Kashmir was and is still an agricultural State. The fertile soil and abundance of water supply has made agriculture an easy means of sustenance. So from earliest times agriculture has been the principal means of livelihood to the majority of the populace. The agricultural productions did not only provide all the food grains for the people of the province but also large quantities of raw material in the shape of cotton, oil seeds, saffron and other crops, on which depended the trade and commerce of the valley.

Moreover, land revenue was the main source of state income. Any increase in the State expenditure generally affected the rate of land revenue. Thus the condition of the peasantry was closely related to the rate of revenue assessment and the mode of taxation. Under the benevolent rulers like Avantivarman (855–83) and Zainul Abidin (1420–70), who encouraged the development of agriculture and carried out irrigation works on large scale, peasants were most contented but under the cruel and oppressive rulers they were the worst sufferers. To know
the life and conditions of the peasantry, one has to study different methods of land revenue assessment and taxation policy in Kashmir at different stages of its history.

To understand the agrarian system of Kashmir during the period under study, it has been studied under the following heads:

1) Classification of cultivable soil and the system of land measurement.
2) Agricultural implements.
3) Agricultural crops and their cultivating techniques.
4) Revenue administration — units and functions.
5) Land revenue, other cesses and perquisites.
6) Jagir and Dharmarth grants and the ownership of land.
7) Position of peasantry.
8) State policy towards the peasants.

Classification of cultivable soil

Before presenting an account of the agricultural crops, it is pertinent to classify the cultivable soil (arazi-qabil-kasht). On the basis of availability of irrigation facilities productive capability and quality, the arable land was classified into four categories viz, Abi (irrigated), Sambu (flood lands), Nambal (swampy) and Khushki (un-irrigated).¹ The Abi land which

¹ Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, ff. 1-57.
includes all irrigated alluvial land of the valley was further subdivided into two classes viz; ab-i-shali (paddy-lands) and ab-i-sagzar\textsuperscript{2} (vegetable plots). The ab-i-shali was further divided into two categories. The first division of the ab-i-shali was the land which grew rice annually. The other kind of it was of inferior quality and required the land to be left fallow now and then or a sowing of some other crop to restore energy to the soil.\textsuperscript{3} The former included all irrigated soils of the plain with the lower portions of the side valleys of the valley. The latter generally consisted of karewas (wudar) and their inferiority was mainly due to the inadequacy of water supply.

The ab-i-sagzar was the land which was under special crops such as vegetables, red chillies, tobacco, poppy and fennel.\textsuperscript{4} In the villages almost every villager used to keep little portion of land holding under sagzar productions to fulfil their own vegetable requirements. But round the Srinagar city this type of cultivation was extensive, as the cultivators produced large quantity of vegetables and then sold them to the city people.\textsuperscript{5}

Under the second head comes the land situated near the banks of the Jhelum and in the vicinity of the Vular lake. These were

\begin{itemize}
\item[2.] A. Wingate, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.47-48.
\item[3.] Ibid.
\item[4.] Ibid., \textit{Dasturul-Amal-i-Kashmir}, f.133.
\item[5.] A. Wingate, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.47-48, Vigne, \textit{op.cit.}, II, p.91. These city vegetable farms were mostly irrigated by lift because they were on the edges of the Dal lake and the suburbs were consequently full of dip wells called dinglis, the long poles of which were a feature wherever these sagzar plots were located (A. Wingate, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.47-48).
\end{itemize}
flooded annually or sometimes after longer intervals, hence retaining sufficient moisture and nutrients. As such these rich lands were capable of producing huge quantity of grains without manuring and irrigation. Apart from rice, many other crops especially maize and oil seeds were cultivated in these lands.  

The third category of land included all swampy lands from the richest soil to a marsh, always covered with water. When naturally or artificially drained, the water did not dry up or if it did, this peaty soil still retained moisture. So paddy was the sole crop grown on it and it grew luxuriantly. This type of land was called nambal-shali. Nambal-sagzar was another category of land, which like abi-sagzar was used for vegetable production. The only distinction between the two was that the former belonged to the category of nambal land, while the latter belonged to the abi-shali land. Lands which were too swampy to produce any crop but grass and reed were known as nambal-banjar.  

The fourth category of land, known by the name of Lalim, was that part of cultivable land which was difficult to irrigate. As such the crops like wheat, barley, rape, millet, mashang and linseed were sown in this land. Likewise karewas capable of producing saffron formed a special class of land, as did also  

7. Ibid.  
8. Ibid.  
9. Ibid.  
10. Ibid.  
the floating cultivation of the Dal lake.

The total cultivable land of the period under study was equal to 110,766.99 kharwar.\(^13\) Out of which 68,947.99 kharwars were under rice cultivation and the remaining 41,819 kharwars were used for twenty-nine different dry crops, like maize, wheat, buck-wheat, rape seed, flax, oats, millet and amaranth.\(^14\)

**System of Land Measurement**

In order to understand the land revenue system of the period under study, it is essential to see what system of land measurement prevailed in Kashmir. Indu Banga is of the opinion that in Kashmir the area of cultivable land was reckoned by the amount of seeds sown in it.\(^15\) In support of her statement, she quotes *Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir*. But it is surprising to note that this revenue document furnishes two methods of land measurement, one for residential lands (*purnis*) and floating gardens and another for arable lands.\(^16\) The method employed to measure habitational lands and floating gardens was as follows.

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12. Various aquatic plants such as water lilies, corfervae, sedges and reeds sprang from the bottom of the lakes. Along the banks of the lakes, the roots of the water plants, were cut off about two feet under the water to loosen their connection with the bottom. Then they were floated on the surface, matted together and strewn with soil and manure, about two feet in height. Afterwards, a protecting fence of rushes was allowed to grow upon, around these rafts or platforms, which later on served as beds for cultivating various vegetables and fruit.

As these floating gardens were moveable a close and strict watch had to be kept on them by the gardeners. Otherwise they were towed and joined to a similar one. Then it was impossible to identify the garden or discover the perpetrator of the robbery. A floating garden ten yards long by two to three in width (10 x 2-3 yards) was sold for a rupee. (Moorcroft, op. cit., II, pp. 137-45. Vigne, op. cit., II, p. 9. Schonberg, op. cit., II, p. 14. John Martin Bonigberger, Thirty Five Years in the East, pp. 184-85.

Six hairs breadth-wise from the mane of the horse of the Iraqi breed were equal in breadth of a grain of barley corn. Three barley corns placed together breadth-wise were equivalent to one finger-breath (angushti-nar). Three finger-breaths (angushti-nar) were equal to one girih. Eight girihs or twenty-four finger-breaths (angushti) were equal in area to one ast of land. Twenty-two asts in length and eleven in width were usually required for laying the foundation of a building. The same method of measurement was applicable to floating gardens.

The cultivable land was reckoned as such. A biswah or pal was a quantity of land, three yards long by three yards broad. When it was brought into square measures, it became nine square yards. One seer of land constituted of twenty biswahs or pals, which was equal to one hundred and eighty square yards. So according to this calculation, one trak (six seers) or sixteenth part of a kharwa was equal to one thousand and eighty square yards in area. Similarly a bigha (1/3 of acre) of land was twenty biswahs in length as well as in width. In other words it can be said that three thousand and six hundred square yards of land were equal in area to one bigha of land.

17. Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, f.132.
18. Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, f.132.
In the zila of Narwa, the subdivision of the parganah Kruhin, Kuroh was the measurement of land. But the size of the Kuroh is not given. However, it is known that 17750 kurohs of land produced 11096 kharwars of paddy. So the average production per kuroh of land was 1.60 kharwars, on the other hand the average production per kharwar of rice land was 32.57 kharwars. On the basis of this average production per kharwar and per kuroh of land, it can be assessed that one kharwar of land was equivalent to 52.11 kurohs.

Agricultural Implements

The agricultural implements were few and simple, easy to make, easy to repair and easy to handle. The plough was usually made of some hard wood such as mulberry, ash, apple, etc. The ploughshare was kept tight by a moveable wedge. The other implements were spade, wicker basket, wooden mattocks, hand hoe, thrashing sticks, pestle and mortar. The spade was made of wood with a narrow face, tipped with iron blade. It was employed by the cultivators for digging out turf clods and arranging their fields for irrigation. To fertilise the soil, manure was carried from the homestead to the fields by women by means of the wicker basket. The mallets

21. Kuroh is the Persian equivalent of the Sanskrit krosa, from which is derived the Hindu kos.
22. Ibid., f.41 b.
23. For further information see Appendix 'A'.
served the purpose of crumbling the ridges. With the help of hand hoe women extracted weeds from maize and cotton fields. Similarly pestle and mortar were employed for husking paddy and pounding maize.

**Agricultural crops and their cultivating techniques**

There were two types of crops, rabl as well as kharif. The rabl or spring crops consisted of the grains such as wheat, zirah siyah (cumin seeds: Cuminum Sp.), barley, pea (pisum stivum) opium, poppy, rape, sarshaf (Barassica compestris), flax (linseed) and fennel. The kharif or autumn crop consisted of paddy, maize, cotton, saffron, tobacco, Italian millet amaranth, buckwheat, mung (phaseolus aureus), mah (phaseolus radiatus), moth (phaseolus aconitifolius), bean(phaseolus vulgaris) and sesame (sesamum indicum).

Rice was the staple grain of Kashmir and the principal sustenance of its population and chief article of revenue to the government. There were seventy five varieties of it, which varied in taste, colour and yield. Some of the best varieties were basmati, sukadas, putibara, katichan, yemberzal, mushkabudijia and magulbyol.  

27. Ibid; p.133, Vigne, op.cit., I, p.309.  
28. Lawrence, op.cit., p.325.  
30. Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, f.133. Ghulam Nabi Khahyari states that there were ninety varieties of paddy in Kashmir (Tarikh-i-Kashmir, f.36)  
31. For remaining varieties of paddy, see Appendix 'B'.
Rice cultivation requires extensive system of irrigation because the soil of Kashmir is porous. The silt of Kashmir is porous. So it must be watered from the time of sowing to that of harvesting. Kashmir with abundance of rivers, streams, brooks and other water resources was suited for its cultivation. The rice fields were manured with turf clods of fresh earth and rice straw rejected by cattle and mixed with their dung. The clods were cut from the sides of the water courses and were rich silt. Then earth was ploughed three or four times, because people believed that the greater the number of ploughing, the greater would be the out turn of the crop. When the clods were dry, they were broken with hand hammer generally by women followed by watering of fields. The seeds which were kept in water to germinate were sown in the watered fields. But the seeds should be sown within forty days of Nau-roz (Spring festival) thus avoiding an apprehension of the crops being generally destroyed by the cold blast from the new snow.

There were two systems of sowing seeds. In the first system paddy was sown broad-cast and was known watri. In the second it

32. Lawrence, op.cit., p.331.
34. Vigne, op.cit., I, p.309.
36. Lawrence, op.cit., p. 327.
37. New-year's day (according to the Persian calendar being that on which the sun enters Aries)
38. The vale of Kashmir which is set in the heart of Himalayas is enclosed on all sides by undivided and unbroken chain of lofty mountains. The new snow which usually commences to fall on these mountains in September earlier or latter, brings down the temperature and cold breeze starts to blow in the valley. This chills the paddy and adversely affects the ripening of crops. It was known as handru and its strong form was called wohan.
was sown in a nursery (thal) and later on the seedlings were transplanted.\(^{40}\) The broadcast cultivation gave the best outturn but the labour entailed in this system was far heavier than that required in the nursery sowing. Two khushabas (Ninds) were sufficient for the latter, while four were essential in the broadcast sowing.\(^{41}\) Khushaba is a Kashmiri term, applied to weeding the plots and breaking up the surface soil of the rice plants and to eradicate counterfeit grasses. Just as the yield of opium in Hindustan depended upon the care and frequency with which this was done so it was with rice in Kashmir.\(^{42}\) The nursery system was practised mostly in the northern part of the country and it required elaborate preparation right from the raising of nursery beds to their plantation.\(^{43}\)

In the early phase of the Sikh rule, the annual output of the rice crop was 2,000,000 lakh kharwars.\(^{44}\) But the statistical figures of the cultivable land are not available. Towards the second half of the Sikh rule the production capacity reached 2245448.37 kharwars and the strength of lands under rice cultivation was 68947.99 kharwars.\(^{45}\) On the basis of this information, the average productivity per kharwar of land turns out to be 32.57 kharwars. The highest average productivity per kharwar of irrigated land was 67.63 kharwars in the parganah Khovurpor. The

\(^{40}\) Ibid.
\(^{41}\) Lawrence, op.cit., p.331.
\(^{42}\) A. Wingate, op.cit., pp.50-79.
\(^{43}\) Vigne, op.cit.,I, p.310.
\(^{44}\) Moorcroft, op.cit., II, p.135.
\(^{45}\) Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, ff.1-57.
lowest was 26.05 kharwars in the parganah of Mahal Machipur. But the average productivity per kharwar of arable land of the maximum parganahs falls within the range of 20.06 to 37.38 kharwars. The variation in the yield from parganah to parganah seems to be mainly because of the variation in the fertility of the soil of the parganahs and availability of irrigation facilities.

Saffron: This precious crop was produced in the nineteen villages of Pampore, the capital of parganah Wahow and 10510 bighas of land were under its cultivation. Saffron grounds were classified into three categories such as wantu, Darmu and Keru. No doubt, all the three are karewa lands but the difference is, not only, that the former is flat-topped and the latter is sloping but they also differed on their productivity strength. But the saffron cultivation was the monopoly of the karewas in the neighbourhood of Pampore. On account of illiteracy people believed that saffron could not be produced any where other than Pampore. The soil nutrients in Pampore karewas were not different from those present in other karewa of lands of Kashmir. Vigne was almost of the same opinion and he writes that saffron grounds of Pampore "are said to be composed

46. See Appendix 'A'.
47. For detailed information see Appendix 'A'
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Lala Ganeshi Lal, op.cit., p.27.
of the richest soil in the valley; though I do not know any reason why any other of the karywahs (karewas) when irrigated as formerly, should not be just as good. We have evidence that during the Mughal rule in Kashmir saffron was cultivated at Andarkot and Shihabuddin Pore (modern Shadipur).

The soil intended for the cultivation of saffron were ploughed four or five times and then raised into small parterre (chumuns) of oblong shape, one yard and twelve girih by one and twelve girihs. The intersecting trenches were deeply cut to allow the water to run off freely, as the plant sustained injury from too much moisture. In the month of May, 4.8 seers of saffron corns which are like onion, were planted in each parterre and then loose earth was thrown over them, just it was done with potatoes and ginger. It was not necessary to sow the seeds every year. Once scattered these lasted for twelve or thirteen years (perennial) and after that duration, seeds were found at it root attached to the parent in the same way as the young potato.

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55. Baba Dawud Mishkati, Asrarul-Abrar, f.141b.
57. Dasturul Affial-1-Kashmir, ff.81-83.
58. Lahore Political Diaries, VI, p.190.
59. Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, ff.81-83.
60. Lala Ganeshi Lal, op.cit., p.27.
61. Lahore Political Diaries, VI, p.190.
The saffron plants blossomed into beautiful purple flowers in the month of Asooj and Katik (September and October) and a parterre of wantu kind of land produced a pound of flowers and one ounce of saffron was collected from it. Because the red and white pistils were only taken and yellow were given to the cattle. It is because of the fact that Pampore was famous for its ghee. In 1846, the total yield of saffron cultivation was 2500 seers and it valued 50000 rupees, as it was sold at the rate of 20 rupees per seer. While one kharwar and four traks of its seeds could cost only one rupee.

Wheat: The technique of cultivation of wheat was not so complicated as that of rice because the land under its cultivation was neither manured nor weeded. In addition to this two ploughings with a cover ploughing at seed time was required for its cultivation and as a rule no irrigation was ever given. Its cultivation was entirely confined to dry lands and it was sown in late autumn and reaped in June. Parganah Shahabad was famous for its cultivation. Barley was cultivated in the same way but was harvested before wheat.

Maize: The maize or Indian corn was cultivated on karewas and river bank lands. It neither required manure nor much irrigation but for a fair crop of maize fortnightly rains were essential. It was also cultivated on the plains of northern portion of the valley (Kamraj). It was the spring crop constituting staple

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63. Ibid., I, p.324. Lahore Political Diaries, VI, p.191.
64. Lala Ganeshi Lal, op.cit., p.27.
65. Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, ff.61-63.
Cotton: It was grown in every situation. Sown in May, the crop was collected in September and October. Sikh rulers of Kashmir introduced brown cotton from Yarkand but on its third sowing, it changed completely into white, probably because of climatic conditions. The cloths made from it were generally coarse and flimsy.

Tobacco: Tobacco was produced but to a very limited extent. The village Sihamu, situated between Baramulla and Sopore was famous for its cultivation. Small quantities of it were exported to Ladakh.

Oil Seeds: The main oil seed was rape, of which there were three varieties, viz. Tilgoglu, Sarshaf, and Sandijji. Tilgoglu was sown in September and October on dry and soft reclaimed swampy land and harvested in May and June. The second variety known as Sarshaf was sown in spring and reaped with Tilgoglu. The third variety of rape Sandijji, was sown in the standing rice when the fields were watered for the last time. Flax was also an important kind of oil seeds and was cultivated all over the valley. The land required for its cultivation was ploughed thrice and its seeds were sown in April and crop was harvested towards the end of July.

68. Ibid., pp. 154-55.
70. Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, f. 133.
71. Ibid.
Pulses: Different varieties of pulses such as *mung* (*phaseolus aureus*) *mah* (*phaseolus radiatus*) and *moth* (*phaseolus aconitijolius*) were cultivated. Mung, the best of the pulses was sown in May in barren (banjer) lands and depended entirely on rains for irrigation. Its crop was resistant to the insect attack and its stalk was excellent fodder. Moth was inferior kind of pulse, and was an important food for cattle during winter. Peas and beans (*vulgaris*) were also cultivated.

Vegetables: As already pointed out every villager had kept a small portion of his holding for vegetable production. But there in the neighbourhood of Srinagar and other towns of the valley, was a professional group of vegetable growers known as *maliara*. They manured their vegetable plots with night soil, which was mixed with the dust and pulverized by the action of sun. It is because of this fact that government had imposed tax on night soil.

A considerable number of vegetables such as carrots, turnips, parsnips, cabbages, spinach, knol-khol, pumpkin, cucumber, red chillies, onions etc. were grown extensively. Lettuces, the national vegetable, was of three varieties such as *Sag-Karam*, *Sag-butwa* and *Sag-Kasni*. This plant was produced in large quantity with out much labour. Pumpkins were of two

71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid., f.199.
75. *Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir*, f.133.
varieties, one of them was indigenous and another of foreign origin (kudoh-i-walahti). Turnips and parsnips were the only vegetables which yielded double crop in a year. The turnips of Hurapore were of special significance because they were delicious in taste. Potatoes were introduced in Kashmir for the first time during the Sikh rule. Hugel who was a German nationalist visited Kashmir in 1835 and brought several baskets of potatoes with himself and cultivated them in Kashmir and Tibet.

Towards the second half of the Sikh rule, the total strength of un-irrigated land was 41819 kharwars and its productive capacity was 512771.28 kharwars of grains. On the basis of this statistical information the average productivity of per kharwar of dry land was 12.61 kharwars. The highest and lowest production of per kharwar of un-irrigated land was in the parganahs of Phakh and Banihal and was 14.66 and 9.14 kharwars respectively. But the average outturn of per kharwar of un-irrigated land of seventeen and twelve parganahs was within the range of 12.00 to 12.84 and 11.34 to 11.96 kharwars respectively. The variation in the yield of dry land from parganah was because of the variation in the fertility of the soil.

76. Ibid.
77. Ibid.
80. Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, II,1-52, For details see Appendix A.
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid.
PRODUCE OF LAKES:

Water-nuts: It was the most valuable and edible produce of the uncultivated vegetation as it provided an excellent food from its kernel and a welcome fuel from its shell. It grew abundantly in various lakes of the valley, but in its production Wular lake took the lead. Moorcroft states that Wular lake produced about nine million six hundred twenty thousand kharwars of water-nuts annually. In the same period it provided food for not less than thirty thousand inhabitants for five months in a year.

Water-nuts are and were of two varieties viz. na-kamil (un-ripe) and kamil (ripe). The former was green and was collected in October. The latter was black and was gathered from November to May. Lakes in addition to water-nuts, produced the lotus root (chobi-dal) which is even today used as a delicious vegetable by a sizeable number of people.

Floating Gardens: "Floating gardens" especially of the Dal lake constituted a unique feature of cultivation of Kashmir. Vegetables of almost of all variety and fruits like melons and water-melons were grown on these floating garden extensively. It was because of this reason that floating gardens were taxed heavily. To improve the quality of melons, seeds were imported from Baltistan and Tibet. In the first year the average

86. Ibid.
85. Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, f.60.
86. Diary of P.S. Melvill, Punjab Government Records (1647-1649) VI, p.221.
weight of a melon of this imported seed was four to ten pounds and in the second year not more than two to three pounds, probably because of changed ecological conditions and problems of adaptability.89

FOREST PRODUCTION:

Kuth (Aromatic Costus)

It grew, as at present, on the hills surrounding the valley of Kashmir and formed an important article of commerce during the Afghan and the Sikh regimes.90 A great portion of it was sent to Bombay and Calcutta wherefrom it was exported to China.91

Horticulture

Kashmir is known for the production of fruit merely because of conducive environment. So the grafted variety of fruits such as apples, pears, grapes, walnut, quinee, mulberry, almond, pome­granate apricot, sweet cherry (gilas), plum, peach, melon, water melon, annab, Sabaa etc; were cultivated in Kashmir without any difficulty.92 Apple was the staple fruit of Kashmir and was produced in fifteen varieties.93 But amri and mohi-amri were of superior quality and were popular for their sweetness and handsome appearance. The former matured in October and had a large round

89. Ibid., p.143.
91. Ibid
93. Vigne,op.cit.,II,pp.86-87; Hugel, Kashmir and the Punjab,p.100
     Victor Jacquemont, op.cit.,II,p.70.
93. Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, f.134; Vigne,op.cit,II,p.87.
94. Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir,f.134.
red and white sweet fruit. The latter ripened with the former but had more acid and was more red. But trel (little-apple) was best of the Kashmir apple so far as the flavour was concerned. All the six\(^95\) varieties of it were usually of deep red colour and found favour with the natives for its delicious taste that was half sour, half sweet.

Kashmir was also famous for its grapes because as many as twenty-two varieties of these were widely cultivated here.\(^96\) Hussani, Kishmishi, sahibi, maska, panfaqir, and kanihapni were some of these varieties.\(^97\) According to Moorcroft the first four varieties of these grapes were of foreign origin.\(^98\) However, all of them were thin-skinned and grew considerably. But kishmishi grape was highly esteemed for its being seedless\(^99\) (bedana). They were collected in October and were preserved in earthen vessels till March. In spring different kinds of wine were distilled from them. Although for religious reasons, Afghans discouraged the brewing of wine, the Sikhs revived it.

Walnuts were grown in abundance during the period under study.\(^100\) According to Moorcroft four kinds of walnuts such as khanak, wantu, dunu and kaghazi were prevalent.\(^101\) The first was wild and the rest were cultivated. The walnut tree was

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95. Ibid. These varieties were janbazi, nabadi, sili, lalbugl, chikni and mapus.
96. Ibid.
97. Ibid.
98. Moorcroft, op.cit., II,p.150.
99. Ibid.
100. Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, f.134.
propagated from seed, although grafting was not uncommon. The forest walnut was diminutive with a thick shell and scanty kernel. Wantu had a large nut but thick and hard shell and deficient kernel. The shell of the dunu was thick but its kernel large and was extracted easily. Kaghazi, as is quite obvious from its name, was not only superfine but the largest of all. It had a large excellent kernel and was easily extracted. But Vigne enumerated five kinds of walnuts and the best among them was burzol. Its shell was so soft and delicate that birds like neightingale could break it easily. It appears that Kaghazi and burzol were two different names of one and the same kind of walnut. The state share of walnuts was one-half but corrupt officials of the state left with producer only one-fourth of the out-put.

Sixteen varieties of pears were cultivated in Kashmir but nak and gulabi were the best of all. The former had beautiful shape and sweet juicy flesh and the latter was pleasant fruit with a pretty red skin. Quince had three varieties which were very fine and plentiful. One of them was sour and the other two sweet. They were mainly cultivated for their seeds which were exceedingly mucilaginous and cooling. They were exported to Punjab and earned a good amount of money. There were five

107. For details see Chapter on "Trade and Commerce".
kinds of mulberries but Shahtut which was purple and juicy
was the best of all. 109 Almonds were of three varieties but
**badam-i-Shirin** and **badam-i-talkh** were commonly grown. 110 The
former was worth double the latter in the market. Six kinds of
pomegranate were cultivated in Kashmir but none of them was of
any special merit as all of them were of very inferior flavour. 111

**Revenue Administration**

The agrarian administration of Kashmir bore greater
resemblance to that prevalent in other Sikh provinces. The
contemporary English documents, indigenous Persian chronicles
and travelogues contain stray references about units and
functionaries, which differed little from those of other parts
of Sikh dominion. However, the terms generally used for the
administrative units in Kashmir were **parganah**, **Mahal**, **Zila**,
**Mauza**, **Deh** and **Qaryat**. 112 The terms most frequently used for
the functionaries were **Hakim**, **Subedar**, **Nazim**, **Madarsul-mahamm**,
**Shiqdar**, **Patwarl** and **Tahwildar**. 113

But all these terms did not necessarily denote a distinct
unit or office. Some of them closely coincided with one another.

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111. ^111. Ibid., op.cit., I,p.187.
112. Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, ff.1-66, Mullah Hamidullah Shahabadi
Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, f.2a,b. Birbal Kachru,op.cit.,f.3;
Chulam Nabi Khanyari, op.cit.,f.6; Ramjoo Dhar,op.cit.,f.5b;
Moorcroft, op.cit.,II,p.113; Vigne,op.cit.,I,p.272; For.Sec.
Cons. 18 Nov.1843; Nos. 13-17, Lala Baneshi Lai,op.cit.,
113. Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir,f.3; Mullah Hamidullah Shahabadi,
Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir (Acc.No.523),f.3a; Ramjoo Dhar,op.cit;
ff.5b-6a;Birbal Kachru,op.cit.,ff.268a-269b; Khalil Mirjanpuri
op.cit.,ff.174a,b,175a,181a; Mohiuddin Miskeen,op.cit.,II,f
For instance parganah and Mahal was one and the same unit. The *mauza*, *deh* and *qaryat* were synonymous connoting villages. Likewise *Hakim*, *Subedar* and *Nazim* referred to governor and *Madarul-mahamm*, *Peshkar* and *Sahib Kar* denoted Chief Revenue Collector. The terms like *Amil*, *Kardar* and *Tehsildar* used rarely, were actually the substitute for *Qanungu*. So one has to consider parganah, *zila*, and *mauza* from revenue divisions and *Subedar*, *Sahib Kar*, *Qanungu*, *sazawal*, *Shiqdar*, *Fatwari* and *Tahwildar* from the revenue functionaries.

**Revenue Units**

The administrative unit, next to the province was parganah. Kashmir was divided into parganahs for the proper functioning of administration and collection of revenue. The travel accounts of Moorcroft, Vigne and Lala Ganeshi Lal, the persian chronicles of Birbal Kachru, Ramjoo Dhar and Ghulam Nabi Khanyari, and English document of Major Leech provide a long list of thirty-six parganahs of Kashmir. The first two informants had also provided the names of the chief town or village of each of them. But *Dasturul Amal-I-Kashmir*, the monumental statistical revenue document which was compiled under the patronage of Sikh governor Colonel Mehan Singh and is entirely based on the official

114 Moorcroft, op.cit.,II,p.113; Vigne, op.cit., I,p.272; Hugel E.C. Kashmir and the Punjab, p.; Lala Ganeshi Lal,op.cit., pp.38-39; Birbal Kachru,op.cit.,f.3;Ghulam Nabi Khanyari, op.cit.,f.6; Ramjoo Dhar,op.cit.,f.5b; For. Sec.Cons. 18 Nov. 1843. 

Birbal Kachru has written that the number of parganahs was thirty seven but while enumerating them one by one mentions only thirty six.

revenue record of the period, enumerates as many as thirty nine parganahs.\textsuperscript{116} But parganah Machipur and Achan were termed by the name of Mahal. Moorcroft, had even gone to the extent that he declared them districts.\textsuperscript{117} In the light of above discussion the statement of Indu Banga that \textit{Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir} furnishes a list of thirty parganahs is not based on facts.\textsuperscript{118} Some of them were very small and their principal places were not more than villages. For instance parganah Achan consisted only of ten villages.\textsuperscript{119} But Nagam, Bangil and Divasar parganahs were the largest and contained 276, 188 and 178 villages respectively. The opinion of Vigne about the number of villages of Nagam and Divasar is approximately the same.\textsuperscript{120}

The subdivision of the parganah or Mahal was zilä. The parganah of Banihal was divided into six zilas viz; Adalatkot, Deogol, Pasand, Tathar, Nagam and Doligam.\textsuperscript{122} The parganah of Balda Srinagar was subdivided into sixteen zilas in the time of Pathans and the Sikhs also retained the same division.\textsuperscript{123} So the number of zilas differed from parganah to parganah. Just as the number of zilas differed from parganah to parganah, so the number of villages varied from zila to zila. For instance in

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\textsuperscript{116} See Appendix 'A'.
\textsuperscript{117} Moorcroft, \textit{op.cit.},\textit{II}, p.144.
\textsuperscript{118} Indu Banga, \textit{op.cit.}, p.6.
\textsuperscript{119} See Appendix 'A'.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{121} Vigne, \textit{op.cit.}, I, p.272.
\textsuperscript{122} \textit{Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir}, ff.40-43.
\textsuperscript{123} Vigne, \textit{op.cit.},\textit{II}, p.137.

Every zila or parishe of the city of Srinagar was under the proper care and management of Kotwal (city police) or mayor. They were also patrolled at night for prevention of disturbance. Vigne,\textit{op.cit.},\textit{II}, p.137; Schonberg, \textit{op.cit.},\textit{II}, p.84.
Adalatkot, Devigol, Pasand, Tathar, Magam and Deligam there were 6, 6, 10, 6, 12 and 2 villages respectively. So the village was the smallest unit of revenue administration and its boundaries were usually marked and entered into revenue records. Now village which was basic fiscal unit usually consisted of habitational, agriculture and waste land. The Dasturul Amal-i-kashmir provides the list of every village of each of the parganah with the individual land holding. So on the basis of this information there were three thousand, four hundred and fifty one villages in the valley of Kashmir.124.

Revenue Functionaries

The person employed to look after the administration of the province and the collection of its revenue, was generally called nazim. To be precise, the Sikh monarchs administered the provinces of their dominion through the office of nazim. So the former were the fountain of power and authority and the latter who were their representatives derived it from them. So it is but natural that governors who were at the apex of provincial administration, held office subject to the pleasure of king. But neither Maharaja Ranjit Singh nor his successors laid down any particular rules for the appointment of nazims and the tenure of their office.

124. See Appendix 'A'.

But Birbal Kachru, who was the contemporary of Sikh rule and member of the civil service of the said regime, has written that the number of the villages of whole of Kashmir did not exceed three thousand, two hundred and seventy-nine, (Birbal Kachru, op.cit.,f.8b.)
However, it remained the matter of policy and strategy of the Sikh rulers that long tenures of offices were not ordinarily allowed to nazims due to the fear that they might turn rebels and declare independence.

During the Sikh domination over Kashmir, which lasted from July 1819 to March 1846, ten governors were sent to administer Kashmir. Their average tenure of the governorship was two years and eight months. Bhama Singh Ardali (1830-31), remained the governor of Kashmir for less than a year. The longest tenure was seven years four months and was enjoyed by Colonel Mehan Singh (1834-41).

125. The Sikh nazims of Kashmir were Dewan Moti Ram (1819-20), Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa (1820-22), Dewan Moti Ram (second term, 1822-25), Dewan Chuni Lal (1825-27), Dewan Kirpa Ram (1827-30), Bhama Singh Ardali (1830-31), Kanwar Sher Singh (1831-34), Colonol Mehan Singh (1834-41), Ghulam Mohiuddin (1841-46), Sheikh Imamuddin (1846).


The claim of Indu Banga that eleven governors were appointed to Kashmir is not substantiated and supported by the facts. The list of governors, furnished by said scholar, included the name of Dewan Chand Zafar Jang. But the said scholar is misled because, he was not the governor but the victorious Sikh military general under whose commandship Kashmir was subjugated. (Indu Banga, op.cit., p.71).

The primary function of nazim was to maintain law and order and to collect revenue and to despatch its regular instalments to the royal treasury. Regarding the submission of regular revenue instalments, the directions of governor Colonel Mehan Singh to his subordinate revenue officials are worth quoting.

"Revenue officials were instructed that the revenue of Kashmir should not be deposited in the State exchequer but directly sent to the royal treasury at Lahore."

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was always vigilant in exercising strict control over the activities of the governors of Kashmir.

127. He was also assisted by Qildars, Bakshi-foj, Kotwal (Shahna), Thanadars, Muftis, etc., Khali Mirjanpuri, op.cit.,ff. 174b-175a.


129. Maharaja Ranjit Singh "had declared that whosoever of the glorious chiefs will go to Kashmir, must manage its affairs by making the people prosperous and to earn their good wishes and to send on their behalf in writing about their satisfaction because they are marvels trusts of Almighty and entrusted to him, will be granted a new country and shall receive generous attention and favours."
If any one proved to be indolent or abonoxious administrator or failed to arrange the stipulated revenue instalment, he was thrown out of office of the governorship at a moments' notice. But it is strange to note that Maharaja Ranjit Singh, a ruler of high calibre did not discriminate between conscientious and corrupt governors. He even suspected Colonel Mehan Singh, the best Sikh governor of Kashmir and decided to remove him but failed due to the timely interposition of Captain C.M.Wade.

The Subadar was assisted by Sahib Kar. He was directly appointed by the Lahore Darbar and was sole supervisor of the Daftar-i-Dewani. He was authorised to handle the revenue affairs and to scrutinize parwanas relating to jagirs. Birbal Dhar was appointed the first Sahib Kar of Kashmir for the help which

130. Governors like Kirpa Ram, Ehama Singh Ardali and Sher Singh were dismissed for administrative inefficiency (Vigne, op.cit.,II, p.75). Dewan Chuni Lal was grilled for non-fulfilment of the contract regarding the stipulated remittance. (NEWS, 1825, pp.67-68).

131. Mehan Singh who was man of administrative ability and firmness, was appointed as governor to rehabilitate the people of Kashmir and to stabilise their agricultural economy and industry which was in shambles due to the famine of 1832-33. He gave internal prosperity to Kashmir by boosting the agriculture and industry. He decided cases quickly, provided agricultural advances to the peasants free of interest and introduced uniform and standardized weights and measures. And punished ruthless hoarders, fraudulent and dishonest weighmen and auctioned adulterated stockists (tehwildars) of grains. To be short, the meritorious Daeturul Amal-i-Kashmir, the book of Ains, composed under his patronage is a testimony to his overwhelming interest in the economic development of Kashmir. (Khalil Mirjanpuri, op.cit., f.181a., Miskeen Mohiuddin, op.cit., II, ff. 102a-103b, Hasan, op.cit., II, p.768, Khasta Hargopal Kaul, op.cit., p.168; Ramjoo Dhar, op.cit., ff.4a-5a.)


he rendered in the final subjugation of Kashmir by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He, in the capacity of chief revenue administrator, ordered the confiscation of a large portion of the jagirs of Pandit Ganesh Dhar, the son of Pandit Sahajram Dhar, the leading jagirdar and revenue collector of the age, on the excuse that they were beyond his status and normal requirements.

Sometimes Sahib kar assumed the powers of governors and became the virtual administrator, when the latter proved to be

134. Pandit Ganesh Dhar created misunderstanding between Birbal Dhar and the then governor Hari Singh Nalwa. He told a brazen-faced lie to the said governor that Birbal Dhar considered him only a Qiladar and not the Subadar. He now wanted to demolish his image and so while submitting his report of the Khakha-Bomba uprising to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, blamed Birbal Dhar for their rebellion. He became so exasperated that he was dismissed and all administrative rights and decorations were snatched from him. (Hasan, op.cit., II, p.522; Khalil Mirjanpuri, op.cit., f. 174b).

But Birbal Kachru does not mention these details and states that Birbal Dhar did not show obedience and courtesy to Hari Singh, so he developed animosity towards him (Birbal Kachru, op.cit., f. 242b.)

But after sometime he was reappointed as Chief revenue collector but was replaced by Wasakha Singh during second term of governorship of Dewan Moti Ram. He was put behind the bars with his son Raja Kak Dhar for misappropriating revenue and all his estates were confiscated. This public degradation affected him so much that he breathed his last in jail.

either inefficient or voluptuous. For instance Kumedian Gurmukh Singh was incharge of the forts of Kashmir but was simultaneously assigned with the charge of the revenue administration. Chuni Lal who was an incapable governor was demoted by him to the state of nincompoop and decided all the policy matters by himself. When Maharaja Ranjit Singh heard about these unpleasant developments, he dismissed both of them.

The subordinate fiscal officials of Sahib karo were called Qanungos. Their main function was to look after the administration of parganachs and to collect revenues and to keep a proper record of the collections made and the expenditure incurred. They had also to superintend the proper employment of land and to maintain records relating to payment of cash or

136. Kanwar Sher Singh was appointed governor of Kashmir in 1831 and Wasakha Singh was appointed to assist him in the settlement and collection of revenue. But the former was addicted to "wine and women to an excessive degree" and was "a complete drunkard and debauchee." (Mc Gregore, The History of the Sikhs, I, p.254). Maharaja Ranjit Singh himself confessed that "Kanwar (Sher Singh) was in the prime of his life and the paradise-like Kashmir was a place fit for his merry-making and enjoyment" (Sohan Lal Suri, op.cit., III, p.141).

His Sahib karo, who was corrupt, realized the weaknesses of the young prince and accordingly provided him means of enjoyment such as wine, women and song and managed freely the administrative affairs of Kashmir and embezzled large portions of the state revenue. He was replaced by Pandit Ganesh Dhar and was imprisoned, for misleading the prince and mismanaging the affairs of Kashmir, by the orders of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (Fauq, Muhammad Uddin, Mukammal Tarikh-i-Kashmir, III,p.699). Pandit Ganesh Dhar held this office even during the governorship of Colonel Mehan Singh and distinguished himself as an expert in revenue and fiscal matters by helping a lot Colonel Mehan Singh in carrying out the first revenue settlement of Kashmir.

137. Vigne, op.cit; I, p.311.
alienation of revenues in favour of individuals or institutions; area statistics of cultivable land, revenue rates, revenue receipts etc; of the parganahs under their jurisdiction. They were also instructed to increase the cultivation of their respective parganahs and to get largest possible amounts of revenue from them for the state. They had to work for the betterment of people and to guard their lives and property from thieves and criminals. For this very purpose, they were empowered to imprison the culprits and impose fines on them. But the Qanungus who either proved corrupt or fraudulent were fined, imprisoned, transferred or their property was confiscated depending upon the nature and seriousness of their crime. Qanungus who were responsible for defalcation and loss of the state's dues during the governorship of Kanwar Sher Singh, were imprisoned and forced to pay back misappropriated sum of seven lakhs and twenty six thousand rupees. When Colonel Mehan Singh, the governor, observed the malpractices of Qanungus and realized that they were not sympathetic in their dealings with the peasants, he appointed thanadars in each parganah to see that the Qanungus did not oppress the peasants.

138. The statement given below identifies the leading Qanungus who were compelled to return the money they had embezzled:

- Pandit Sujram Bhan Rs. 1,90,000
- Munshi Tralok Chand Pandit Rs. 75,000
- Himmat Pandit Potedar Rs. 25,000
- Pandit Koul Bhan Rs. 35,000
- Shanker Pandit Kotru Rs. 15,000
- Sheikh Jalaluddin (Incharge of Dagh Shawl Department) Rs. 75,000
- Jamadar Dewa Firosban (Chemists) Rs. 50,000
- Pandit Chandar Bhan (Sirishta or Keeper of the records of Dagh Shawl) Rs. 25,000
- Qanungus of Parganahs Rs. 56,000
- Kardars of Kanwar Sher Singh Rs. 85,000
- Kardars in general (Murassal) Rs. 95,000

(Sohan Lal Suri, op.cit., p.169).

139. The author of Tarikh-i-Hasan states that thanadars were very much there but their number was increased from ten to twenty. (Hasan, op.cit., pp.771).
It is quite strange to note that the Qanungus rendered services to the state but were paid by the peasants. They usually received one and a half seer on each Kharwar of grains from the share of the cultivators. In addition to this, peasants were obliged to bring wood, charcoal, ghee, fodder, etc. to the Qanungus. However, some of them were granted revenue-free land grants.

Usually, there was one Qanungu for each parganah. But in certain parganahs their number had considerably increased. For example, Parmanand Bhat and Birbal Raina were functioning as the Qanungus of parganah Amantnag. But in the parganah of Divasar four Qanungus viz., Sujram Koul, Atma Ram Koul, Shankar Koul, Days Ram Koul held the office of Qanungu at one and the same time.

There can be two reasons for having more than one Qanungu in a parganah. The first one seems to be that the office of Qanungu which was innovated during the Mughal regime of Kashmir was hereditary. So on the death of the deceased Qanungu all his male issues had a claim to the post. So to avoid and minimize chances of clash, all the eligible descendants were appointed Qanungus and kept in charge of the various revenue divisions of the parganah. It is because of the fact that their number multiplied.

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140. Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, f.66.
141. Ramjoo Dhar, op.cit., f.36.
142. For instance, Atma Ram Koul and Shankar Koul of Divasar parganah received one hundred and eighty five kharwars of grains as the share of the government from the peasants of the land assigned to them (Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, f.137).
143. Ibid.
144. Ibid.
Koul, the surname, of all the four Qanungs of Divasar further substantiates the fact that they belonged to one and the same family or tribe.

There is also possibility that Qanungs were appointed on the strength of the villages in the parganah. For instance Parganah Anantnag which consisted of ninety four villages, had only two Qanungus. While as parganah Divasar which was one of the largest parganahs and contained one hundred and seventy eight villages had four Qanungus. Apparently the latter interpretation seems to be appropriate and more convincing.

Shiqdar, Sazawal, Mughaddam, Fatwari and Tehwildar formed the bed-rock of the revenue machinery of Kashmir. For smooth functioning, parganahs were divided into zilas and the latter were subdivided into villages. Generally one Shiqdar was appointed for a small hamlet and from two to three for a large one. They were supposed to watch the harvested crop of a village so that nothing was removed from threshing-floor without paying government dues. They had also to protect it from being pilfered by the thieves. The reason for this was that crop-sharing in its strict sense was the mode of payment. So the crops were first harvested

145. Ibid., ff.11-13.
146. Ibid., f.317.
147. Ibid., ff.44-47.
148. Ibid., f.317.
and then stacked near the village and afterwards threshed and distributed between the state and cultivator. Over the Shiqdar, was an official who was incharge of a group of villages. He was known as sazawal.  

His duties were to inspect the Shiqdars and to report to his Qanungu. The Shiqdars were generally drawn from the tribe of Dum, who were known for their giant strength and stature. It fits the occasion to mention that they not only appropriated a portion of the produce for their own use, but when bribed also allowed cultivators to steal a part of it.

Like Qanungus, Shiqdars and sazawals, received respectively one and a half seer and three paus of grain per kharwar from the share of the peasants.

The Muqaddam or chief of the village was only the middle man between the ryots and the state. He was responsible not only for the collection of revenue but was also to maintain law and order, promote agriculture and to suppress the crimes of the village under his jurisdiction. He also received one and a half seer per kharwar of grain from the share of the husbandmen. Apart from that, revenue-free lands were also granted to Muqaddams with the purpose of promoting agricultural production either by himself or through the peasants of the village.

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151. Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, f.66; Ramjoo Dhar, op.cit., f.36.
152. Vigne, op.cit., I, p.301.
154. Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, f.166. For details about weight see infra, pp.
156. Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, ff.66.
157. For instance Muqaddams of the villages of Pulwama and Khagam of the parvanahs Nagam and Showra received seventy five and thirty kharwars of grains respectively from their land-grants (Ibid., f.319).
Patwari, from whom proceeded the revenue administration of Kashmir, maintained the revenue records of the village under his jurisdiction. He noted down asamee's name, the area of his holding and dues from him to government, in his birch-bark khet khusrah (field-book). The remuneration of Patwari for Sarishtadar-i-Deh amounted to one and a half seer per kharwar of grains from the share of peasants of his villages.¹⁵⁸

During the early phase of the Sikh rule, the peasants were bound to carry to the city of Srinagar that portion of the government revenue which was in kind. But this system had lately given place to one by which the grain of the government was entrusted to a third party called Tehwildar. Then it was his duty to carry it to city and with whom government reckoned for the land and the water carriage.¹⁵⁹

The chief administrative and revenue officials were generally Sikhs and Hindus. They were directly appointed by the Lahore Darbar. This is quite evident from the letter written by governor Kanwar Sher Singh to Maharaja Ranjit Singh in which he requested him that some strict Qanungus, are very well equipped with perfect ability and all round administrative capacity should be appointed to render good services by going round for assessment and showing sincerity of spirit in realising large sum of revenue for the Maharaja.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸. Ibid., f.66.
¹⁵⁹. For. Sec. Cons. 18 Nov. 1843, Nos. 13-17.
The other subordinate revenue officials with a trickle of literate muslims, were Kashmiri pandits. The reason for this was that they had acquired proficiency in Persian and were skilled in the arithmetic calculations of the country. It is interesting to note that the attempt of Afghan governors to replace pandit accountants by their own countrymen proved to be abortive as the new-comers failed to discharge their duties satisfactorily so Hindus were recalled. Schonberg states, "when the Sikhs conquered the Afghans, the Pandits were again dismissed, and their places given to munshis brought from the Punjab; but as the financial system of the country was not changed, these strangers were unable to arrange the accounts, and the pandits were again recalled".  

Lala Ganeshi Lal who visited Kashmir towards the closing year of the Sikh rule had observed, "The chief revenue and judicial functions of the province are administered by a set of native pandits who had grown rich at the expense of the Mohamedans and the people at large. At present (1846) pandit Tilak is the treasurer and Mohan Kaul is in charge of the Revenue and Excise Departments." So the Hindus under the Sikh rule had dominated services in civil administration.

But these officials from the highest to the lowest jointly defrauded the State and robbed the people mercilessly. The

162. Lala Ganeshi Lal, op.cit., p.32.
following para from *Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir* of Mulla Hamidullah Shahabadi beautifully exposes the corrupt practices of these dishonest revenue officials.

"Patwari, a satan and sin incarnate, who shares everybody's morsel and stands witness to every word uttered. On the day of judgement, this enemy will stand to seek redress. Qanungu, taking the benefit of the central issues but keeping himself aside and aloof, watching the affairs from afar. Peasantry, a burdened lot without any remuneration. Shiqdar, a watchman who shares ill-gotten with the thief and from the Tahwildar he exacts a portion of share too. The weighman has a sinful hand. Chandal, the happiest of all who fearlessly grabs the revenue. Whatever is left out of the Chandal, is taken away by the Tahwildar. Neither does he fear anyone nor is there anybody to question him."

Land Revenue, other Cesses and Perquisites

With regard to the assessment of land revenue, the cultivable land of the valley was divided into two categories - Sir kishti and pa-kishti. The land, which was cultivated by residential (regular/khas) ryots of village, was called Sir-kishti and that, which was ploughed and sown by inhabitants of other villages or new-comers (non-residential) was termed pa-kishti. The significance of this classification of cultivable land was that the latter was assessed more lightly than the former. Probably, it was a sort of incentive to the pa-kishti peasants to bring more and more land under cultivation, as they, in addition of cultivating land holdings of their respective villages brought under cultivation, that portion of arable land of other villages which remained uncultivated for want of labour. This is further substantiated by the fact that no-abadi lands were more lightly assessed than the pa-kishti lands.

According to the existing taxation laws of the land, Sikh administrators of Kashmir realized one half of the paddy production as share of the government. The Sikh governors did

164. For. Sec. Cons. 28 Jan. 1848.
So far as the classification of Moorcroft was concerned, lands adjacent to city of Srinagar were called Sar-kishti and those more remote were known as pa-kishti (Moorcroft, op.cit., II,p.126).
165. For details, see infra. pp
166. For. Sec. Cons. 28 Jan. 1848.
not only continue the Trake-system of Afghans but also enhanced it. For instance during the Afghan regime, over and above the government share, two more traks of paddy were charged per kharwar from the share of the peasants, while as Sikh rulers of Kashmir collected this quantity of grain at the rate of four traks per kharwar from the Sar-kishti lands and two traks from pa-kishti lands. However, the pirs (religious preachers and teachers) and pandits, the privileged classes of Kashmiri society, paid this cess at the rate of two traks per kharwar. But governor Sheikh Ghulam Mohiuddin (1841-46) reduced the rate of Trak-system of Sar-kishti lands from four to two traks of grains. This remission of two traks of sar-kishti traki in 1845 was given on the conditions that the cultivators would increase the cultivation of land.

168. These additional traks per kharwar of paddy over and above the fixed share, was the legacy of Afghans. During the governorship of Raja Sukh Jewan Mal (1753-62), a devastating famine visited Kashmir. For the rehabilitation of the peasants, the said Afghan governor provided them one lakh kharwars of grains as taqawi loan, but they were not able to repay it to the state. So from that time onwards, they had to pay one trak per kharwar as interest on this taqawi loan. (Hasan, op.cit., II p.771) Ramjoo Dhar, op.cit.,f.5a). But the statement of Kirpa Ram does not corroborate with that of Hasan and he states that they had to pay two traks per kharwar and two annas a rupee (Kirpa Ram, Gulzar-i-Kashmir, pp.255-56).

169. For.Sec.Cons.28 Jan. 1848, Nos.36-40. During the governorship of Colonel Mehan Singh over and above the state share five traks and two seers of grain were charged per kharwar from the cultivators share (Ramjoo Dhar, op.cit.,f.56).

170. For.Sec.Cons.28 Jan.1848, Nos.36-40. Sheikh Ghulam Mohiuddin the governor, who was very popular with his subjects for his social reform and equal treatment and religious freedom to all classes of people irrespective of their colour and creed, was also credited with having abolished zar-i-qazai and zar-i-kara-bashi (Mohiuddin Miskeen, op.cit.,f.106a.) He was also conferred with high sounding coveted title of Nizamul Mulk-itimad-ul-Daula by Maharaja Sher Singh for maintaining law and order and developing Kashmir into a prosperous province. (Khalil Mirjanpuri, op.cit.,f.183b.)

171. For.Sec.Cons. 28 Jan. 1848; Nos.36-40.
Besides this, peasants had to pay 1/2 trak of grain per
der kharwar from his share to Qanungo and Fatwari. The
other subordinate village officials any way employed for the
purpose of revenue collection such as sazawal, shiqdar, mugaddam,
Tarazudar, Hurkara, etc; also claimed their respective shares and it amounted to five seers and one pau of grain.

In addition to this, peasants having been left with no
grains for seed, had to borrow it from government stores from the
previous production. They had to pay a sort of interest known as musa 'ada. It was charged on the gross output (har-du-hissa) at an extra-ordinary rate of one and a half trak per kharwar of grain.

It may not be without interest to mention here that under Sikh predecessors, the husbandmen were responsible for the produce of their land-holdings without reference to the number of labourers employed on them. But this system was thrown to winds during the Sikh rule and the number of persons available was the

172. Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, f.66., Ramjoo Dhar, op.cit.,f.56; For. Sec.Cons. 28 Jan. 1848; Nos.36-40; A.Wingate, op.cit.,p.54; Vigne, op.cit., I, p.311; Hugel, Kashmir, p.27.

173. According to Vigne, the following method of weights was prevalent during the period under study:

- 3 red beads (berries) = 1 dang
- 41/2 kasyreh = 1 domreh
- 51/2 pul = 1 pau (a handful)
- 11/2 seers = 1 munawutu
- 16 trak = 1 kharwar
- 96 seers or 144 lb. English (Vigne,op.cit.,II, p.429 (Appendix No.1).)

174. For. Sec.Cons. 28 Jan.1848; Nos.36-40.
175. For. Sec.Cons. 28 Jan.1848; Nos.36-40; Hugel,Kashmir,p.28.
only consideration at the time of distribution of seeds.\textsuperscript{177}

Over and above this heavy demand, the peasant had to pay cesses such as Nazrana, Mandari, Tambul, Rasum-i-daftar, Rusudat, Husud-i-Kah, Sur-i-dehee, Rasd-i-Chungi, Thanadar and the like.\textsuperscript{178} Nazrana was levied four times a year. Mandri was charged for the sustenance of temples and other religious endowments. Tambul was taken on the occasion of marriages in the rulers family.\textsuperscript{179} Rasum-i-daftar was the abwab collected for the clerical staff and of Daftar-i-Diwani and was charged at the rate of five rupees per thousand kharwars of grain of a village.\textsuperscript{180} Rusudat was a tax collected on fruit trees (except walnuts); willows, vegetables, etc. and was demanded according to the agricultural productivity of a village. It normally varied from ten to hundred rupees from every village.\textsuperscript{181} Rusud-i-Kah, was realized from such lands which were categorized as waste-land (kah-charahi). From these uncultivable chunks of land every village had to pay one rupee and one anna for every hundred kharwars of long grass and half of the amount for the small grass.\textsuperscript{182} Sur-i-dehee was also one of the landed cesses and was charged at the rate of one rupee from small village and two rupees from a large one.\textsuperscript{183} Rasd-i-chungee was actually

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{177} Vigne, op.cit., I, p.310.
\item \textsuperscript{178} For comprehensive list of these cesses, see For.Sec.Cons. 20 Jan.1848., Nos.36-40; pp.9-16. Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, f.66 A. Wingate, Preliminary Report of Settlement operations in Kashmir and Jammu, p.54.
\item \textsuperscript{179} A. Wingate, op.cit., p.54.
\item \textsuperscript{180} For.Sec.Cons. 28 Jan.1848, Nos.36-40; pp.11,14.
\item \textsuperscript{181} Ibid., pp.10,14.
\item \textsuperscript{182} Ibid.; pp.10,14; Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, f.66; Hugel, Kashmir, p.29.
\item \textsuperscript{183} For.Sec.Cons. 28 Jan.1848, Nos. 36-40; pp.11,14; Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, f.66.
\end{itemize}
The peasants were obliged to pay certain portion of their produce as Kamiana to the artisans and village workmen such as carpenters, iron-smith, barbers, etc. They provided him agricultural implements and rendered other services.

In short the peasants got hardly one fourth of his produce for his own use, in return for his labour and time. This was not sufficient to keep his body and soul together, so he mostly lived on vegetables, milk, watermelons, fruits, etc; while on the other hand government realized three-fourth of the gross outturn without spending a single penny in the process of agricultural cultivation.

So far as the agricultural crops other than rice were concerned, government took a share and three traks (abwab) per hundred kharwars of grain from the share of the peasants.\(^{184}\)

Thanadari, which was levied at the rate of one rupee from a small village and two rupees from a large one, was a tax collected for thanadars who rendered their services to peasants by protecting them from thieves, corrupt and oppressive revenue officials.\(^{185}\)

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So far as the agricultural crops other than rice were concerned, government took a share and three traks (abwab) per
kharwar. However, three traks were charged only when government provided seeds and in case the cultivator sowed his own seeds, only one trak was charged as khurch (expenses). 187 When the full demand of revenue was realized, the peasants were bound to take back approximately one-third of the government share at the prevailing rates in the city magazines. 188 Vigne writes, "The price, I was informed, is regulated by the Maharaja (Ranjit Singh) at one rupi a kirwah (kharwar); but the ryot is first obliged to take back the twenty-five (out of 75) kirwahs (kharwars) at one and half rupi. The price, moreover, at which the Maharaja, upon representation made to him, had ordered the rice to be sold in the city, is sometimes exceeded by the demands of the governor, who puts the difference into his own coffers. It is useless to remark on the hopelessness of improvement under such a system." 189 Because of the fact, Lala Ganeshi Lal has said that by this method of commuting into cash, "the cultivator is sometimes put to loss and at others equalises, but gets any profit very rarely." 190

188. The revenue collected in kind was commuted into cash at the following rates during the year 1846.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rice per kharwar</td>
<td>1 annas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat per kharwar</td>
<td>2 annas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley per kharwar</td>
<td>1 annas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton per kharwar</td>
<td>5 annas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnip per kharwar</td>
<td>8 annas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mustard per kharwar</td>
<td>5 annas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulses per kharwar</td>
<td>3 annas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans per kharwar</td>
<td>8 annas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coriander per kharwar</td>
<td>8 annas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poppy seed per kharwar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

190. Lala Ganeshi Lal, op.cit., p.38.
During the Sikh rule no such report on land revenue administration was prepared which could furnish statistical information about the total amount of land revenue realized annually from Kashmir. However, some scattered reference about the total collection of land revenue are available from indigenous persian sources and accounts of travellers who traversed Kashmir during the said regime. But the information contained in these persian sources does not corroborate with that of travelogues, therefore, diverse figures of land revenue are available. For instance, Ramjoo Dhar writes that the annual amount of revenue from land during the governorship of Diwan Kirpa Ram (1627-30) was 3934625 rupees, but Vigne and Schonberg declared with one voice that it was 420000 rupees. The amount of annual revenue from land, according to the Major Leech was 1431823 rupees, when Mehan Singh was governor (1834-41) of Kashmir. But Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, the contemporary revenue document of his time, gives 2068691 rupees as the annual land revenue of Kashmir.

191. The annual revenue of Kashmir during the governorship of Diwan Kirpa Ram was 1290435 kharwars of grain in kind and rupees 2244390 in cash. The market rate of grain was one rupee, but two lakh kharwars of the grain from the government share, received in revenue, were sold to the shawl weavers at the rate of three rupees per kharwar. So the total annual revenue both in cash and kind amounted to 3934825 rupees. (Ramjoo Dhar, op.cit., f.5b).


193. During the governorship of Mehan Singh the annual revenue from land was 27,977 rupees in cash and 167246 kharwars of cereals in kind. The cost of one kharwar of grain was one rupee. For.Sec.Cons.16 Nov. 1843; Nos. 13-17.

194. The total agricultural output of Kashmir during the governorship of Mehan Singh was 2756255 kharwars and two-thirds of it, which amounted to 206891 kharwars was payable to the government as its land revenue demand (Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir,ff.1-55). But the revenue realized in kind was disposed of to the subject at the rate of one rupee per kharwar, For.Sec.Cons.18 Nov.1843, Nos.13-17.
According to Ramjoo Dhar the annual land revenue from Kashmir was 2320507 rupees, during the governorship of Sheikh Ghulam Mohiuddin (1641-46). But Lala Ganeshi Lal, who was an eyewitness of the period states that this amount did not exceed 120000 rupees. So one can get the same controversial figures of land revenue from time to time and source to source during the whole period of the Sikh rule. However, on the basis of the aforesaid data we can assess the average land revenue of Kashmir and we find it to work out to rupees 2525974 per annum.

Jagir and Dharmarth Grants and the Ownership of Land.

The arable land of Kashmir was categorized into Khalsa, jagir, dharmarth and khwud-kasht lands. The first category of land was the state property and was consequently under its direct supervision and administrative control. It was let out for cultivation and the revenue derived from it directly went to the state exchequer. The portion of the khalsa lands, which was divested by the Sikh rulers and their predecessors to the personages for serving the state either in civil or military capacity were known as jagirs. The grantees, known as jagirdars were authorized

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195. Ramjoo Dhar, op.cit., f.5b.  
196. Lala Ganeshi Lal, op.cit., p.38  
198. Ibid., Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, ff.183-87; Ramjoo Dhar, op.cit., f.5b.  
199. Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, ff.187-290; Ramjoo Dhar, op.cit., f.5b.  
to collect the revenue due to the state from the land assigned to them as jagirs. These jagirdars managed their jagirs either personally or indirectly through their agents.

The jagir was not only the basis of the social, economic and political position of the noble class, but the secret of the stability of the central authority also lay in the nature of handling of these jagirs. Therefore, a farsighted ruler could not handover the management of these jagirs to the people whose faithfulness was deemed doubtful. Sikh rulers suspected Kashmiri Muslims, who were possessing big and more jagirs than other communities that they might plot to overthrow their rule in Kashmir. So to weaken them economically, the jagirs, which were granted to them under the former rulers like Mughals and Afghans were confiscated by the Sikh governor Hari Singh Nalwa (1820-23). In this way thousands of jagirdars, who had long lived in comfort, were reduced to penury and subjected to absolute destitution. Some of them even migrated to other countries for good. For instance, the jagirs of Kanth and Sadat Hamadani families who had held them for generations together were resumed. The Muslim divines such as Shah Niaz Naqashbandi and Khawaja Munawar Shah were not spared and their jagirs were

203. For additional information, see supra p.
207. Ibid.
also confiscated. However, former succeeded in getting restored five villages of his jagirs from Maharaja Ranjit Singh through the influence of Moorcroft.\textsuperscript{208} The jagirs of latter were released by Sheikh Ghulam Mohiuddin in the capacity of Sahib kar of governor Diwan Kirpa Ram (1827-30).\textsuperscript{209} Village Talhal of the parganah Showara was granted to Khawaja Munawar as jagir.\textsuperscript{210}

The Sikhs granted these jagirs to their own favourites, whom they believed to prove loyal in strengthening their rule in Kashmir. For instance, Pandit Raja Kak Dhar, son of Birbal Dhar, who persuaded Maharaja Ranjit to conquer Kashmir, was conferred five villages as jagir.\textsuperscript{211} Likewise, Faqir Azizuddin whose family served Lahore Darbar in the capacity of diplomats and administrators, received four villages as jagir in the parganah of Divasar.\textsuperscript{212} The information pertaining to the jagirs of other jagirdars is also available in the official revenue document known as \textit{Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir}.\textsuperscript{213}

The independent and recalcitrant petty tribal Rajas of the Khakha and Bamba of Muzaffarabad and Uri were subdued by the Lahore

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{208} Muhammad Yusuf Saraf, op.cit., I,p.140.
\bibitem{209} Khalil Mirjanpuri, op.cit.,f.175b; Ghulam Nabi Khanyari, \textit{Wajizut-Tawarikh}, f.59a.
\bibitem{210} \textit{Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir}, ff.183-87.
\bibitem{211} Three of these villages were in the parganah of Divasar and other two in the parganah of Martand.\textit{(Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, ff. 183-87).}
\bibitem{212} \textit{Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir}, ff.183-87. For the personal expenses of Prince Kharak Singh, the heir-apparent of Punjab, a jagir of fifty thousand rupees was granted to him in Kashmir (Sohan Lal Suri, op.cit.,III,p.321). But according to Vigne, he was granted an estate worth one lakh rupees (\textit{Vigne},op.cit.,II,p.307). Likewise seven villages were assigned to Namdar Thakar in the parganah of Adavin.\textit{(Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, ff.183-87).}
\bibitem{213} \textit{Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir}, ff.183-87.
\end{thebibliography}
Darbar and were reduced to the status of nothing more than tributaries. But the Sikh rulers provided them big jagirs in Kashmir simply to earn their loyalty to strengthen their rule in Kashmir. Raja Muzafar Khan was assigned twenty eight villages as jagirs in the parganah of Manchahoma. Similarly Sultan Zabardast Khan, Raja Mauezud-Din Khan and Raja Mansoor Khan were granted eleven, eight and six villages as jagirs in the parganah of Patauttara respectively.

The grants alienated by way of jagir in perpetuity and heredity to those who rendered meritorious service to the Lahore Darbar or provincial government were known as mustamar-i-jagirs. They were also known as inam jagirs and were awarded by way of reward. For instance Raja Rahimullah Khan of Rajouri was granted a jagir, worth 11000 rupees a year in appreciation of his loyalty and help which he rendered to Maharaja Ranjit Singh during the Kashmir campaign of 1819. In lieu of this amount of money,

214. Lala Ganeshi Lal, op.cit., p.37. Hugel, who visited Kashmir, writes "on the ground, to his right (governor Mehan Singh), sat many of the Mohammadan Rajas, from the Baramulla and Muzaffarabad mountains, tributaries of Ranjit Singh. One of every family is detained as a hostage in Kashmir, and from time to time, they are obliged to bring large gifts to the governor, otherwise their tribute is raised; their present condition is mainly owing to their former habits of independence, which made it necessary for Ranjit Singh to lead his troops against their hill fastnesses." (Hugel, Kashmir and Punjab, p.116).
216. Ibid., Melvill, Punjab Government Records (1847-49) VI, p.216.
the revenue of five villages such as Aklar, Babgam, Bawalpora, Saibooj and Kanopora was granted to him permanently.\textsuperscript{219} Similarly, Ganesh Pandit Dhar, the Sahib kar of governor Kanwar Sher Singh, who headed a successful expedition against Ahmad Shah, the ruler of Iskardu, was granted village Seer of the parganah Kruhin as jagir.\textsuperscript{220}

\textbf{Dharmarth,\textsuperscript{221}} was the term, used by the Sikhs, for land donated by way of charity (khairat)\textsuperscript{222} to religious personages and institutions. It was in no way different from the \textit{madad-i-maash} grants. The land granted in dharmarth was \textit{kharij-az-jama}, because the revenue and other cesses due from it to the state, went to grantee, not to the \textit{khazina-i-amira}.\textsuperscript{223} The Sikh rulers were generally liberal in giving extensive grants of revenue free lands to religious classes of Sikhs and non-Sikhs alike.\textsuperscript{224} Likewise, when Kashmir became a part of Sikh dominion, the same policy was adopted. They not only confirmed the \textit{madad-i-maash} grants of former rulers but also alienated fresh grants. But it may be readily conceded that some Muslim religious establishments such as Jami Masjid of Srinagar lost a portion of its subsidy for political reasons.\textsuperscript{225}

\textsuperscript{219.} Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, ff. 183-87. The first three villages were in the parganah of Shawara and remaining two in the parganah of Manchahoma and Batoo respectively.
\textsuperscript{221.} Literally dharmarth means "by way of religious duty."
\textsuperscript{222.} Birbal Kachru, op.cit., ff.272a,b.
\textsuperscript{223.} Ramjoo Dhar, op.cit., f.5b.
\textsuperscript{224.} Indu Banga, op.cit., p.191.
The Sikhs became pioneers when they established **dharmarth** department in Kashmir for maintaining proper records of these charitable grants and to ensure that the grantees received what was donated to them. The revenue of certain villages was attached to it. In addition to this a portion of the government income derived from different sources such as *Mahal-i-Singara*, *Mahal-i-dagh shawl*, *Mahal-i-Jewahir bazar*, etc. went to the **dharmarth** fund. This fund was given to men of letters, imams, brahmans, gosains, Sadhus, Fajaris, Jotshis, miskins, faquirs, etc; regularly in cash and kind every month and every year. For instance, muslim divine, Khawaja Mohamed Shah Naqashbandi was given five villages in dharmarth. The guardians and servitors of shrines, Tirths and Dharmshals of known scancity also received allowance. For instance khadaman and wa'z Khwandan of the Shrine of Shah Hamadan received forty-seven rupees in cash and eighty nine kharwars of grain from **dharmarth** fund annually.

In short, the number of **dharmarth** grants of all categories ran into thousands. This statement is also in corroboration with the writings of G.R. Tylor, who toured Kashmir only one year after the eclipse of Sikh rule there. He states, "There are in Cashmere no less than 3,115 cases of land granted in dhurmurth, and besides these there are jageers, mustumurree grants, nukdee dhurmurth,

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231. Ibid., f.207.
jinsee ditto, and very many cases kharij-az-juma-e-duftur or totally unregistered."\(^{232}\)

The official revenue document *Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir* contains not only the names of *nakdi* and *jinse dharmarth* recipients but also specified areas of both irrigated and un-irrigated land granted by way of charitable grants. It even provides a separate list of the Shia-Sunni recipients.\(^{233}\) In short, state spent two lakh rupees both in cash and kind by way of *dharmarth* grants.\(^{234}\)

The most fascinating feature of the agrarian system of the period under study was the ownership of land. But unfortunately we do not have source material bearing on this aspect. The reason is that most of the contemporary sources are absolutely silent on this vital issue of agrarian system. However two European travellers namely Moorcroft\(^{235}\) and Hugel\(^{236}\) touched the subject superficially and concluded that whole of the agricultural land belonged to the state. Probably they were misled by the transfer of Jagirs by the government which they found contrary to the feudal system of western Europe. Therefore, they concluded that the state enjoyed the proprietary rights over land. There is no denying the fact that the proprietorship of jagirs given from khalsa lands vested with the state. But there was another category of land known as

\(^{232}\) R.G. Tylor, *Punjab, Govt Records* (1847-49), VI, p.60.
\(^{233}\) *Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir*, f.208.
\(^{234}\) Vigne, op.cit., II, p.120.
\(^{235}\) Moorcroft, op.cit., II, p.125.
khwud-kasht, where in the peasants enjoyed the rights of proprietorship in its strict judicial sense and which has been totally ignored by these European travellers.

Their statement is baseless as they did not understand the crux of agrarian system of the valley. First, they made no distinction between the khalsa and the khwud-kasht lands. Jagirs were granted from the former category of land which was the state property and not from the latter. Secondly they were grossly ignorant about the complex nature of the working of the jagirdari system in the valley. As such they erroneously equated jagirs with the estate of the feudal lord of the medieval western Europe. But actually jagirdar was given only the right to collect the revenue from land alienated to him by way of jagir and not the right to its ownership. Thirdly, the transfer of jagirs did not disturb the existing rights of the peasants of the khalsa lands. Because the transfer of jagirdars from one place to another meant only the transfer of a functionary of the government and not that of the land or the peasants within that jagir. So neither the resumption nor the transfer of jagirs did any way affect the rights of the peasants of the khalsa lands. Similarly, not a single instance of eviction of the peasants of khalsa land on the European pattern was available. So it can be
said with certainty that they enjoyed permanent hereditary occupancy and cultivating rights in that land. But it is not known whether this right was or was not alienable by sale or mortgage. As no information is available in this connection which could lead towards any definite conclusion.

The fourth category of land was known as khwud-kasht. The term khwud-kasht signifies nothing more than "cultivation of one's own land." So it can be well defined that the proprietorship of such lands vested with the peasants. It is further substantiated by the fact that these property rights were sold and purchased freely. These rights were also fully recognized by the government. Because the land transactions were to be legalized and for this government imposed a tax in the shape of gabalat. It was charged from the purchaser of the land at the rate of two annas and half paisa per rupee on the cost price of the land. Two annas of this amount went to the government treasury and the remainder was the Rusum-i-Patwari.

Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, the official revenue document of the period under study even provides information about the sale and purchase of the richest soil of the valley known as saffron.

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238. Ibid, ff. 81, 135.
239. Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, f. 135. Mohiuddin Miskeen, op. cit., f. 1036. The specified paper which was provided by government for legalising the sale-deeds of land was known as gabala. It was duly affixed with the sale of the then government.
Per bigha of all the three kinds of saffron lands, such as wantu, darmu and kuru, were sold at the rate of eighteen, twelve and nine rupees respectively.

Conditions of the peasantry

The whole system of revenue assessment and collection was exceedingly complicated and was always implemented in such a way that the corrupt revenue officials got the benefit. They collected cesses over and above the fixed land revenue and sometimes embezzled a large portion of the State revenue. Even the inferior state watchmen of paddy, stole a portion of the state share. Thus both the state and the peasant were at loss but the latter was the worst sufferer. His life would be extremely miserable, if he would not steal a portion of his produce by bribing the state watchmen. The extensive grazing lands, abundance of wild fruits and forest productions enabled him to survive. The corrupt revenue officials would not leave anything with him. By selling firewood from forests, milk, butter and pattu (home made woolen garments), he sustained himself and his family. But even then he was in extreme wretchedness. Moorcroft writes about the consequences of heavy taxation and plunder by the Sikh administrators of Kashmir.

241. Ibid., f.62.
242. For the detailed information about the classification of saffron lands, see, sub-chapter Agricultural Productions of the chapter "Agrarian System of Kashmir.
244. Vigne, op.cit., I, p.304.
246. A. Wingate, op.cit., p.54.
in these words "Everywhere, however, the people are in the most abject conditions, exorbitantly taxed by the Sikh government and subjected to every kind of extortion and oppression by its officers. The consequences of this system are, the gradual depopulation of the country; not more than about one-sixteenth of the cultivable surface is in cultivation, and the inhabitants starving at home, are driven in great numbers to the plains of Hindustan."\textsuperscript{247} Vigne was of the same opinion and he states "The first consequence of the oppressive nature of Runjit Singh's government is, that the inhabitants have been constantly leaving the valley for many years back."\textsuperscript{248} The harsh taxation and ruthless policy of the state officials compelled the peasants to give up the tilling of the land. All those facts contributed towards the decrease in the agricultural productivity. The total output of shali was twenty lakh kharwars in the early phase of Sikh rule,\textsuperscript{249} while in the time of Mughals it was not less than sixty lakh kharwars.\textsuperscript{250} So the masses in general and the peasants in particular were reduced to abject poverty. Victor Jacquement, has rightly said, "I strongly believe that every thing then under the arbitrary government of the Afghans, was similar to what is to be seen today, under the despotic and Capricious dominion of my friend Runjeet Singh, king of Lahore. India is no longer the poorest country in the world to me: Cashmere surpasses all

\textsuperscript{247} Moorcroft, op.cit., II, pp.123-23.
\textsuperscript{248} Vigne, op.cit., II, p.116.
\textsuperscript{249} Moorcroft, op.cit., II, p.135.
\textsuperscript{250} Vigne, op.cit., I, p.306.
imaginable poverty."^{251}

The famine of 1632-33, which ravaged the province of Kashmir,^{252} deteriorated further the conditions of the peasants. Food became so scarce,^{253} that people had no alternative but to eat carrion. Khalil Mirjanpuri, the author of Tarikh-i-Kashmir, states that near Jami Masjid in Srinagar "I saw a Musalman begar and a Hindu woman eating the flesh of dead cow." Birbal Kachru the contemporary of the Sikhs give a more distressing picture and writes that not only the prowling dogs but the famine-striken people passed their starving days on human corpses that remained undisposed^{255} due to the non-availability of shroud.

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252. Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, f.2.
253. Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, f.2.
255. In the same manuscript, we get the masnavi of Kazir Shah Muqabil, entitled "Gala Namaz." He states (on f.178b) that not to speak of the flesh of corpse but people ate the flesh of their living children." Shohan Lal Suri, the Court chronicler of Maharaja Kanjut Singh had written that the "famine was so fearful in Kashmir that food-grains were sold at the rate of four to five seers a rupee, population was hungry to such extent that they sold their sons and daughters." Umdatut-Tawarikh: II, p.261.
The peasants who were already groaning, were plunged into the deepest misery. For their survival the people quite naked left Kashmir for Punjab, Lahore, Sindh, etc., and many of them died by exposure on their way. When Maharaja Ranjit Singh came to know about the devastation of Kashmir he recalled the said governor and appointed Mehan Singh in his place to rehabilitate the people and to reorganise its devasted resources. He even issued sympathetic letters to the "kardars of Raja Gulab Singh, Lala Dilbagh Rai, authorised agent of the Raja Kalan, workers of Sardar Hari Singh, Sher Baz Khan of Funchh, Rahim Khan of Rajouri, Namdar Ahan of Thakkar and others that the Maharaja, out of his kindness, had abolished the tax upon grain going to Kashmir, adding further that whatever amount of grain and other merchandise of the traders entered Kashmir must be considered exempted from taxation and allowed to go free from interference."258

Besides this, Mehan Singh imported seed grains, fowls, poultry etc; from Punjab, Rajaori, Muzaffarabad, Karnao and Kishtwar to replenish the villages. He brought twenty lakh maunds of cereals at the rate of sixteen Hari Singhi rupees and sold the same to the peasants at the rate of three rupees per maund. He personally met the cultivators and encouraged them by allotting new farms on contract basis. He annulled the

Traki system, and fixed one half of the produce as government share but it remained in practice only for sometime. He also uprooted Gulbans (Gulwans), who often looted the whole produce of the peasants. He even appointed Thanadars in each parganah to see lest the revenue officials should oppress the peasants, with these and other inducements agriculture began to progress and for some time peasants took a sigh of relief. The emigrants from Kashmir returned to it when they heard about the prosperity of Kashmir.

While peasants suffered less or enjoyed more under one or two governors of the Sikh regime, the people on the whole and the peasants in particular suffered much. The peasants lost all interest in the land and were rather forced to plough it. They had not enough means to afford clothes for protecting themselves from the cold of the winter, which some times extended to six months. Their houses with thatched roofs were not better than cow-sheds. They lived mostly on vegetables and wild fruits, when government exported large quantities of rice to Ladakh, Tibet, Iskardu and other parts of Central Asia.

State Policy towards the Peasants

The importance of agriculture cannot be overlooked in a

263. 146-1/76, Wade to Maddock, January 22, 1840, Punjab Government Records, Lahore.
264. Gulam Nabi Khanyari, op.cit., f.50.
266. Hugel, Kashmir, p.34; Dasturul Amal-i-Kashmir, f.145.
State like Kashmir where from earliest times agriculture was the main source of livelihood to a large number of population and hence the main source of income to the State. But even then the Sikh governors did not take any interest in the development of agriculture. Instead of improving agricultural production, they imposed heavy taxes on peasants, in order to get sufficient wealth, so that they would be able to fulfil the wanton desire of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who was always in quest of wealth. If a cultivator wanted to cultivate a new tract of land, he had to fulfil some conditions. "All that is required of him, is to subscribe to the ordinary condition, that is, he must give three fourths of the revenue (produce) of the farm to the government. Even the remaining fourth is not wholly his own. It is taxed in various ways. The seed for the ground is supplied by the government but at usurious prices, so that the position of the zamindar (peasant) is most distressing."267 This clearly shows that the State instead of providing incentive to bring more and more land under cultivation, rather discouraged the peasants to do so.

The servile practice of begar which had been causing damage since earliest times was in full vogue at that time.268 Under its comprehensive name every kind of demand for labour or property was made but not paid for by the officials.269 The able-bodied

269. Lawrence, op.cit., p.411.
labourers mostly from the ranks of the farmers were sent away for long periods to distant places to carry the loads, when they were badly required to attend to their fields.

It became a great cause for the decline of agriculture.

Similarly the rapacious system of revenue exaction coupled with natural calamities such as earthquake, famines and pestilence adversely affected agriculture, because these factors were responsible for the depopulation of Kashmir. The population of Kashmir which was 800000 in 1822-23, was reduced to 120,000 in 1835. It was because of this reason that in 1835 a good portion of cultivable land remained uncultivated for want of labour and irrigation. It clearly shows that the Sikh governors of Kashmir did not pay any attention towards the development of irrigation. A. Wingate, who was the Settlement Officer of Kashmir in 1888, states, "Traces of disused irrigation and of former cultivation .... all point to a greater prosperity, which, by the end of the Sikh rule in 1846 A.D. had well-nigh disappeared." However, some

270. Birbal Kachru, op.cit., p.245
The earthquake of 1826 toppled down 1200 dwellings and killed 1000 persons. Similarly the cholera which followed this catastrophe, killed thousands of people and destroyed the economy of Kashmir. To quote Vigne, "A census of the dead was taken at first, but discontinued when it was found that many thousands died in twenty one days." Vigne,op.cit.,I,pp.281-82.
274. Ibid., I, p.308.
275. A. Wingate, op.cit., pp.50-79.
Sikh governors did try to improve the lot of the peasants by introducing some new high yielding seeds. Governor Moti Ram (1827-30) imported seeds of brown cotton from Yarkand and melons from Tibet into Kashmir.  

277. Ibid., p.143.