CHAPTER -- II

(khalsa)

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II—KHALSA

NATURE OF KHALSA:

The nature of Khalṣa varied from time to time. From 1846 to 1894 A.D., the Dogra Maharajas claimed both proprietorship of land revenue as well as the proprietorship of the whole land of the Valley. In the opening chapter, we have seen that every inch of land of Kashmir was considered by the Dogra Maharajas as their purchased property and, therefore, acted as "farmers working with coolies under a management closely approximating forced labour." The magnitude of the taxes was so gigantic that the peasant was left with no more than one-fourth of his produce. Being the sole owners of land, the Maharajas sometimes alienated the proprietorship of land and sometimes only the proprietorship of revenue of a small portion of the Valley to their family members, kinsmen and collaborators. But the major portion of land always remained under the direct possession of the Maharajas over which they not only enjoyed

1. See, Supra, Chapter, Land Ownership.
2. Wingate, Report, p. 56.
4. For further details, see, Infra, Chapter, Agrarian Taxes.
proprietorship of land but also the proprietorship of revenues. This big area of land over which apart from proprietorship of soil, the Maharajas claimed sole right over its revenues is known as Khalsa in our contemporary sources.

However, after the succession of Maharaja Pratap Singh and the establishment of British Residency in Kashmir in 1885, pressure began to mount on the Maharaja for reforms, which ultimately led to the appointment of two British Officers, namely Andrew Wingate and Walter Hooper Lawrence, as Settlement Officers.

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The State from time immemorial retained a vast chunk of land to itself, the revenues of which were exclusively appropriated by the state and the peasantry at the ratios fixed from time to time. (See, Infra, Chapter on, Agrarian Taxes). These revenues were used by the rulers in running the internal state administration, maintain law and order, use for their military exploits, pay for their officials and so on, because there used to be no other source of income for the state except the land revenue.

Wingate made a thorough study of the land problem and recommended that hereditary occupancy rights with the right to sale, mortgage and transfer be conferred on the peasants holding land at the time of settlement.

In addition, he recommended that there should be collective right of occupancy of the village in grave-yards, threshing floors, ponds and other similar lands as has been entered into village accounts as Shamil-i-Deh at the time of settlement.

But the official machinery was in no way ready for any change in the existing system, and, therefore, opposed Wingate tooth and nail. They also made the peasants to believe that the settlement was harmful for them. Wingate, therefore, had to go back because of this opposition.

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8. Ibid., See also, INA, For. Deptt; Sec., Nos. 183-92, Progs. Feb., 1888; JKA, Pol. & Gen. Deptt; File NO: 45 of 1889; Adm. Rep. 1889-90, p. 37.


Wingate was succeeded by Lawrence who continued his work in spite of strong opposition. Besides other things, he recommended that occupancy rights should be given to the marusi (hereditary) peasants or essamis without the right to sale, mortgage and alienation in undisputed lands.

However, in 1895-96, the nature of Khalsa underwent a change. Now the peasants working on Khalsa land either on hereditary basis or for a pretty long time were given occupancy rights without the right to sell or mortgage it.

In 1933, a revolutionary change occurred in the nature of Khalsa, when the occupancy rights of the peasants were upgraded as ownership rights. Thus now onwards the Khalsa meant that land over which the state enjoyed the proprietorship of land and other revenues. Yet there was still a sizeable area of land especially the uncultivated waste and fallow and newly cultivated land which was the sole property of the Maharaja, and over which the peasants did not enjoy the “malikana rights.”

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11. Ibid., See also, Lawrence, Valley of Kashmir, p. 424.


13. Ibid., pp. 428-32.


15. Even during present times, the lands known as Khalsa Sarkar are not entered in the revenue records in ownership rights of anybody and still continue to be the property of the Government.
REVENUE AND AREA OF KHALSA

The total land revenue yielded by the Khalsa land varied from time to time. On the eve of the establishment of Dogra rule in 1846 A.D., the land revenue of Khalsa land amounted to Rs. 13,00,000. In 1861, we find it getting swelled to Rs. 15,00,000. This increase was the result of the resumption of a large number of Jagir and Muaf grants and the imposition of new taxes by the Dogra Maharajas. In 1871, the assessed revenue of Khalsa land almost doubled as we find the estimated revenue touching the amount of Rs. 27,00,000. The land revenue further dwindled to estimated revenue of Rs. 16,07,542 in 1887. This fall in land revenue amounting to Rs. 1,40,402 was alienated to Raja Ram Singh, Raja Amar Singh, Mian Rajputs and for religious endowments after 1871 and also because owing to oppression, a considerable area of land was deserted by the peasants.

16. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 238.
17. Ibid.
19. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 238.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. See Infra, Chapter, Peasants.
In view of the fact that the *jama* (assessed revenue) of the Khalsa varied between Rs. 15,00,000/- and Rs. 27,00,000/- and the revenue alienated to Jagirdars and revenue-free grantees was not more than Rs. 3,50,000/-, it can be said, therefore, that during the first quarter of the Dogra rule or during the pre-settlement period, not less than three-fourth of the total land revenue of the Valley went to the state treasury.

Immediately after settlement, due to the fixity of tenure, the land revenue of Kashmir began to enhance considerably. In 1902, the total land revenue demand was Rs. 15,26,691/- which increased to Rs. 15,85,593/- in 1903; increasing by Rs. 85,902/- and got further increased to Rs. 18,11,196/- in 1904-5. This increase was mainly due to the reclamation of more and more waste land. The land revenue further increased from Rs. 21,41,977/-

23. Lawrence, *op. cit.*, p. 238. Though the *jama* (assessed revenue) amounted from Rs. 15,00,000/- to Rs. 27,00,000/-, but the *hasil* (revenue collected) never went beyond Rs. 12,00,000/- or Rs. 13,00,000/-. *Ibid.*, pp. 238-39; Also, INA, For. Deptt; Sec. Nos. 87-89, Progs. January, 1853.

24. *Ibid.* The revenue alienated to different Jagirdars amounted to Rs. 2,85,358/- (JKA, Pol. & Gen. Deptt; File NO: 117 of 1896, see for details, Table-I). Under the revenue-free grants (muafis), there was a small number of villages. In 1846, the amount paid as *dharmarth* (charity) to the men of letters amounted to Rs. 64,395/- (INA, For. Deptt; Sec. Nos. 66-70, Progs. March, 1848), which also included the grants paid in terms of cash.


1915-16 to Rs. 44,99,000/- in 1919-20, but got dwindled to Rs. 41,11,732/- in 1926-27. This fall was mainly due to the alienation of land revenue as Jagirs and Muafis, amounting to Rs. 16,310/- in the year 1925-26, besides assigning the additional Jagir compensation of Rs. 3,70,958/- to the Jagirdars in the Kashmir Valley. The revenue got further decreased to Rs. 34,44,354/- in 1938-39, out of which Rs. 8,35,614/- were alienated as Jagirs, muafis and dharmarth. But despite of these alienations, the land revenue undoubtedly increased from Rs. 13,00,000/- in the beginning of our period of study to Rs. 44,99,000/- at the close of our period. It should, however, be noted that the revenue collection never went beyond Rs. 30,00,000/-.

Some information about the area of the Khalsa land is also available to us. Lawrence says that, "the total area of land surveyed by my department amounts to 11,95,555 acres." The area surveyed excluded the Jagir villages of Raja Ram Singh.

References:
32. JKA, For. & Pol. Deptt; File NO: 231/J.F-84 of 1939
34. Ibid.
36. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 239.
and Raja Amar Singh and also a small number of villages held revenue-free (muafi) by other persons. However, out of this area of land only 4,92,117 acres were under cultivation. The considerable portion of land as Khalsa can also be substantiated by the statistical information about the total number of villages during the last decade of the last century of the Dogra period (1887) in Kashmir Valley was 2,487, out of these only 326 villages were held as Jagir. And since Chaks were granted in terms of area of waste land of a village and that the number of villages held revenue free was "small", it cannot be rash to conclude that at the close of the last century, out of 2,487 villages of Kashmir, not less than 2,000 villages must have been held as Khalsa.

After the settlement much waste and fallow land was brought under cultivation so much so that the cultivable land of Khalsa increased from 4,92,117 acres in 1889-90 to 8,74,654 acres.

37. Ibid. Also, JKA, Pol. & Gen. Deptt; File NO: 7 of 1890.
38. Ibid., p. 240.
40. JKA, Pol. & Gen. Deptt; File NO: 117 of 1896. For full details, see, Table-I.
41. Since the villages held by revenue-free grantees were "small" in number (Lawrence, op. cit., p. 239), the number of such villages must not have exceeded more than hundred villages.
42. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 240.
in 1926-27, which further increased to about 9,49,000 acres at the close of our period. It was thus because of this increase in the area of cultivable land in Khalsa that the land revenue of Kashmir, which was at the lowest ebb at the beginning of our period, enhanced from Rs. 13,00,000/- to Rs. 44,99,000/- at the close of our period of study.

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT AND COLLECTION IN KHALSA:

The pattern of assessment and collection of land revenue of Khalsa land varied from time to time, rather it was constantly changing. Having a strong conviction that the land of Kashmir had been purchased by them, the Dogras believed that they should make the best bargain out of it. Till 1859, Khalsa land was parcelled out among the kardars, when they were made the Revenue farmers, thus becoming "the land agents of the state with very large powers" and the land was farmed out to them on contract. It was the duty of the kardars to get the largest possible amount of grain for the state. The kardar divided the land among the peasants on the basis of nafre. Once the kardar had distributed the lands, he

46. See, Chapter, Land Ownership.
47. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 402.
49. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 402.
was helped by Sheqdar and Sazawa.\(^\text{50}\) When all this was done, the kardar would let loose the reign of terror over the innocent peasants. It is to be noted here that when the harvest time came, a regiment known as Nizamat Faltan\(^\text{51}\) moved out into the villages to enforce the State’s claim, and this regiment was supplemented by sepoys from the regular army\(^\text{52}\).

In 1860, the petty kardars were replaced by Tehsildars.\(^\text{53}\)

At the same time in 1860, the state resorted to the practice of farming out land to Chakladars\(^\text{54}\) “who robbed the state and the cultivator alike”.\(^\text{55}\) The land was farmed out to them for a period of three years.\(^\text{56}\) But they proved to be the worst type of speculators and where they could not come to terms with the state,

\(^{50}\) Ibid., Also, INA, For. Deptt; Sec. Nos. 239-40, Progs, Jan., 1883.

\(^{51}\) Saif-ud-Din, op. cit., Vol. X, f. 72; INA, Charles Girdleston, Memorandum on Kashmir, p. 9; See also, Lawrence op. cit., p. 420; JKA, Pol. & Gen. Deptt; File NO: 185/H-71 of 1906.


The total strength of the Nizamat Faltan in 1884 was 7,429 sepoys. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 420n.

\(^{53}\) Bates, Gazetteer, p. 100.

\(^{54}\) G.K.L. p. 109; Lawrence, op. cit., p. 403; Also, Sukhdev Singh Charak, Life and Times of Maharaja Ranbir Singh, p. 121.

\(^{55}\) Lawrence, op. cit., p. 403.

\(^{56}\) Qamar-ud-Din, Diary, Vol. VII, ff. 5 and 156.
the Chakla was held as aman (on a non-contractual basis) and made the state to take its share of actual produce of the village. However, from 1865, the extra traks per kharwar were reduced only to one trek from two traks for all Pandits and Pirzadas. From 1869, the state established the practice of contracting with Mughaddams or Zamindars, and only two traks instead of four were levied. In 1873-74, the village contracts were divided up into cultivator's accounts and either cash or kind was taken, but due to the bad harvest in 1875, state took two shares of the produce, leaving only one share with the peasant. In the meanwhile, in 1873-74, the state made futile attempt to establish a three year "raiyatwari" settlement. This was not liked by the chain of middlemen and rapacious officials whose privileges were hurt. When this could not properly work out, fresh contracts were entered into either with Mughaddams, Kardars or cultivators in 1875, and two traks per kharwar were again added.

57. The Chakla comprised of three to four villages and the whole arable land was divided into numerous Chaklas.

58. INA, Administration of J & K State, pp. 5-7; Lawrence, op. cit., p. 403.


60. Ibid., p. 63.

61. Ibid.

62. INA, For Deptt, Sec, Nos. 239-40, Progs. Jan, 1883; Wingate, op. cit., p. 63; Lawrence, op. cit., p. 403.
to the assessment, besides an aggregate tax of Rs. 9-12-0 percent and this system continued up to 1877-79 when a disastrous famine struck the Valley, the introduction of a new system was felt necessary and the state, therefore, embarked upon a new method of assessment and collection of land revenue, wrongly denominated as the "Assamivar Khewat". It does not seem beside the point to mention as to how the khewat of 1880 was worked out.

First, it was ascertained at to what crops were raised in a grain village. Then on the basis of the produce of the previous three years, average of each crop was struck. The practice was to record the gross produce, take one-half of the government share, add the "Siwai Trak" or four traks per kharwar. Then these kharwars of sixteen traks were converted into the kharwars of fifteen traks (Kachcha kharwar) and the number of kharwars thus obtained was then commuted into money at standard prices. An illustration will suffice to show the prices of some important products which were fixed as under:

63. Ibid.
64. INA, For. Deptt; Sec. E; Nos. 51-52, Progs. March, 1883; JKA, Grain Control in Kashmir, pp. 1-17.

The Assamivar Khewat which was nominally the cash assessment and supposedly on holdings, was in reality made on villages.

66. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 403.
67. Wingate, op. cit., p. 64.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid., pp. 64-65.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>15 Trak per Kharwar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1866-1885</td>
<td>Jaw</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mung</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1866-1879 Shali and Maki Said to have been no fixed price but the accounts generally show Rs. 2/- per kharwar of 15 traks.

1880-1885 do- 2 0 0 15 traks per kharwar

1866-1872 Cotton 18 0 0 -do-

1873-1885 do- 14 0 0 -do-

These prices continued to regulate the transactions year by year between the state and the cultivator.

Taking now a village at random, it will be understood how the khewat was arrived at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gross produce in 16 trak kharwars</th>
<th>Govt. share after adding traki in 15 trak kharwars</th>
<th>Government share calculated in chilki rupees at standard prices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crops</td>
<td>Kh.</td>
<td>Tr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaw</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tilgogul</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kapas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mung</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shali etc.</td>
<td>1,438</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: 1,447</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

70. Ibid.
Thus, say, a given village was assessed at Rs. 1,844/-.

But the transaction "Village Cash Assessment" of the term Assamiwar khewat should not mislead us to believe that the revenue was exclusively paid in cash. Instead it rested with Hakim-i-Ala how much of the assessment he would take in kind and how much in cash 71. The system of annually settling the demand in kind and cash was known as mujwaza 72. It was here that the peasant suffered because the price of Shali which was the staple crop of Kashmir was fixed very low 73. Before this khewat of 1880, the prices of shali and maize were the same 74 and the cultivator could pay the state demand either in shali or maize without any difficulty. But after the khewat, the prices of the maize fell and the government changed the commutation rate and the prices for maize per kharwar was fixed at 15 annas, while for shali it was fixed between 16 to 17 annas 75, and the government decided the cultivator would receive a credit of Rs. 1-4-0 per kharwar of shali and maize.

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73. INA, For. Deptt. Sec. E., Nos. 39-40; Progs, March, 1883; JKA, Grain Control in Kashmir, pp. 1-17; William Digby, Condemned Unheard, p. 69; Wingate, op. cit., pp. 73-75; Lawrence, op. cit., pp. 403-7; Younghusband, Kashmir, pp. 173-74. See also, Hassan, Tarikh-i-Hassen, Vol. II, p. 840; JKA, Pol. & Gen. Deptt; File NO: 50 of 1919.

74. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 405.

75. Ibid.
from the revenue which fell due to the cultivators. This change put them to loss and this innovation was termed as *kasri nirkh* 76. Naturally when the cash was converted into kind, the peasant had to part with a major part of his produce and surrender it to the state. In this way the system helped a fairly well-to-do village or peasant in laying by enough *shalli* to live upon, while on the contrary a poor village or peasant deprived of even what was needed, for his bare subsistence, lived in penury and indigence.

Not satisfied with this manipulation, the cultivator was also made to pay the carriage charges by means of fraudulent devices. When bringing *shalli* to the city at the rate of Rs. 2/- *chilki*, the cultivator was credited Rs. 1/14/- only and showed *annas* two per *kharwar* as carriage charges 77, and this also put the cultivator at great loss.

In 1881, when the harvest was very good, the government again increased the assessment by Rs. 8-9-0 percent; the main increase being for a pony tax of Rs. 6-13-0 required to be paid on ponies 78. However, in 1885, this tax was reverted nearly to the assessment of 1830, and this settlement became the basis for Lawrence, "This settlement of 1880", says Lawrence, "is practically

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77. G.K.L., pp. 89 and 109; INA, For. Deptt; Sec. E; Nos, 233-40; Frauds Jan., 1883; INA, Mr. Henry, Report on Kashmir, pp. 7-8.

the only financial foundation upon which I have had to work and the cultivators whose names were entered into the papers of 1880 A.D., are regarded as having stronger claim to the occupancy right in land than those who left their villages in the great famine and have since returned.\(^79\)

It should, however, be noted that the assamiwar khewat of 1880 was worked out in a very brief and expeditious manner.\(^80\) Just an average of previous three years was roughly estimated and in order to cover the risk of loss to the Government, more than thirty percent was added to this estimated figure,\(^81\) a figure beyond the capacity of the cultivators. To apply the general criteria for all the villages without properly evaluating the actual conditions in the villages separately, was unjust. Moreover, the assessing officers hardly bothered to distribute the revenue of the villages to the respective holdings, instead left this job to the Lambardars and Fatwaris who managed to spare their holdings from the assessment and conspired to lay more burdens on their opponents.\(^82\) Those officers who were strict, made the cultivators to pay the revenue by selling their sheep

\(^79\) Lawrence, *op. cit.*, p. 403.
\(^80\) Ibid.
\(^81\) Ibid.
\(^82\) Ibid., p. 404.
and cattle. This forced the cultivators to desert their fields and migrate to other villages favourably assessed or just take shelter by working on the estate of some big holders having a lot of influence.

Moreover, the officers would collect the revenue by telling lies and would falsely assure the cultivators that a part of their revenue would be given back in the form of seeds, etc. Besides, the mujwaza, already noted, had its own drawbacks. When the collectors received the government share both in kind and cash, they deposited the portion of cash with the government and retained the kind for themselves showing it as bagi (arrear) against the cultivator, and this bagi would get accumulated year after year, as these corrupt officers recorded these arrears in their revenue register. An illustration will be suffice in substantiating this fact. Lawrence while making the assessment of a village Mahnoor, was able to detect that there was a bagi of...
Rs. 8,159/- against this village. But after digging into the records, he was able to find the village had to pay only Rs. 821/-, while it had already paid Rs. 973/-, Rs. 52/- more than the due. But still the village was in the list of bagidars.

In 1882, the state resorted to the system of Izatboli (the device of auctioning villages) which brought about disastrous results to the state as well as the peasant, both of whom had good reasons to mourn and deplore the consequences. When it was known to the interested people that a village was to be auctioned, the "greedy Pandits, boatmen and snuff-sellers" would rush to join the bid. It is to be noted here that fictitious and impossible revenue demands were set which were too difficult to achieve; yet attempts were made to realize these. After the crops were surveyed, only by eye, nazardid, the villages under this system were auctioned out to the highest bidders, known as Mustajirs, who after wringing of whatever they could from the poor peasants, did not pay even a single penny to the state.

87. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 448.
88. Supra, fn. 86.
89. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 404.
90. Saif-ud-Din, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 37; INA, For. Deptt., Sec; E; Nos. 239-40; Progs. Jan., 1883; INA, Mr. Henvy, op. cit., pp. 7-9; G.K.L., pp. 108-9; Bates, op. cit., p. 97; Wingate, op. cit., p. 72; Lawrence, op. cit., p. 420.
91. INA, Mr. Henvy, op. cit., pp. 7-8; G.K.L., pp. 89 and 109.
92. Ibid., Also, For. Deptt., Sec; Nos. 172-73; Progs. March, 1894; JKA, Pol. & Gen. Deptt., File NO: 457/R-31 of 1891.
In short, the method of land revenue assessment and collection during the pre-settlement period was very defective which weighed heavily on the poor peasants.

Needless to repeat, no peasant, not even the Khalsa peasant could claim any occupancy or proprietary rights in land. However, in comparison to the peasants working under the Jagirdars, Chakdars and Muafidars, the condition of Khalsa peasants was extremely bad. In the absence of anyone to protect them from official oppression, they were not only subjected to a number of legal and illegal taxes (Koul and Rasum), but what is more that they were exclusively called upon to bear the responsibility of hated corvee (forced labour) or begar. Leaving the detailed discussion of the condition of peasantry to the last chapter; here it is sufficient to say that the official oppression, the large-scale migration of the peasantry from Khalsa to the lands of the privileged right-holders causing serious decline in the revenues of the state. It also gave birth to a new landlord class to whom the peasants sold their "shadowy rights" in land with the hope that they would be protected from official oppression.

93. For details see, Infra, Chapter, Agrarian Taxes.
94. For full details, see, Infra, Chapter, Peasantry.
95. INA, Peasant Position, pp. 1-5; Wingate, op. cit., pp. 78-79; INA, For. Deptt; Sec. E; Nos. 30-31; Progs, Jan., 1904.
96. INA, For. Deptt; Sec; E. K.W; Nos, 106-110, Progs. Feb., 1890; INA, Peasant Position, pp. 1-6; Wingate, op. cit., pp. 91-92; Lawrence, op. cit., p. 414.
As already discussed in detail, under the great pressure, the Maharaja undertook the land settlement operations under A. Wingate and W. R. Lawrence. After the settlement the peasants who were possessing land at that time, were given permanent hereditary occupancy rights, non-alienable and non-ejectable so long as they agreed to pay the revenue. The settlement also either did away with the fraudulent and fictitious arrears or reduced them considerably. Not only this, over the waste and fallow land, which was in abundance, the Khalsa peasants were given priority to acquire this land than others. But the most important thing was the fixity of tenure which made the peasants somewhat confident and also abolishing Gilgit begar, both of which had compelled the peasants to take to their heels and get refuge either under some influential persons or to take recourse to Indian plains. The fixity of tenure, as made by Lawrence, gave some stability to the assessment and collection process more especially after the grant of proprietary rights in 1933 till the end of our period.

97. See, Supra, fn. 8, 12 and 13.
98. Lawrence, op. cit., pp. 448-50.
100. For full information, see Lawrence, op. cit., pp. 433-38.
101. INA, Peasant Position, pp. 1-6.
102. See, Supra, fn. 14.
REVENUE MACHINERY IN KHALSA:

There was an elaborate revenue machinery devised to ensure adequate cultivation of land and collection of state dues from the khalsa land. Upto 1860, it were the kardars who were responsible for cultivating the land and collecting state share. Each kardar had under him two or three parganas and it was his duty to get the largest possible amount of grain for the state. Every year the kardar would arrange for the cultivation of the estate. After the kardar had made annual distribution of the land, the village passed into the hands of a person known as Shaqdar whose duty was to sit in the village and watch the crops. The office of Shaqdar was indispensable as it was the qhallabakshi system that obtained in Kashmir for a long time. In a large village, there would be several Shaqdaras, one to each threshing floor. The Shaqdar received eight kharwars of shali from the state and took as his perquisites about twelve kharwars from the villagers. Over the Shaqdaras, was an official


104. Ibid., see also, INA, Charles Girdleston, Memorandum on Kashmir, p. 8; INA, For. Deptt; Sec. Nos. 172-73, Progs. March, 1848.

105. INA, Charles Girdleston, op. cit., pp. 8-9; Bates, op. cit., p. 97; Lawrence, op. cit., p. 402.

106. INA, For. Sec. No. 68, Progs. March, 1848. In Kashmir from time immemorial up to the village cash assessment of 1880, the qhallabakshi(bstal) system or crop-sharing was the mode of assessment and collection even for the "cash crops" like cotton, saffron and tobacco. For full details, see, INA, D. K. Lal, op. cit., pp. 1-20.

107. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 402.

108. Ibid.,
known as Sazawol. There was one Sazawol to about every ten villages. His duties were to inspect the Shaqdar and to report it to his kardar. He was paid Rs. 2 per mensum. However, he was also paid by the villagers and extorted money from the Shaqdar. There were many other petty officials like Tarazadar, Harkara and Doom. Tarazadar was meant to weigh the government share and was notorious for cheating the peasants. Harkara and Doom were to look after the revenue interests of the state.

110. Ibid., Also, Bates, op. cit., p. 97.
111. INA, For., Deptt. Sec. E; Nos., 239-40; Progs. Jan., 1883; INA, Mr. Henvey, op. cit., pp. 7-11; Thorp, op. cit., p. 50; Bates, op. cit., p. 97.
112. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 420.
115. INA, C. Girdleston, op. cit., p. 8; Bates, op. cit., p. 97.

"Most of the Tarazudars were dishonest, who by a turn of the wrist added a considerable amount to the weighment, and thus received more from the cultivators by fraudulent practices." Lawrence, op. cit., p. 411.

116. In addition to their police services, the Harkara and Doom had some revenue functions as well. Every member of the Harkara’s family used to be a Harkara. Thorp, op. cit., p. 52; See also, Bazaz, Inside Kashmir, p. 62.
In 1861, the kardars were replaced by the Tehsildars. Initially, Tehsildar had under him two to five paraganas but subsequently uniformity was introduced in the jurisdiction of each Tehsildar, when Kashmir was divided into Tehsils each under a Tehsildar. The Tehsildar was assisted by one or two kardars who were subsequently renamed as Naib-Tehsildars.

The Tehsildar was the pivot of the land revenue administration of the state. He was primarily a fiscal officer and his most important duty was to ensure revenues of his tehsil. He was supposed to ensure greater cultivation of land for which he had to see that canals were cleared and excavated in time, and that all land was cultivated. "The Tehsildar rarely moved out", says Lawrence, "except at the time of ploughing for the autumn.

118. Thorp, op. cit., p. 50.
120. Till late when the education was rare in the Valley of Kashmir, the petty kardars were working under Tehsildars after 1860 (Thorp, op. cit., p. 50). It was only when people got educated and passed their High Schools, were trained in the Settlement Department and then entered in the list of Naib-Tehsildars (Lawrence, op. cit., p. 422). It is obvious that the petty kardars might have been renamed as Naib-Tehsildars till the new educated people got their entry in the Revenue Department.
121. INA, For. Deptt; B; Pol; E; Nos. 52-63, Progs, Oct., 1883; INA, For Deptt; Sec. Nos. 239-40, Progs, Jan., 1883; See also, Thorp, op. cit., p. 50; Lawrence, op. cit., p. 420.
122. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 423.
crops when it was necessary to urge the villagers to cultivate. It was also his duty to see that the peasants do not desert the land. As a matter of fact when the flight of the peasantry of a particular village or tehsil became universal, the Tehsildar stood revealed as a bad revenue officer and he would be removed or transferred to other tehsil. It was also the responsibility of the Tehsildar to keep a proper record of the collections made and the expenditures incurred. From 1880, the position of the Tehsildar further enhanced when under the "village cash assessment" he was authorized to distribute the assessed revenue into cash and kind. This provided an enormous source of peculation to the Tehsildar. It was only during the times when the land was farmed out that the position of the Tehsildar suffered a considerable erosion.

For ensuring the efficient performance of his duty, the Tehsildar, besides his kardars/Naib-Tehsildars, Qanunqoes, Patwars and Muqaddams, was supported by his sepoys, as each Tehsildar had from two hundred to four hundred sepoys under him.

123. Ibid., p. 420.
124. Ibid. See also, Lawrence, The India We Served, pp. 127-128; INA, C. Girdleston, op. cit., pp. 9-10; J. L. K. Jalali, Economics of Foodgrains in Kashmir, pp. 37-39.
125. INA, For. Deptt.; Gen. B; Nos. 93-100, Progs. Feb., 1879; Lawrence, op. cit., p. 420.
126. See, Supra, fn. 71 and 72.
127. INA, For. Deptt.; Sec. Nos. 239-40, Progs. Jan., 1883; INA, Mr. Henry, op. cit., pp. 7-9; Lawrence, op. cit., pp. 422-23.
His position was further reinforced by the judicial powers which he enjoyed empowering him to award punishments up to one month's imprisonment and ten rupees fine. It is also interesting to note that a Tehsildar always kept with him in the tehsil a number of relatives and friends, known as Mutabirs, whom he delegated the duties of his office. As these men received no pay from the state, they took it from the villagers, and, "the more friends and relatives the Tehsildar had, the worse was it for the villagers".

No Tehsildar, as a rule, was allowed to serve at one place for a long time. They were transferred or even removed at any time. According to Lawrence, the uncertainty of the tenure of the Tehsildars was an administrative folly which bred corruption among the Tehsildars.

The Tehsildar was a man on small pay as he was paid not more than rupees thirty per month. However, the post of Tehsildar, like other posts in the Revenue Department, was not valued for its...
pay rather for its perquisites. When the land revenue was collected on the basis of ghalla bakshi system, Tehsildar and his subordinates had a big source of peculation by defrauding both the state and the cultivator. That is why we find the state abolishing the system and replacing it either by Izatboli (farming out system) or the so-called "village cash assessment." The "village cash assessment" of 1880 which gave the Tehsildar arbitrary powers to divide the land revenue of the villages into kind and cash, provided enough sources of peculation to him. In short, it can be said, the Tehsildar had enormous powers which in alliance with his superiors he could misuse and accumulate enormous riches at the cost of the state and the people. According to Lawrence, small pay, uncertainty of tenure, and the absence of any system of pensions were some factors which bred corruption among the Tehsildars.

134. Ibid., See also, INA, C. Girdleston, op. cit., pp. 3-9; E. F. Neve, op. cit., p. 73; Youngusband, op. cit., pp. 177-79.

135. See, Supra, fn. 88.

136. Ibid.

137. See, Supra, fn. 65 and 71.

138. The peasants were extorted from Rs. 70/- to Rs. 90/- per head so as to get exemption from the inhuman beqar. INA, For. Deptt.; Sec. E; Nos. 295-300, Progs, Feb., 1891; INA, For. Deptt.; Sec. E; Nos. 196-211, Progs, Dec. 1890; G.K.L, p. 106; Lawrence, op. cit., p. 413; Knight, op. cit., pp. 69-70.

139. Ibid.

140. Lawrence, op. cit., pp. 422-23.
After the settlement, especially after 1900 A.D., onwards, the position and powers of Tehsildar got enhanced considerably and his jurisdiction extended from revenue to other fields as well. First of all, in order to make them worthy of work, they were given proper training in the settlement work \(^{141}\) which, in the later stage, was taken up by the retired Tehsildars themselves. Besides, giving the power to hear cases of evasion of the Kuth Root Rules \(^{142}\), the Tehsildars were given the power of inspecting the educational institutions within their jurisdiction. They were also given the judicial, civil and criminal powers besides their revenue powers and hear the cases of different nature \(^{143}\), though a controversy arose on abolishing these powers. However, the Maharaja allowed the continuance of these judicial and criminal powers \(^{144}\). Moreover, the peasants returning back from plains had to seek certificates from the Tehsildars Mugaddam and the Patwari for the repossession of land \(^{145}\), but this was

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144. *INA, For. Deptt; Sec. F.s Nos. 295-300, Frogs, Feb., 1891.*
mostly misused by these officials and extorted huge sums of money from these peasants. The Wazir-i-Wazarat whose duty was the custody of grains earlier, was now entrusted to the Tehsildars and Lambardars, which, too, bred corruption for them.

The more powers a Tehsildar got, the more corrupt, dishonest and fraudulent he became. This can be substantiated by the fact that by using their influence, they acquired lands without seeking any consent of the zamindars and thus became landgrabbers themselves. Sometimes they fraudulently entered lands belonging to one into the settlement papers of the other. For instance, the village Daunsu of Baramulla belonging to one was entered in the name of somebody else by a Tehsildar. Not only this, they often interfered with the Jagir villages and pressed the tenants of the Jagir for begar. For instance, the villagers of Jagir village in Sopore belonging to Raja Raghunath Singh were pressed for begar by the Tehsildar; but the Maharaja, through a telegramme, prohibited this.

149. JKA, Pol. & Gen. Deptt; File NO: 122 of 1896.
151. JKA, Pol. & Gen. Deptt; File NO: 181/L-78 of 1912.
It should, however, be noted that when the illegal exactions of these revenue officials headed by Tehsildars touched the heights, the Government had no alternative left but to take some stern action. So the Revenue Minister, in 1918, visited different places of the Valley, heard the people and then suspended some revenue officials on spot. Besides, this suspension, he also recommended to the Governor of Kashmir for an immediate action to be taken against some other officials, who were transferred from one place to the other.

After the bestowal of ownership rights on the peasants in land in 1933, the powers of the Tehsildar simultaneously increased when in 1937, he was entrusted to realize repatriation charges from the persons going on pilgrimage on government expenses, as land revenue arrears. They were also given the


right of vote to the Praja Sabha along with other revenue officials like Zaildars, Safedposhes, Lambardars etc. Besides, the Tehsildars were also made the Chairmen of Town Area Committees which worked under the respective Tehsildars, the main function being to make improvements in the areas and make adequate water supplies available.

For maintaining revenue records so as to facilitate safe collection of land revenues, the Dogras maintained the office of Patwari which bequethed to them from their predecessors. In each village there was one Patwari who was paid by the peasants. Besides maintaining revenue record of the village, the Patwari, along with the Mugaddam distributed land revenue among the peasants. He was also a co-partner to the Mugaddam in distributing relief measures among the peasantry, which were generally misappropriated by them. The Patwari has always been notorious and so is echoed by our contemporaries:

"It would be a great help if I could get hold of the original Tehsil accounts for the last few years, instead of being left to plunder among the scraps of paper, a

Fatwari reluctantly produces from the folds of his garments, and of which I am told he has seldom less than three editions, one for himself, which may be supposed to be near the truth, one for the Tehsildar, and another for the villagers, the two latter being prepared with a view to convincing each side of the excellent bargain he has secured.

However, after the settlement, the revenue officials (Tehsildars, Mugaddams, Fatwaris) got less chances of peculation and manipulation due to the fixity of land tenure system and revenue demand. The Mugaddam having been paid five percent instead of two percent and the Fatwari two percent of the land revenue felt somehow satisfied and this led, to some extent, to the stoppage of rasums, perquisites and free purveyance for the chain of officials who acted as parasites on the caracass of the deceased revenue system existing before the settlement. Not only this, the position and prestige of the Fatwari also strengthened by and large after settlement. As already seen, the peasants returning from the plains had to get a certificate from the Fatwari in order to get the repossession of land which provided great chances of peculation for him. At the same time, his pay was enhanced to an average of Rs. 10/- per month.

160. Wingate, op. cit., p. 49; Lawrence, op. cit., p. 407.
161. Knight, op. cit., pp. 60-70; See also, Census, 1941, p. 94.
163. JKA, Pol. & Gen. Deptt; File NO: 77/F-100 of 1906.
should, however, be noted that the appointment of Patwari from 1906 onwards was made by the Governor in those tehsils or villages which were not under settlement operations but where the settlement was going on, their appointment was made by the Settlement Officer. It may be mentioned here that in spite of their enhanced pay, they continued to extort money from the oppressed peasantry, resulting in the suspension of some by the Revenue Minister in 1918.

After the upheaval of 1931 and the recommendations of the Glancy Commission of 1932, most of the Hindu Patwaris, after retirement, were replaced by the Muslim Patwaris and their duties with regard to collection of land revenue were clearly laid down, and so as to bring the Patwaris up to the mark, a Patwar Training School was established at the close of our period of study where they got adequate training.

Last but not the least revenue functionary of the period was the Lumbardar, commonly known as Muqaddam. He was invariably a peasant having comparatively better socio-

164. Ibid.
165. See Supra, fn. 152 and 153.
166. JKA, For. & Pol. Deptt; File NO: 113/P, S-221 of 1932.
economic position. This qualification was indispensable for ensuring collection of heavy revenues from the oppressed peasantry. Theoretically, the position of the Mugaddam was not hereditary, but practically the office bequeathed from father to son. True, it was a matter to be decided by the villagers themselves.

While the Fatwari was mainly directed towards the revenue records of a village, the Mugaddam was chiefly concerned with its collection. When the chali batal system was abolished, the land revenue was contracted with the Mugaddams and it was their duty to distribute it among the peasants and collect it.

Apart from his principal functions of collecting the land revenue, the Mugaddam had certain subsidiary duties. For instance, with the cooperation of the Fatwari, he distributed and stood surety for the repayment of the tukhmi musada, which never reached the peasants but was appropriated between them and left the burden of arrears against the cultivators in the

170. For details, See Infra, Chapter, Peasantry.
172. See, Supra, fn. 94.
173. INA, C. Girdleston, op. cit., p. 8; Thorp, op. cit., p. 50; Knight, op. cit., pp. 64-65.
174. See, Supra, fn. 93 and 94.
175. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 407-8.
Likewise, the villages supposed to be the sakim-ul-hal (poor) and unable to pay revenue, were exempted from the revenue payment. But only those villages which were well off and able to pay their revenue, were included in this list by means of a secret understanding between the Tehsildar, Mugaddam and Patwari. Such a village paid seventy percent of its revenue, the remaining thirty percent was appropriated by these revenue officials. The Mugaddam was also to enlist and supply coolies to assist the revenue officials and had also to impress labour for begar. It was he who often received the pay for these coolies and, "how much he retained as his dastur, and how much he hands over to the unfortunate coolies and farmers, it is difficult to say". He also was to look after the officials and visitors who entered the village within his jurisdiction.

The condition of a village, in the Valley of Kashmir at any rate, much depended on the character of its Mugaddam, and the post was sought after. In what way he could be a useful

176. Ibid.
177. Ibid.
178. Ibid.
179. Thorp, op. cit., p. 50; Knight, op. cit., p. 64.
180. Ibid.
181. Saif-ud-Din, op. cit., Vol. IV, f. 21; Bates, op. cit., pp. 113-14; Knight, op. cit., p. 64.
man to his village, was a striking instance of the extraordinary corruptness of Kashmir administration. It appears that if the Mugaddam was an influential person, and could hold his own with his superiors, the village was to be prosperous, and the sign of prosperity was to be gigantic indebtedness. The more flourishing the village, the more helplessly bankrupt is the state. There were several causes for the paradoxical state of things, but the following will be suffice as an illustration.

A powerful Mugaddam never rendered the state its dues. He bribed the officials above him to leave his village in peace. He and the assamis entered into collusion with the Tehsildar. Instead of paying the full revenue to the state, they allowed heavy arrears of revenue to be entered against the village; while one half of this amount was secretly handed over to the Tehsildar as an honorarium for his leniency.

182. INA, For., Deptt.; Sec. Nos. 239-40; Frogs, Jan. 1883; INA, Mr. Henry, op. cit., pp. 5-11; G.K.L. p. 109; Knight, op. cit., p. 65.
183. Knight, op. cit., p. 65.
185. How a strong Mugaddam was a boon for his peasants, who while entering into secret deals with the officials, threw the burden of his village on some other village having a weak Mugaddam. JKA, Gen. Deptt.; (FR), File NO: 173-A of S. 1939; JKA, Gen. Deptt.; (FR), File NO: 1080/Q-R of S. 1940; See also, Wingate, op. cit., pp. 61-64; Lawrence, op. cit., pp. 445-47; Knight, op. cit., pp. 64-65.
186. INA, For., Deptt.; Sec. Nos. 239-40; Frogs, Jan. 1883. See also, INA, Mr. Henry, Report on Kashmir.
187. Ibid., Also, Knight, op. cit., pp. 64-65.
A weak Muqaddam could not contrive this. It seems that under him, "the payments were heavier, arrears fewer, and the assamis crowned beneath extortionate demands."\(^{188}\)

Though the ejectment right was exclusively vested with the state, yet the revenue officials like Lambardars, themselves as land grabbers, ejected the zamindars from their possessions for personal gains.\(^{189}\) Receiving very low remuneration of two percent,\(^{190}\) they were enhanced by five percent after settlement,\(^{191}\) which, too, did not stop their corrupt devices. Their pay, therefore, was further enhanced to eight percent in 1907.\(^{192}\)

After 1895–96, not only their remuneration got enhanced but their powers also extended considerably. Besides functioning in Khalsa lands, they were also appointed in the Main Jaqir villages\(^{193}\) which increased their influence more than before.

At the same time, they were also made bound to assist the Forest

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\(^{188}\) Ibid.

\(^{189}\) Admn. Rep. 1889–90, pp. 53–54; Lawrence, op. cit., p. 431

\(^{190}\) Knight, op. cit., pp. 63–66.

\(^{191}\) Admn. Rep. 1889–90, p. 60; Lawrence, op. cit., p. 447.

\(^{192}\) JKA, Pol. & Gen. Deptt; File NO: 45/H-92 of 1907.

\(^{193}\) JKA, Pol. & Gen. Deptt; File NO: 76 of 1896.
Officers in the prevention of the forests from any damage
done by fire, etc. Not only this, he too, had to give certificates
to the peasants returning back from outside Valley for the
repossession of land, which also provided great chances of
corruption, peculation and extortion for the Muqaddams. Enhancing
their powers further, the Muqaddams in collaboration with the
Zaildars were empowered to cremate or bury the bodies of the
persons meeting any accidental death without waiting for police.
Moreover, in 1937-38, they were given the right to vote for Praja
Sabha which, undoubtedly, increased their prestige and position.
As already stated, the post of Lemberdar was of hereditary nature,
but now their hereditary position was abolished at the end of our
period of study and the task was left to the people to elect them
democratically, immediately after 1947 when Kashmir became free
from the yoke of the Dogras.

To conclude, it is clear that all the revenue officials,
big or small, were corrupt and fraudulent and "lived free on
villagers on whom they levied exactions in the form of systematic
toll". Most of them worked in numerous villages where land-

194. JKA, Pol. & Gen. Deptt; File NO: 45 of 1897.
196. JKA, Pol. & Gen. Deptt; File NO: 158/P-70 of 1916.
holders, contractors, rich people and even bankers lived and had a common vested interest of exploiting the ignorance of the helpless peasant. It is surprising that they forgot the oppressed and harassed peasantry was their own bretheren, instead they had a strong tendency to oppress the peasantry, force them to desert their lands which in turn were grabbed by these officials. In fact Lawrence, during the last decade of the last century, opposed giving of right of sale and mortgage to the Zamindars, as had been proposed by Wingate; merely because the revenue officials like Lambardars, even if a Muslim, could be able to purchase lands from all directions. Today even in the contemporary period of history, how prophetic appear the words of Lawrence when one observes that the official corruption continues unabated with a change in its form and content, even though Muslims have replaced the non-Muslims and that the peasants have become the masters of their lands and live like free men with their fundamental rights protected under the constitution.

200. JKA, Pol. & Gen. Deptt; File NO: 34/P-35 of 1913.
201. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 431.