CHAPTER I

THE PRE-REVOLUTIONARY POLITICAL AND SOCIO-
ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF TAJIKISTAN

The socio-economic structure of a pre-capitalist society
is generally dominated by feudal lords and/or tribal chiefs.
Such a formation existed almost in all countries at that
stage of development. Under this system the feudal lords,
including the nobility and the higher clergy who owned the
means of production, formed the ruling class. There generally
existed a hierarchic division within the ruling class. The
church itself acted as feudal organisation and controlled
large landed estates. It exercised considerable political
influence and exploited the peasantry which was deprived of
all political rights.

The means of production were owned privately by feudal
lords. Although, in some tribal and in many ancient and
medieval societies, land largely belonged to the tribal chief
or the sovereign alone with no recognised right of private
ownership; yet, in practice, it was held privately by the
upper strata of the society. The right of private ownership
of the feudal lords was upheld by customary laws. Apart from
the ownership of the means of production; the personal
dependence of peasants in various forms on the lord added yet
another dimension to the relations of production under the
system. The productive forces were developed mainly through increased exploitation of the dependent peasantry. General level of operative technology and of productivity was generally low. Agricultural production was largely meant for self subsistence as against the capitalist system where it is primarily for commercial purposes. An absolute monarchy was a common form of state. Religious ideology played an important role in the social life and, in the development of social thought. Class struggle in the form of peasant uprisings, occurring frequently, took place mostly under religious banner.

The Central Asian region of present day USSR was a typical of such areas in pre-revolutionary days where means of production were concentrated in a few hands and the levels of technology and of productivity were very low. Under the system, inequalities and rigidities of social life were perpetuated to the detriment of any possibility of the modernization of the society. The Russian conquest of the region in the second half of the nineteenth century was an important event in its history, which not only influenced the political set up in the region but affected the socio-economic structure as well. Beside the political considerations, the Russians had important economic interests in the region.
In the light of the above it is necessary to comprehend the pre-revolutionary socio-economic and political structure of Tajikistan as it had bearing on the revolutionary process itself. It is, therefore, imperative to make a closer scrutiny of the following of pre-revolutionary Tajikistan:

1) Political structure of Tajikistan before the coming of the Russians and the changes introduced in it after the conquest;

2) the traditional socio-economic set up; and

3) finally, the impact of the Tsarist colonial policies on the traditional socio-economic structure.

The Early Political Structure

Tajikistan in its present political administrative structure is of recent origin. But the archeological evidences record the existence of sedentary settlements in this area as early as 3,000 B.C. Tajiks, the majority ethnic group of the republic, belong to its older identifiable cultural stratum. They have a record of continuous habitation in the region since third millennium B.C.¹ As mentioned

¹ Tajiks in ancient times were distributed for more widely than the narrow confines of the present day Tajikistan. B.S. Gafurov, Istorii Tadzhikskogo naroda, (Moscow, 1955), Vol. I, p. 5; M.S. Andreev, Poethnografi Tadzhikov in R. Vaidayanath, Formation of Soviet Central Asian Republics (PPH, India, 1967), p. 12.
before, Tajiks belong to the Iranian ethnic family which is an eastern branch of the ancient Indo-European ethnic stock. However, the present day Tajiks do not form a single homogeneous body of the older ethnic stock.²

The name 'Tajik' originally meant an Arab.³ Later on during the eighth and the ninth centuries the term gradually started being applied to indicate any person of Islamic faith rather than of the Arab ethnicity. Barthold argues that since Iranians were the first converts to Islam in Central Asia hence the term referred to them. The emergence of the Tajik nationality, therefore, can be associated with its adoption of Islam. Two Soviet orientalists namely Berthels and Gafurov associate the origin of Tajik nationality with the emergence of 'Dari' as an independent language from which descended modern Tajik language. These scholars

² Some scholars suggest triple origin of Tajiks as i) descendants of the Iranian aborigines of Bactria and Sogdiana who remained in the plains throughout the successive invasions of Turks, Tartars, Mangols and Arabs; ii) some of them are immigrants who arrived at this region from time to time and permanently settled here; iii) of mixed origin between the original wealthier inhabitants and the Persian slaves brought from various places by the Turk invaders. See F.H. Skrine and E.D. Ross, The Heart of Asia, Part II (London, 1899), p. 364.

emphasise the distinctiveness of Dari from modern Persian and its independent origin from Khorasan dialect of Sogdian Iranians around seventh century A.D. It facilitated the Tajik Nation Formation. However, Barthold maintains that the modern Tajik or Dari originated from the Persian language. He believes that the Iranian dialects of Central Asia including the Sogdian were gradually thrust back by the Persian. And the Iranians living in Iran and Central Asia created a general Persian literary language which differed a little from modern Tajik.

Tajiks along with some other ethnic groups of Central Asia were also known as 'Sarts'. The term meant different things at different points of time in Central Asian history e.g. an occupational group, a religious body, an ethnic unit and inhabitants of a particular region. Some orientalists like Barthold, N. Postroumov and P.I. Pashino even maintain the Sarts to be a separate ethnic group different from the Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kirgiz and Turkmens, whereas scholars like Vambery, A. Grebenkin and A.P. Khoroshikin assert that the

5. V.V. Barthold (1925), p. 4.
Sarts in fact were Tajiks or a part of them. Schuyler notes that the word 'Sart' in the beginning was primarily used for the inhabitants living in the valley of Syr-Darya and subsequently its use got extended to the people occupying other areas of Central Asia. Tajiks were the first settled inhabitants of the Syr-Darya basin. It was at a later stage that the Uzbeks and the Kazakhs joined them. Lawrence Krader concludes a long discussion on the term 'Sart' by stating that, "it is chiefly Uzbeks and Kazakhs who on settling down in farming communities came to be known as 'Sarts' in addition to Tajiks who had long been so called." The term was commonly used for the sedentary population throughout Central Asia during Russian period.

Tajiks inhabiting the high mountain areas of Pamir, Hindukush, Hissar and other south-eastern parts are called 'Galchas' by the Tajiks of the plain region. The term is not viewed favourably by the so called 'Galchas' themselves.

6. R. Valdmanath, n. 1, p. 10; L. Kader (People of Central Asia, America, 1966, p. 55) maintains that the term was first attached to the merchants of Indian origin during the period of Buddhist influence in Central Asia.

as it literally means a 'hungry crow which retreats to the mountains'. The people refer to themselves as Pamir Tajiks or else by the name of the locality where they live. The Tajiks of the high mountains managed to preserve the language and of ethnic purity as they occupied inaccessible areas and were not influenced to a great extent by the Turkic conquerors and other settlers of Central Asia.

Two slave states of Bactria and Sogdiana situated in the upper and middle Amu-Darya basin were known to have existed in the ancient times. Alexander conquered these two states in the 4th century B.C. and left a legacy of Greek culture and legends among the people. Two centuries later the successors of Alexander were defeated by the Tartars and the state of Tocharistan was established on the territory. Later on Tocharistan along with Sagdiana and some other territories of Central Asia became the part of the Great Kushan empire which lasted for the next five hundred years. Institution of slavery got further strengthened during this period and urban life attained a high level of development. Many archeological finds attest to the

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8. The territory also formed the part of the first world monarchy known to history as Achaemenid state. D. Kaushik, *Central Asia in Modern Times*, (Moscow, 1970), p. 15.
existence of high level skills performed by the artisans of this period. The region experienced expansion of its culture and economy mainly due to its location on the 'Great Silk Route'. The route connected China with Persia and the Roman world for trade purposes. The political fragmentation of the area started with the attacks of the White Huns in the 3rd century A.D. and by the 4th century the great empire had been divided into number of small political units. Throughout its history the region was repeatedly attacked and invaded by foreign rulers. By 6th century a new wave of invaders brought Turks and a century later the Arabs into the region. Arab conquest started a new chapter in the history of the region. The Arab brought with them the religion of Islam. Soon, then existing religions of the people such as Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Nestorian Christianity were replaced by the faith of the conquerers. Thereafter, Islam remained the dominant cultural and social force until recent times. The political authority of the caliph of Bagdad declined by the end of the 8th century; consequently, the political power in Central Asia came into the hands of powerful local families such as Takharides (821-873), Saffarides (873-903) and Sāmanides (903-999).

The Sāmanides built a powerful feudal state with Bukhara as their capital in the beginning of the 10th century. It was
at this time that Tajiks became more prominent as a nation and the Tajik language became predominant in the area. Famous Tajik-Persian poets Rudaki, Firdausi lived in this period. The Samanides empire lasted for about a century and afterwards for many centuries the Tajik nation became a part of one or another feudal state. During this period they were conquered by Karakhanides-Turks, Seljuk-Turks and in the 13th century by Mongols.

The Mongol invasion of Genghis Khan formed another important turning point in the history of Tajikistan and with it began the dark age. Various cities and irrigation networks were destroyed, population declined and the socio-economic fabric was ruined. Timur regained the last grounds in the fourteenth century and tried to enrich his kingdom with the spoils of the wars waged on other areas. He was the last important ruler of Central Asia. Once again the process of political disintegration started after the death of Timur. From sixteenth century onwards the people of Central Asia lived under three feudal states of Bukhara, Khiva and Kokand until the coming in of the Russians. The rulers of these feudal states, known as Khanates, belonged to Uzbek national group.
During the first half of the 19th century, the territory under modern Tajikistan was mainly a part of Khanat of Bukhara. The rulers of the Khanat belonged to the Uzbek ethnic group and had been ruling over Tajiks for the past three centuries. Probably because of long rule over Tajiks the latter were described with great disregard and contempt by the former. Interestingly it has also been admitted at the same time by a number of scholars that the Tajiks are 'more elegant', 'cultured', 'intelligent' and labourious in comparison to the other ethnic groups of the region. A long history of settled economic pursuits, developed urban culture and the legacy of great Tajik-Persian literature certainly made them polished and cultured.

Among the Khanates of Central Asia, Bukhara had the largest population of about a million people. Beside

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9. A popular Uzbek proverb says that "when a Tajik tells the truth he has a fit of colic". Tajiks were regarded by Uzbeks as deceitful, cunning and unreliable. Some 19th century travellers have also described them as 'greedy', 'faithless', 'coward' and 'cunning'. S. Krime and Ross highlighted their 'vices' by adding that, "as each tide of conquest swept the country the Tajiks bent their neck and and acquired all the vices of a race inured to foreign domination", The Heart of Asia (London, 1999), p. 363-364.


Tajiks and Uzbeks, other ethnic groups inhabiting the Khanate included the Kirgizs, Jews and Turkmens. The treatment meted out by the Uzbek rulers to the Jews was much worse than that given to Tajiks. They were forced to wear a particularly distinctive costume including a small black cap so that they could be identified from a distance. They were also forbidden to ride in the streets.  

The Uzbek Emirs ruling the state were hereditary rulers running a tyrannical and oppressive government. Although the control of the Emir of Bukhara was quite stable which provided internal centralisation till the Russian conquest but the influence of the provincial feudal lords was growing. Ultimately the sovereign had only a nominal authority over them. The provincial governors became not only practically independent but also started waging wars against their neighbours and the sovereign in order to expand the area of their influence and authority.  

In general, the people of Soviet Central Asia had no national consciousness in modern or political sense of

12. S. Krine and Ross, n. 9, p. 366.
the term. They had no feeling of allegiance to the sovereign except those who were immediate officials of the ruler. Their ties with the feudal lords, who were often the chiefs of their tribes, were stronger than those with the sovereign or the state. ¹⁴ Loyalty towards one's own tribe and the joint family was specially strong among the nomads of the region, they hardly recognised any external power as their masters. Overtones of feudal and tribal allegiance in the political sphere were common which actually originated from their tribal-patriarchal socio-economic set up.

The Coming of the Russians:

Though Russians had been interacting with the Central Asians since early times but it was from the 16th century onwards that the relations became more intense. These were both political and economic in nature. However, the trading caravans of the two faced serious problems due to frequent attacks by the nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes of Kazakh steppes. It was mainly due to this factor that the Russians decided to capture this region in the 18th Century. This put the Russians in direct contact with the

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 3.
Central Asian Khanates. But even after the political conquest, it was difficult to keep the Kazakh nomads under control. They recognised no external authority except that of their own tribal chiefs. They continued their disobedience and raids and usually flew across the border to the Khanates for protection. The people of the Khanates were sympathetic to Kazaks than to the Russians because of their ethnic, religious and cultural affinities with the former. Thus, the problem of 'insecure and unstable border' continued. Therefore, their further advance into the Khanates in search of stable border line was quite inevitable.15 Besides this, Britain sitting very close to the region in Indian sub-continent started taking keen political and commercial interest in Central Asia during the middle of the nineteenth century. This made the Russians realise its strategic and political significance. Apart from this the region had great economic importance as well.16 The Russian bourgeoisie in the middle of the 19th


century compared to other capitalist countries of Europe was weak and could not support the 'intensive' expansion of capitalism. So the Russian capitalists had to look for the possibilities of 'extensive' expansion of capitalism. The Russian defeat in the Crimean War closed the possibility of any such expansion towards Europe. It left the Russians with the only possibility of expansion in Central Asia where already, an important market for the surplus products of the Russian light industry had been found. This region could also become an important source of raw cotton for the most important textile industry of Russia. Russia was getting its cotton supply from America before the American Civil War. The supplies got disrupted after the war and the Central Asia assumed an increased importance as an alternative source of supply. In Lyashchenko's words the economic control over Central Asia thus became a 'historical necessity' for the Russian capitalist development. The economic objectives of the Russian conquest have been either over or under emphasised by various scholars and it has raised interesting controversies. A study of the nature of economic changes introduced by

them in this region have been dealt within the next section of the chapter, which effectively brings out nature of the basic objectives of the conquest. However, it would be interesting to take note of an official circular. On 21st November, 1864, Prince Gortschankoff circulated a note for the benefit of the Great Powers of Europe explaining the interests and aims which prompted his government to take action in Central Asia. The official clarification explains that, "the position of Russia in Central Asia is (was) that of all civilized states which came into contact with half savage, wandering tribes possessing no fixed social organisation". Therefore, it was "a mission to civilize neighbouring countries on the continent of Asia". It further adds, "It invariably happens in such cases that the interests of security on the frontier and of commercial relations compel a certain ascendency over neighbours whose turbulence and nomadic instincts render them difficult to live with". "In order to stop these (we are) compelled to reduce the tribes on our frontier to a more and less complete subjugation".


19. Ibid.
In fact, encouraged by various objectives and aims such as - need for a more secure frontier, the fear of the British aggression, military glory and economic necessity; the Tsarist Russia decided to conquer the region in the middle of the last century. The entire Central Asia was conquered within a short span of 20 years.

The northern parts of present Tajikistan - Khodzest, Ura-Tube, Dzhizak, Yangi Kurgan and Samarkand, were annexed to the Russian empire as a part of Governor Generalship of Turkestan. Southern and Central Tajikistan then called eastern Bukhara and the Khanat of Khiva were not directly incorporated into the empire but were reduced in size with a status of vassal state. The then ruler of Bukhara Said-Alim Khan, after accepting a reduction in the size of his kingdom, had to surrender his right to conduct foreign relations which onwards were handled by the Russian government. Russian political agents were permanently placed in his territory. He was also made to grant special trade concessions to the Russians. Though the state remained under an overall supervision of the Governor General of Turkestan but he had no direct administrative jurisdiction. The Russian

20. At present although Samarkand comes under Uzbek SSR but the population of the area is mainly Tajik.
government followed the policy of non-interference for all internal administrative and political affairs. The Russian resident at Bukhara had cordial relations with the Emir and confined himself to tending advice rather than interfering directly. His advice was also mainly restricted to trade matters. However, he had a court of his own for judging cases involving Russians or non-natives. The ruler of Bukhara was generally obedient to Russians because he knew that the capital of the Khanate was at their mercy as the river Zarafshan, the only source of water to the fields of the capital, flew through Samarkand which was under direct control of Russians. It would not have been difficult for them to divert its course. The Russians, on the other hand, dreaded the responsibility of direct control over half a million of Asians spread over an area of 80,000 square miles. The indirect control cost them nothing to administer, while its economic gains were very impressive. It was due to this that the Governor General of Turkestan once said, "the Emir of Bukhara is the most zealous of my lieutenants."  

22. Ibid., p. 385.  
23. Ibid., p. 370.
The natives did not react to the Russian take over. As mentioned earlier, the concept of nation or nationality had little meaning for them. The tyrannical rule of the Uzbek Emirs hardly gave any popular reason to the masses to rally around their ruler against Russian subjugation.

The political administrative division of the territory of present day Tajikistan between the Governor-Generalship of Turkestan and the Khanate of Bukhara resulted in diverse economic development of the area. The parts of Tajikistan which came under the direct control of the Russians developed faster and started absorbing capitalist trends in its economy whereas the area under the Emir of Bukhara remained largely feudal.

Bukhara was allowed to retain its own system of administration by the Russians. Theoretically the ruler of Bukhara was absolute master of the lives and fortunes of his subjects, but in practice his authority had number of limitations. First of all, he was required to follow the Koran and the canonical law of Islam. Secondly, clergy of the Khanate exercised considerable influence over the matters of the state and lastly, feudal pressure groups and court intrigues further limited the authority of the Emir. Kushbegi, the Prime Minister, was next to be sovereign. He was the official guardian of the state treasury, collector of tax and custom duties and kept the keys of the city doors.

24. N.V. Khanykov, Opisaniya Bukharskogo Khanastva (writings about Bukhara Khanat), (St. Petersburg, 1843), pp. 9-18.
For the administrative purposes the kingdom was divided into 36 provinces each under its Governor who was called Beg or Bek. The position of Begs with regard to the sovereign of the state was loosely defined. They were obliged to support part of his army and made him large presents and in certain other matters were required to obey their lord. In return, they were allowed to collect taxes in their provinces for their own use. However, the Emir had land in every Bekship, the revenue of which went to his own treasury. Such lands were called amlak lands distinct from bek lands. The tax collector of these lands was known as amlakdar. He was directly responsible to the Emir. The Begs were also supposed to present weekly report of their provinces to the Emir of Bukhara. Below the Begs were local Amlakdars who performed similar function in the amlak or districts. Their main job was the collection of taxes and the execution of judicial decrees.²⁵

Rā'is was an important official of the state whose main job was to safeguard the public morals. He also supervised the due observance of all religious rites by the subjects. "He drives the faithful to the public prayers like flock of sheep, meddles in family affairs, levies

²⁵. N.V. Khanykov, n. 23; Skrine and Ross, n. 9, pp. 380 ff; E. Schylev, n. 7, pp. 152-53.
blackmail, and has elevated deletion to the rank of a science .... (along) with the kazi (he) served as a spy on the executive officers and is an object of universal dread. 26 These officials were dismissed by the Russians in the areas under their direct control.

Legal system in the Khanate was cumbersome, ineffective and time consuming. Kazi was the native judge appointed by the Amir after passing an examination in the Islamic law. The chief judge of Bukhara was called Kalan but he had no right to revise the decisions of his colleagues. 27 Before the coming of the Russians, Bukhara had an army of about 10,000 soldiers on regular basis and about 40,000 on irregular basis. The strength of Bukhara army was a small matter for the Tsars of Russia. However, it is significant to note that while the civil officials from Kushbeg down to the Amin received no remuneration beyond what they could squeeze from the people; the Amir's forces were well kept as well as regularly paid.

The Tsarist regime though did not interfere much with the basic political and administrative institutions of the region but the administration of Turkestan was modified to facilitate the Russia's colonial policies, whereby, the Turkestan region


27. Ibid.
was to provide revenue to the imperial government and a market for the Russian light industry on the one hand, and the region was to absorb a part of the surplus population of the central parts of Russian empire on the other.\textsuperscript{28} To fulfil these economic objectives the Tsarist regime did introduce some important economic changes. The nature and aim of the colonial policy of the Tsar was essentially to obtain maximum profits by plundering the riches of Central Asia.\textsuperscript{29}

**The Economic Situation:**

As stated earlier, the region in the nineteenth century was economically backward where means of production were controlled by a few and the levels of available technology and of productivity were very low. The economy largely operated at subsistence level. In order to understand the pre-revolutionary economic structure of the region, it is essential to comprehend its various aspects as those operated traditionally as well as after the Russian occupation.


\textsuperscript{29} A.M. Aminov, *ibid.*
While the majority of the ethnic groups of Central Asia as Turkmens, Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kirgiz and Karakalpak were nomad herdsmen, the Tajik were engaged in agriculture particularly in irrigated districts and (had) developed form of handicrafts and trade in their towns. The Tajiks, living in plain areas were essentially sedentary agriculturists. Some of them were also engaged in commerce whereas, Tajiks living in mountains called 'Galchas' practised both agriculture and cattle rearing.

In order to comprehend the traditional economic structure in Tajikistan; it is important to make a closer scrutiny of the following:

i) the pattern of ownership of land and the system of land tenure;

ii) the system of taxation and revenues on agricultural production;

iii) the cropping pattern and generation of surplus; and

iv) level and nature of technological and other inputs.

Land Rights: All land according to Shariat belonged to the ruler. In other words there was formal absence of private property in land and the principle of sovereign ownership of the ruler or of the state was upheld. The cultivable land was leased out in perpetuity to the person who made it cultivable by making necessary improvements. In fact, customary law i.e. adat and the actual conditions added many variations and complications to the land rights. In practice, thus arose many other categories of land ownership. Important among these included:

1) Amlak, land or Miriie land: It was under the direct ownership of the state. The bulk of the cultivable and uncultivable land used both by the nomads and the sedentary population belonged to this category. The agricultural land was given to the cultivators in return for a fixed obligation to the ruler. The tenure of these 'tenants at will' could be passed to their male descendants on their death but the females were excluded from this.32

31. Muslim Canon Law practised among the Central Asians.

ii) Milk lands or Tankhwah lands: It was free hold private property that arose from the gifts or rewards made by the sovereign for notable merits and/or services. The land was free of any kind of land rent and was at the complete disposition of the owner who could sell it or give it away at his will. If the owner died without heir it would revert to the government. Such gifts/rewards kept the beneficiaries under obligation and strengthened their loyalty towards the ruler.

iii) Milk-i-kharaj lands: at the time of conquest were owned by non-muslims. It remained in their possession subject to their payment of land tax. The tax amounted to one-fifth of the gross produce in case of irrigated land and one-tenth for dry lands.33

iv) Dashyak lands: were named so because one-tenth of its produce was set apart for the support of mosque attached to it.

v) Wakf lands: were wholly meant for religious use; donated to mosque either by an individual or state. The land belonged to the religious institutions and was free from any tax.

vi) Mevat or waste lands: Could be turned into Milk land or private property by any person who with the consent of the govt. Could reclaim it or in the phrase of Shariat 'vivifies the land' with the help of irrigation or by cultivating it. 34

The exact extent of land under each category is difficult to assess. Holdsworth noted that lands under Wakf and Milk categories increased throughout the nineteenth century. 35 The Khans constantly and considerably increased the Milk lands in order to maintain their authority. Nasrulla, the Amir of Bukhara is recorded to have made 36,000 such gifts in his eastern Vilayets alone. She estimated that wakf land constituted about twenty-four percent of the total land in the eastern parts of the Bukhara state. 36 The development of these lands based on such land rights further strengthened Feudal relations of production.

In Tajikistan where farming tradition had a long history the land relations differed substantially from those among Kazakhs and Kirgiz. Here feudal ownership of land developed faster than among the nomads of central Asia. At the initial stages, the size of individual properties was

34. Ibid. p. 152-53.
36. Ibid.
not large. Small scale cultivation on small land holdings was the normal practice. However, the class of native beys (big landlords) was expanding throughout the 19th century and consequently it led to an increase in the number of Ṣar-i-Kan (landless labourers). By the beginning of twentieth century, the beys in Bukhara owned more than 85 per cent of the arable land. The biggest landlord was the Emir himself. The number of farmers who had no land at all was estimated to be about 25 per cent of the total number of cultivators. According to another estimate, based on 1909 statistics, in the irrigated areas of Turkestan and Bukhara, 52 per cent cultivators owned from 0.5 to 1.3 desyatins, 33.3 per cent from 1.3 to 3.3 and 14 per cent more than 3.3 desyatins. Thus, more than 85 per cent of the cultivators owned less than 3.3 desyatins of land. The landless population among the peasants rapidly increased after 1909 in the process of transition from primitive natural economy to commercial farming. Although large masses of the peasantry were becoming landless but it did not give rise to large plantations using

38. Dessyatín = 2.7 acres
hired labour.\textsuperscript{41} The feudal lords and new exploiters who financed cotton cultivation through local firms continued to squeeze the share croppers and the small cultivators.\textsuperscript{42} 

Land Revenue and Other Taxes - The land tax was the major source of income for the rulers. As the substantial portion of the milk and waft land was exempted from the taxes, the middle and the poor peasants had to bear a heavy burden of taxes. The important land taxes were Kharaj and Tanap. Kharaj was the land tax which was estimated on the total output of the production. The amount generally varied from one-tenth to one-fifth and on certain waft lands it was even one-third. The land unit on which the tax levied in money terms was called Tanap. It was usually levied on gardens or orchards and meadows. As the unit of land measurement was tanap so it came to be known as tanap tax.\textsuperscript{43} Zekat was the tax levied on trade and Kosh-pul was charged on irrigation. Corruption in the matters of tax collection, both on the part of the peasants as well as officials, was quite widespread. The payment of taxes was generally made in money though the practice of payment in kind was also prevalent.\textsuperscript{44} According

\textsuperscript{41}. R.R. Sharma, \textit{op.cit} p.12.

\textsuperscript{42}. D. Kaushik \textit{Central Asia in Modern Times}, (Moscow, 1970), p. 67-68.

\textsuperscript{43}. E. Schuyler, (n.7, p. 154) recorded, "under Bukhara rule Kharaj was 1/5 of the harvest and frequently more but during Russian expeditions to quite the population it was reduced to 1/10."

\textsuperscript{44}. The currency of the period was called \textit{Tila} and \textit{Tanka}. 
to Khanikoff the price of land in Bukhara, even before the coming of the Russians, was quite high. 45

System of Tenancy - Share-cropping system of tenancy was most common among the sedantry agriculturists. The share-croppers were called chairikers literary meaning 'one-fourth'. These share-croppers contributed their own labour along with generally one bullock and some tools and provided for their own food and in return received one-fourth of the total production. In case the share-cropper did not possess the draught animal and could not provide for his food, he received one-fifth or even less of the total harvest. 46 If he provided both bullocks and ate his own food and got only land and seeds from the land-owner, then he generally received half of the total produce. However, the share cropper had to pay one-fourth of his share in the form of land tax and had to meet other expenses incurred on production. After these deductions he was sometimes left with even less than half of his actual share. The lack of draught animals could cut their share considerably. Therefore, a co-operative method, known as Shirkat was practised by some peasants.

45. N.V. Khanikoff, "Bukhara" Journal of Royal Geographical Society, June, 1860, p. 9-18, cited in Schyler, n. 7, p. 152. The author writes that in 1845 the average price of good land in Bukhara was a sum equivalent to £20 (per acre). Forty years later the Russians paid £16 per acre for land acquired for the railways.

46. M. Holdsworth, n. 10, p. 124
Under this system more than one household joined together to raise a pair of draught animals, which sometimes consisted of even different animals. They worked on the fields in turns.\(^\text{47}\)

Apart from working on leased land, the sharecropper tenants had to work for several days on the other farms of the landlord without getting anything in return. They were even forced to do repair and construction work for the landlords. Legally, the share croppers were not bond to the land or the landlord but due to acute shortage of irrigated land, their mobility got restricted and they had to stay on with their exploitative landlords.

The peasants who could not afford any draught animal, basic implements and sometimes even their own food, worked as agricultural labourers and they were called Mard-i-kar. They were hired by the landowners for whole year and were paid partly in kind and partly in cash. However, in terms of actual material conditions and the status there was not much difference between the share cropper and the agricultural labour.

 Implements and Methods of cultivation - Agricultural implements were primitive and mainly consisted of wooden plough and hoe called omach and ketmen respectively. In

\(^{47}\) Ibid. p. 12.
Tajikistan before the revolution there were about 112,000 omaches and 100,000 ketmens. The fields were manured and were ploughed with the help of a pair of oxen. As it was very hot in the day and the ploughing could be done only during the cool hours of night as a result the farmer could plough only limited land in this time. The ploughing was done thrice before sowing.

Irrigation - The regulations determining water rights and the use of irrigation facilities were of great significance. Water is the most important element of the agricultural economy of Central Asia due to its arid climate. According to the rules of Muslim Canon Law, water could neither be bought nor sold. It was to be distributed equally. But in practice, "it often fell into the hands of some powerful individuals ... and notwithstanding the Muhammadan Canon Law and custom, in reality they did trade in water or unequally divided it to the lands of the wealthy." The poor were often deprived of it or were made to pay for it in money or labour.

Special efforts were made by some rulers to improve the irrigation facilities. These efforts could not keep up with the increase in the number of settlements and of


49. Lyshchenko, n. 14, p. 358.
population. Due to constant warfare within the state and with the neighbouring states, the resources were generally diverted to the military operations. The maintenance and administration of irrigation channels was done by peasants themselves. The chief of the irrigation administration called aksakal was elected by the cultivators and every village had its own mirab who supervised the repairs and the distribution of water. He was paid a fixed portion of the total produce. This self administration of irrigation system only led to compulsory peasant service but did not ensure equal and impartial distribution of water resources.

The canals were fed with water diverted from Amu and Syr Darya rivers. Beside canals, the water was drawn with the help of Persian wheel from wells.

**Cropping Pattern** - Agriculture in arid-mountainous areas has certain prerequisites such as the availability of relatively flat land and that of water. These conditions are generally met in the valleys. Consequently, agricultural activity in Tajikistan is mainly confined to a number of steep valleys carved out by rivers and streams (See map I). Leninabad (Khodjent) and the surrounding area which forms the part of the Great Fergana Valley is most suitable for cultivation. Pandj, Vakhsh, Zerafshan
and Kafirnigan or Hissar Valleys are also suitable for agriculture provided water is available for irrigation.

Wheat was the most important crop grown in Bukhara before the coming in of the Russians and was largely meant for self-consumption. Cotton, rice, barley, alfalfa and fruits were also grown. Agricultural activities in the Bukhara Khanate confined mainly to its western parts. The eastern part of Bukhara i.e. modern Tajikistan due to its mountainous terrain was relatively neglected area where the production of foodgrains was hardly sufficient to support the inhabitants of the area. This mountainous region which is known under the name of Kohistan is inhabited chiefly by Tadjiks or Galchas ... only one 85th of the whole extent of territory is cultivated and settled and yet 36,000 people live in wretched villages and manage to procure scanty subsistence by cultivating the soil or by pasturing ... in general the production of grain is hardly sufficient to support the inhabitants." 50 However, whereas the western parts of the Bukhara Khanate generated food surplus, the Zarafshan valley of this mountainous region was known for its cotton production.

50. E. Schuyler, n. 7, p. 149.
Peasant Uprisings - The condition of dehkans in Central Asia even prior to Russian conquest was not very good. They were suffering under the oppressive measures of beks or Hakims, beys and bees. Therefore, peasant uprisings were although few but were not unknown. It was during the later part of the 19th century that more peasant revolts occurred against the grain tax policy of the rulers. But all these uprisings were on a small scale lacking extensive revolutionary effect that would bring about significant changes in the socio-economic order. The reason perhaps was that the bulk of the share croppers were neither slaves nor entirely landless generally they retained the plot, on which their house was built and their own wooden plough and work animals. The sense of personal property tied them to their feudal lords.

In short, the agrarian structure in Tajikistan like in other parts of Central Asia was mainly feudal; outright slavery of the prisoners of war and of very poor peasants

51. As mentioned earlier beys were feudal governors, bees were tribal or clan chiefs and beys were rich land and cattle owners.

also existed under the Emiret of Bukhara. The tribal-patriarchal relationship of nomads was not prevalent among the sedentary Tajik population. Similarly, the religio-theoretical concept of the collective ownership of land and of water resources did not mean much to sedentary population. The existing land-man relations changed only moderately during the period of colonial subjugation before the revolution.

**Impact of Russian Presence:**

After the conquest of Central Asia, the Tsar of Russia gave explicit instruction to his lieutenants to exercise "a fatherly care over his Asiatic subjects". The Minister of War, General Karapatkine, delivered an address at Ashakhabad on 28th November 1897 regarding the policy of his government in Central Asia, upholding this 'basic principle'. However, this did not check the Tsarist regime from pursuing a policy of economic advantages, and soon it became predominant in its various administrative and political measures formulated for the region.\(^53\)

Colonization - The first economic effect of the conquest was throwing the region open for colonization by the Russians.

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53. Skrine and Ross, n. 9, Appendix II, p. 410.
Though initially only the cossacks were settled in the area due to strategic and security reasons, but later on, the colonization movement included a substantial number of peasants and some industrial workers and its objectives clearly became economic.

In 1862, the Russian peasantry was emancipated, and they were given tiny plots of land in exchange for a heavy price. The uneconomic nature of the peasant holdings and prevalence of large scale rural unemployment due to general increase in population resulted in discontentment and revolutionary fervor among the Central Russian peasants. In order to overcome this economic difficulty, which created a politically explosive situation, the Russian government started encouraging the weak and economically impoverished sections of the Russian peasantry to undertake colonization by settling on new lands. Besides, it was through these Russian settlers that the government could more easily consolidate its military gains in the region of total strangers whose loyalties to the Russian regime were always doubtful. The burden of colonization fell more heavily in the steppes of Kazakhstan and parts of modern Kirgizia. The number of colonizers who settled on the

54. For the conditions of post emancipation Russian peasants, see, John Mynard, Russia in Flux (London, 1941), pp. 29-56.
irrigated land of Turkestan was much less than those who had settled in Kazakhstan. The Khanates were not disturbed much by the new settlers. The natives of Turkestan and the Khanates who hardly objected to the military seizure of the region, strongly opposed the confiscation of cultivable land. The nature of resentment was more serious in the areas of sedentary population than those inhabited by nomads. Seeing the strong local opposition in the beginning some restrictions were put on large scale peasant colonization of Turkestan by the Tsarist regime. In 1908, Palen, the head of the Commission appointed by the government to look into the affairs of Central Asia, reported that "little additional land could be taken for colonization without depriving the natives of their livelihood and arousing their resistance." Nevertheless, he proposed the colonization of the region in a slower more dependable fashion by attracting private

55. The Russian population in the Kazakh steppe at the end of the first decade of the present century was around 40 per cent. See Frank Lorimev, The Population of Soviet Union: History and Prospects (Geneva, 1946), p. 27.

enterprise and by allowing Russians to buy and sell land which was prohibited by section 270 of the Turkestan statute. The advocates of colonization opposed the policy of caution and recommended on the contrary. "It (Russian colonizers) should be several millions. Then the Turkestan border region would be for ever firmly bound to Russia, and the native population would become accustomed to and acquainted with the Russian population and would become truly devoted to Russia." Pressure for a change in the colonization status of Turkestan came from various other sides and finally, on December 19, 1910, the statute was amended by which the Governor General declared large chunks of land as 'excess of the needs of the nomad population'. These 'excess lands' could be allotted to the Russian settlers. New irrigation projects were also recommended which would reclaim 3,000,000 dessyatins of unused land for the establishment of 300,000 Russian peasant farms and the immigration of 1,500,000 Russian settlers. However, due to the outbreak of World War I these plans could not be implemented.


58. Ibid., p. 136.
The government could go ahead with its programmes of large scale land confiscation only in the thinly populated areas of nomads till the revolution. The colonizers settled mainly in cities in the areas of sedentary population, this gave colonial character of the cities, such as Tashkent, Samarkand, Fargana (old name: Novyi Margelan) and Kokand etc. Rural colonization was mainly concentrated in Semirechie oblast in Turkestan. The other oblasts - Syr-Daria, Transcaspia, Samarkand and Fargana, were already heavily populated by the native agriculturists.

The number of Russian settlers in Governor-Generalship of Turkestan has been estimated to be around 407,000 persons accounting for 6 per cent of the total population of 6,493,000 persons in 1911. Out of these 177,374 Russians settled in urban areas and rest i.e. slightly more than half in rural parts. If Semirechie oblast with Russians accounting for 17 per cent of total population, is excluded, the other oblasts of Turkestan would be left with much less than even 6 per cent.

of overall proportion for the whole of Turkestan. The situation was described with apprehension by the imperial administration as they saw "the Russian element lost in an endless sea of natives." There was notable increase in the number of Russian settlers during next five-six years. According to the estimates of General N.A. Kurpatkiu, the last Governor General of Turkestan region, the number of Russians living in Turkestan in 1916, was as much as 7.5 per cent of the total population of the region. Whatever may be the total strength of the Russian population but it is certain that their presence in the region had strong economic effects.

Russian population in Bukhara in the beginning was negligible. The 1897 Census shows 12,150 Russians in Bukhara. However, with the Russian proposals of rail-road construction in the Khanate in the first decade of the present century, private Russian commercial interests increased considerably. Several Russian textile manufacturers seeking new sources of raw material proposed to acquire

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60. However, in some accounts this figure has been shown to be 4 per cent. It has been shown that out a total population of 5,090,000 persons in Central Asia (excluding Kazakhstan) only 202,374 were Russians in 1911. Out of this 177,374 Russians have been shown as living in urban areas i.e. 87.6 per cent. See Gavin, Hambly, *Central Asia* (London, 1969), pp. 187-227.
unused Bukhara state lands along Amu-Darya for cotton cultivation. Before the start of the World War I many Russian settlements had developed along the new proposed rail-road line in the Bukhara Khanate. Chardjui, the site of a cantonment and the rail-road workshop, was the largest settlement. Whereas New Bukhara, though smaller in size was more important than Chardjui, politically and economically. Kerki and Termez were important military settlements. By 1910, there were 27,700 Russians in Bukhara state. On the eve of the Revolution, Russians constituted almost 2 per cent of the Khanate's population. Beside the above mentioned four large settlements, Russian presence in the inner parts and specially eastern parts of the Khanate was much less known. But even this limited presence of the Russians was the most important channel of western influence in Bukhara.

The Increase in Cotton Production - The second major economic impact of the conquest was the emphasis laid by Russians on the expansion of cotton cultivation in the region. The region was known for its cotton cultivation since ancient

63. Ibid.
Long before the Russian conquest, the region had been exporting raw cotton and cotton yarn to Russia. It has been estimated that about two-thirds of the total volume of Central Asian trade with Russia prior to the conquest consisted of cotton export.\(^64\) After the disruption of cotton imports from America during its civil war, Russia started developing this region as an alternative source of cotton and slowly converted it into a 'cotton colony' of Russian capitalism.

The import of Central Asian cotton which already had experienced a great rise between 1861-64 due to the sudden shortage of cotton in Russian markets after the American civil war, achieved further heights after the Russian occupation of the region.\(^65\) Inspite of the expansion, however, the quality of cotton produced in Central Asia was of old indigenous variety. At the time of Russian conquest, only this inferior short-staple variety was grown in the region which was not useful for large scale textile manufacturing. Therefore, in the early 1880s the more suitable American upland variety was

\(^64\) R. R. Sharma, n. 31, p. 40.

\(^65\) In 1861 Russia imported 152,000 poods of Asiatic cotton (a pood being approximately 36 pounds) and by 1864, 704,000 poods. The price of Central Asian cotton also rose from four to five rouble per pood in 1861 to twenty and twenty-three roubles in 1864. See Lyshchenko, n. 14, p. 610.
introduced: which soon replaced the old variety on a considerable scale. Schuyler wrote in 1876 that about one-fifth to one-sixth of the whole amount needed by the Russian manufacturers was being imported from Central Asia. By 1911-12, 52 per cent of the total Russian needs of cotton for its textile industry were being met by the Central Asian cotton; the figure grew to 70 per cent in 1915 and to 73 per cent by 1916.

It is important to note that this general increase in cotton cultivation was unequally distributed over the three Central Asian administrative units. Turkestan, the area under the direct control of the Russians, could easily claim the biggest share. The Fargana oblast of Turkestan alone had nearly half of the entire cotton growing area of Central Asia. Almost the entire cultivated area in the oblast was under cotton crop in 1915-16. The cotton output of this one oblast alone accounted for nearly 80 per cent of the total cotton production of Central Asia. The next big producer of the crop was Zarafshan valley where cotton occupied 25 per cent of the total

68. Ibid., p. 9.
irrigated area in 1909. Cotton production increased considerably in Bukhara as well, but here unlike Fargana Valley, it did not develop into the kind of over specialised crop. The total annual production of cotton increased from 410,000 poods in 1880 to 1,359,099 in 1890 and 2,624,000 poods in 1915. It means that the cotton production increased by only 6.4 times in Bukhara between 1880-1915 as against 15.7 times in Turkestan between 1888-1913. However, cotton contributed 3/4 of the total value of export from the Khanate. But the American variety of cotton that completely replaced the native variety by 1914 in Turkestan, could not supplant the latter in Bukhara as well as in Khiva. It was only after 1914 that the American variety of cotton started gaining popularity in Bukhara.

Grain production continued to predominate in Bukhara, both in terms of area under its cultivation and the size of harvest. Unlike Turkestan, Bukhara remained self sufficient in food production and cotton was raised by small peasants to supplement their income. Large scale specialised


Production of cotton for commercial purposes was not known. Only 5 per cent of the total cultivated land was under cotton crop in the first decade of the twentieth century. Even the Zarafshan valley, which accounted for about 80 per cent of the total cotton production of Bukhara, as mentioned before, devoted only 25 per cent of its cultivated land to cotton whereas, it devoted 40 per cent of its cultivated area to wheat. According to Pahlen's estimate the total arable land in Bukhara was 2,900,000 desyatins of which 986,000 desyatins i.e. 34 per cent of area was under wheat crop. Except 2.6 per cent area under cotton cultivation rest was devoted to raising other grain crops towards the end of last century.

The area under cotton cultivation increased without any direct administrative compulsions. It was achieved mainly through tax incentives, credit policy, high prices, distribution of better seeds and by applying other experimental ideas in its cultivation. The local trading bourgeoisie and the small local middle mand played an important role in advancing the necessary capital to small

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72. S. Becker, n. 61, p. 183.
73. Ibid., p. 184.
74. K.K. Pahlen, Mission to Turkestan.
peasants for cotton growing. The most important factor that greatly accelerated cotton cultivation in the region was the introduction of modern means of communication and transportation. Transport of Central Asian cotton to the industrial regions of Russia would have been impossible in the absence of these.

**Development of the Means of Transportation and Communication** - It was a prerequisite to develop the means of transport and communication in order to exploit the economic resources of the region. Until Russian conquest, the area was completely isolated from the rest of the world mainly due to the absence of modern means of communication. Big projects of rail/road construction began immediately after the conquest. The building of railways was important not only from economic point of view but also had political and military significance. The initial efforts in this direction obviously came from the government in 1881 when Trans-Caspian railway line was built. This was the first important rail line which connected Central Asia with the central regions of Russia. The project was completed in 1886. Subsequently, it was extended from Amu-Darya to Samarkand in 1888. The other important rail line built in this period was Trans-Siberian which linked this area
with other parts of the empire. The most important rail line was Tashkent-Orenburg which connected Fargana Valley with European Russia in 1905. By 1915, almost all important cities of Central Asia were linked by railways. The Russian private entrepreneurs also started investing money in various rail-road construction projects by 1915. The Fargana and Bukhara railways were constructed mainly by Russian private enterprise. Roads for transport of passengers and mail were also constructed prior to rail-road construction. The development of means of transport and communication led to quick and regular movement of Central Asian cotton to the industrial centres of Russia.

Improvement in Irrigation - For better economic gains from the region, besides better communications and improved transportation, more irrigation was one of the principal needs of the region. Specially, cotton could only be planted in irrigated areas in such an arid land. In Central Asia where every drop of water meant an extra boll of cotton attention was obviously given to improve the irrigation facilities.

A number of plans to improve land by enhancing irrigation were formulated but these achieved limited success. During 50 years of Russian rule only two major irrigation projects could be completed - one in the Hungry Steppe and the other on the Murgab. After bringing 36,800 dessyatins of new land under irrigation, the total irrigated area in Central Asia could only reach the figure of 4,758,000 dessyatins by 1910; of which Turkestan claimed 2,808,000 dessyatins, Bukhara 1,600,000 and the rest was in Khiva. This large chunk of irrigated land covered only 2.6 per cent of the total geographical area of Central Asia.  

Agriculture remained the main occupation of Central Asian people even during the Tsarist period. Nearly 80 per cent of the total population of Turkestan was engaged in agricultural pursuits. The percentage was even higher in the case of Bukhara. The pressure on scarce irrigated land started increasing during the last decades of the nineteenth century. Apart from the general increase in the population, the number of nomads abandoning their nomadic life and settling down on land increased considerably.

77. V.V. Barthold, The Cultural History of Turkestan, p. 121.
Similar changes were taking place in the Khanates as well. The new economic opportunities paved way for the emergence of a class of moneyed aristocracy. This new aristocracy started dominating the other social groups by virtue of its superior economic position. It was through them that the rudimentary capitalist relations of production started penetrating into the villages of Central Asia. The region's subsistence economy began to breakdown.

Industry in the whole of Central Asia till the late 19th century was in embryo and was mainly related to the extraction of mineral wealth which involved oil, coal and salt, and the primary processing of agricultural raw material. There were only 6 small semi-mechanised industrial enterprises in colonial Tajikistan. After the construction of the Central Asian rail-road in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, imports of Russian industrial goods increased. Russia appropriated 88 per cent of the Turkestan's industrial needs at the beginning of the century. Interestingly


the flow of goods from Russia increased but simultaneously the handicraft or domestic industry continued to have an important place in Tajik economy. There were 6,000 small artisan workshops with 9,000 workers in Tsarist Tajikistan.80

In short, the most important effect of the Tsarist economic policies was the change in the objectives of production. Earlier agricultural production in Central Asia was mainly for self-consumption. The increase in cotton cultivation and availability of cheap Central Russian and Siberian wheat gave rise to market-oriented agricultural economy. However, large scale production on capitalist basis did not take place because hired labour was not being used extensively. Although the money economy had clearly emerged yet the crop-sharing system continued to be dominant in Central Asia. The policy of least investment in agriculture by both the Russian colonisers and the local feudal lords encouraged the existence of small holdings by the use of charikars and sometimes mardikars. According to an estimate based on 1909 statistics, in the irrigated areas of Turkestan and Bukhara, 52 per cent cultivators worked on farms having a size between 0.5 to 1.3 dessyatins, 33.3 per cent on 1.3 to 3.3 and 14 per cent worked on farms

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having a size more than 3.3 dessyatins. The small holdings predominated in the Khanates. With the emergence of bourgeoisie capitalist characteristics in land relations, the land was constantly getting concentrated in a fewer hands. It resulted in the loss of land from the marginal farmers and many small indebted peasants became completely landless. However, in 1916, in Turkestan an average size of the land holding of a immigrant agricultural household was estimated at 10.8 dessyatins of land whereas, the average size of the native agricultural household was between 1.5 dessyatins to 2 dessyatins.

The Russian presence in the region led to the dual oppression of the people - by the local feudal lords and by Russian capitalists. The burden of taxes and obligation increased on the small cultivators, poor tribemen and small tradesmen. This gave rise to mass uprisings against the oppressions. Bribery and corruption of the Tsarist military

82. R.R. Sharma, n. 31, pp. 11 & 14.
83. The burden of taxes on the Central Asian population was 50 to 150 per cent higher than that levied upon the population of European Russia. See, W. Mandel, *The Soviet Far East and Central Asia* (New York, 1944), p. 100.
administration and inefficiency and cruelty of the native rulers added to their miseries. There was also great resentment among the native peasants against the large scale settlements of Russians on the so-called surplus land. The discontentment acquired an alarming proportion and the law and order situation began to deteriorate by the end of the century. There were direct physical attacks by the native peasants on the Russian colonizers. These were usually reported by the Tsarist administration as 'crimes against law and order'. In Tajikistan, an uprising broke in Khodzhent as early as 1872. It was followed by similar uprisings in Ura-Tube Kostakoz and Guliakandoz in 1875 and 1880. All these outbreaks were brutally suppressed by the Tsarist administration with the help of local aristocracy. Similarly, in the eastern Bukhara, the intensification of feudal exploitation and the tyranny of emir's rule provoked various mass disturbances. A large scale uprising broke out under the leadership of peasant Wose when the Emir's tax collectors demanded extra payments.

The situation became very complex in 1916, although the immediate cause of the revolt of 1916 was the call

85. Ibid., p. 289.
for compulsory military service, yet the underlying causes were more important. The basic discontentment was due to the colonial policies of the regime whereby the poor natives, who were in majority, had to bear various economic hardships. However, the resistance from the native peasantry against the colonial and feudal oppression was quite weak and unorganised.

Socio-Cultural Milieu:

Apart from economic difficulties, the Central Asian society had been in a state of cultural stagnation and backwardness since medieval times. In the beginning of the present century the Bokharan state was described as "one of the most degraded places on the face of the earth according to all accounts." Tajiks, who were considered the most advanced and cultured people of Central Asia and had once shared the great heritage of the poets and thinkers like Firdausi, Avicena, Zamani, Saadi, and Rudaki along with the rest of the Persian world had lost many of their sharp contours by this time.

The history of the Khanates, under their feudal lords, was a long chapter of tyranny, barbarianism, fanatisim.

corruption and devastating wars. The Central Asian society was completely untouched by modernism. The situation deteriorated to such an extent that Sadridin Aini, the founder of the post-revolutionary Tajik literature, wrote that "before the revolution a literate man in Tajikistan was as rare as a tree in a desert."

Even the coming of the Russians had a little civilizing influence on the Khanates. The early impact of the Russian rule was mainly economic. The rapidity with which Russian armies had conquered the region made the conquerors more careful and cautious in instituting changes affecting the local culture, fearful of engendering active resentment. Though the economic effect of the Russian colonialism had some associated cultural effect as well which was felt in some regions of Turkestan but the Khanates remained largely untouched by this influence.

Islamic religion held a dominant position in the traditional culture of the sedentary people of Central Asia. Bukhara was regarded as one of the great Islamic centres and all the rulers of the Khanates tried to enforce Islamic practices among their subjects. Many non-Islamic beliefs

and practices of pre-Islamic days, still popular among the Central Asians, were accepted by the clergy as a part of Islam.

The chief instrument of the (Mohammedan) religion for laying spiritual foundations among its followers was its educational system. The schools in this system were the main centres where all ethical and socio-cultural ethos of the passing generation were handed over to the rising one. Therefore, to understand the socio-cultural pattern of the people it is essential to explore the native educational system.

Education - Schools in Central Asia, like in the rest of the Muslim world, were of two types mektabs, the primary schools and madrasas, the higher schools. Both the types of schools were completely controlled by the religious institutions and the priestly class. It was obligatory for every child of six years of age to attend the primary school. Maktabs were found in almost every village of Bukhara and Turkestan. It is interesting to note that despite these schools, there was hardly anyone in the

villages of Central Asia who could read and write. Defective methods of teaching, lack of infrastructure and general neglect of secular education were the main reasons of this disastrous result. Students even after spending five to six years in these primary schools could rarely learn to read or write or to understand the books they had memorised. The mektabs were located mainly in mosques and the priest of the mosque was usually the teacher of the school. The services of these teachers were usually paid for by voluntary offerings from the relatives of their pupils. The subjects of teaching in the Mektabs were always religious scriptures and the students were expected to learn their subject matter by heart. Schools for girls were almost non-existent.

Some of the students after finishing the course in the mektabs went on to the higher native school. Most of the sons of peasants and artisan families could not aspire for advanced education. The higher places of learning were called Madrasas. These schools were maintained and run through the rent of big landed estates attached to them by the rulers or private persons. A mosque was always

89. Ibid., p. 387 ff.
connected with the school. The imam and mueddin of the mosque and same mudaris (teachers) formed the school faculty. All important posts in the administrative hierarchy as well as in the church were filled by the graduates of these madrasas. In the story of his childhood Aini gives an account of the life and curriculum at the madrasa in Bukhara which he attended from 1889-93. The curriculum for these schools was - Arabic, Persian and Turkish languages; philosophy, theology; Arabic law and logic. Rudiments of arithmetic were also taught. A course in 'wordly wisdom' was also an important part of the curriculum. The text books used in these schools belonged to the 15-16th centuries. The teachers of these schools besides having religious and cultural influence also had considerable political influence. Even the most cruel and treacherous of the old Amirs and Khans respected them.

In the beginning, the Russians made no effort to change or influence the native educational system. Gradually, they started realising that if the natives were to be "drawn closer" to their conquerors, these schools have to be dealt with first. Von Kaufman, the

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90. M. Holdsworth, n. 10, p. 35.
first Governor-General of Turkestan, regarded the native schools as against Russian interests, but instead of attempting to abolish them, the Russian authorities decided to follow the policy of calculated neglect which they used in the case of other Muslim institutions as well. The withdrawal of the state support and the end of the former dominant position of the higher Muslim schools in filling public offices did reduce their importance specially in Turkestan. To fill the gap, the Turkestan authorities decided to build Russian public school system in the region. These secular schools failed to attract native students mainly because of the exclusion of Islamic religious education. By the turn of the century, it was decided to reform these Russian schools so as to adapt them to existing native conditions of life. In the reformed schools, Islamic religious instructions were included as a part of the general curriculum. Secular education along with the knowledge of Russian language and arithmetic etc. was being imparted by the Russian teachers whereas the Islamic religious instructions were given by the Mulas specially appointed for the purpose in these schools. 91 The reformed schools were called 'New

Methods' schools. Nonetheless, the old system of Central Asian education of Mektbs and Madrasas continued and the number of these institutions grew considerably over the years. The native children in the 'New Method' schools were very few. Only about two per cent of the students of these schools were native and the number was still smaller at the higher levels. Ninety-five per cent of the pupil were the children of Russian settlers.\textsuperscript{92} Out of 415 students who completed their studies at 'Tashkent teacher's seminars' during twenty-five years from 1879 to 1904, only 65 were natives. Out of these Uzbek, Turks and Tatars constituted only 11 students and the rest 54 were Kazakhs and Kirgizs.\textsuperscript{93} In the entire Turkestane region there were 28 such schools by 1896, 83 in 1906 and 89 in 1911.\textsuperscript{94} The absolute figure of the native students in these schools may not be impressive but few natives who were the first to receive secular education along with the knowledge of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{92} Gavin Hambly, n. 54, p. 223.
  \item \textsuperscript{94} Ibid., p. 217.
\end{itemize}
Russian language through which they could peep into the modern western world, formed the earlier native intelligentsia. By the end of the 19th century many of the 'New Method' schools were being run by the natives themselves. This native intelligentsia tried to modernise the static native culture and more specifically its educational structure by encouraging secular education. The new reformers came to known as Jadidists. However, due to their own limitations arising from the lack of conceptual understanding of the existing situation, they failed to question effectively the institutional and ideological basis of their stagnant society. Though they enjoyed a sizable support among urban professional class but had no following whatsoever in the rural areas. By 1910, the Russian authorities also became greatly apprehensive of the Jadidist movement because of its demands for political reforms and Pan-Turkic inkling. Henceforth, the Tsarist government adopted a negative policy which led to the closer of a large number of New Method schools in 1914.

95. At earlier stages the Emir of Bukhara did not permit to open these reformed schools in his Khanate but later on the Emir also gave permission to establish these schools in his Khanate. There were ten reformed schools in the city of Bukhara by 1914.
In spite of the above mentioned happenings in the field of education, the total number of educated Central Asians remained very small before the revolution. The handful of literate persons were mostly from the rich feudal class. Literacy was almost absent among nomads and women. A census taken in 1897 revealed that 2.3 per cent of the people living in the area now included in Tajikistan were literate - 3.9 per cent of the male population and 0.3 per cent female population. Ten 'New Method' schools consisting of only four grades were organised in the early 20th century in this region. In all by the 1914-15 academic year 369 students were studying in these schools. Not a single girl attended these reformed schools. 96

The poor peasants formed the largest social class in the Khanate. A few landlords, a large and socially powerful group of well-organised clergy and the officials of the Amir formed the privileged class. There was another social group of craftsmen and traders who lived in the cities or big Kishlaks. Families were often very large. Fifteen to sixteen was a normal number of children for one mother to bear. Though she could seldom raise more than half

of them as many young mothers or their babies used to die at an early age. Generally three generations of a family lived together. The women were under a complete subjugation of men. They were not allowed to be seen in the streets without veils. They were obliged to wear paranja, a thick horse hair veil whenever they came out. Marriage was like a simple business transaction with little respectability or sensitivity and not very different from that of cattle. Polygamy and child marriage was common. Though some women managed to get some education but were not allowed to participate in communal life. However, the life of women in the mountains was somewhat easier as they were not required to use the veil all the time and had less restrictions on their movement.

The houses consisted of clusters of dark and cheerless cells surrounded by blind walls to the streets. They used to be very dirty specially during winter months. The rules of hygiene and cleanliness were nearly unknown. The diseases like tuberculosis, malaria, smallpox, cholera and plague

TRADITIONAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

Physical & Economic Parameters

Natural Environment
- Mountainous Rugged Terrain
- Arid Climate
- Limited Cultivable Land

Institutional Structure
- Emir
  - Beys
  - Wahls
  - Chairkars & Mard-i-kars

Technology
- Simple Implements
- Dependency on Irrigation
- Draft Animals
- Human & Animal Refuse Used As Manure
- Low Yields

Backward Economy
- Limited Labour Mobility
- Lack of Diversification

Social Parameters
- Stagnant Social Customs & Institutions
- Overwhelming Rural Population
- Mass Illiteracy
- Low Status & Limited Participation of Women in Production
- Concentration of Wealth With Few and Mass Poverty
- Great Hold of Religious Institutions
- Lack of Secular & Scientific Education
were widespread. Medical services were practically non-existent except for a few quack.98

Music and cheerfulness inside the house were unknown. The only entertainment for the male members outside the home was the performance of *bachas* and the national game of *baigha*.99

In short, Muslim masses in Turkestan and in the Khanates had little exposure to the western and modern ways of life even after the coming in of the Russians. The traditional elite i.e. Ulema continued to enjoy effective control over the strategic institutional structure of the native society. The traditional socio-economic structure as shown in Fig. I acted as an important instrument to thwart any change. Ulema used these traditional structures to block the penetration of all modern influences including those which tried to emerge from within such as the reformist elements under the banner of Jadidists. The revolutionary ferment of the first two decades of the twentieth century, felt so strongly by the Russians did not affect the Central Asian much. The Russian colonial attitude towards socio-cultural institutions of the Muslime was that of non-interference which resulted in strengthening and perpetuation of


99. Ibid., pp. 433-440. *bachas* – the dance performance by boys of adolescent age; *baigha* – a football like game in which a goat is used as a football.
old feudal values on one hand and the cultural aloofness of the Central Asians on the other. The policy of non-interference in the cultural affairs emerged from two basic factors. Firstly, the Tsarist regime, being fully aware of the fact that its army had conquered the area at a fairly rapid speed, moved cautiously in introducing changes affecting the socio-cultural sphere. They feared arousing active resentment. Secondly, the economic interest of the regime had greater priority than its 'civilising mission'. The regime had three main objectives for keeping the area under its political control. These included getting cheap raw-material, having wide market for Russian industrial goods and acquiring new regions for settling peasants. The cruel feudal role of local khans along with their supportive socio-cultural archaic forms were preserved to serve the colonial interests. Innovations were made only in those sectors which could serve some economic, political or military interests of the imperial Russia.

For that matter, mass acculturisation or Russification of the indigenous population was not attempted. So much so, the population of Turkestan was not considered citizens of the empire, hence, were not eligible for military service. The contacts between the Turkestanis
and their more advanced co-religionists of the volga region were also discouraged. The Tsarist regime rejected the claims of the Tatars of this region to extend the jurisdiction of Muslim Spiritual Assembly of Orenburg to Turkestan. Fearing Muslim opposition, even the missionaries of Russian Orthodox Church were not allowed to preach in this region. The socio-cultural backwardness of the society and its degenerating role helped in putting the region more effectively under Russian domination.