CHAPTER 3

AGRARIAN SOCIETY

3.1: Landed Aristocracy: The Zamīndārs and their relations with the Mughal State.

The presence of zamīndārs in Sind, is well recorded in the seventeenth century. We have Persian chronicles, as well as farmāns,¹ that attest to the presence of zamīndārs in Sind.

The zamīndārs of Sind, were generally tribal chiefs, who were established in particular territories, with their armed retainers. There is evidence to show that the landed potentates enjoyed their privilege either owing to their hereditary claim, or as a favor from the Emperor. The author of Mazhar-i-Shahjahānī, mentions old chiefs who caused troubles to the administration, being removed from the place, which they held for centuries, and been replaced by the obedient chiefs. As happened when Amīr Shāh Beg Arghun, replaced the troublesome old chiefs of Baluch tribe in Jatoi pargana of sarkār Bhakkar, and replaced them with Mahars (another tribe), by establishing them in the

¹ There are six farmāns of Aūrangzēb (1704-1705), Farukhsiyār (1716-1717) and Muḥammad Shāh (1722), which speaks of renewal of zamīndārī of one Mīr Shāhdād Baluch. These have been translated and published by Prof N.A. Baloch, Sindh: Studies Historical, Karachi 2007, pp. 335, 337, 339, 341, 345, 349.
regions.² It is interesting to note that in Sind, zamīndārs and peasants often belonged to same tribe similarly as elsewhere in Mughal India the peasants and the zamīndārs belong to same caste. During the course of annexation of Sind, the local zamīndārs were subdued by Qarā Beg [when he proceeded towards Manchur lake], and he obtained a large booty from them.³ These were probably the local tribal chiefs. Similarly zamīndārs of pargana Chandukah (sarkār Bhakkar) belonged to Abhira, Sangi and Bukiyah tribes.⁴

The author of Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī refers to zamīndārs interchangeably with arbābs, and he speaks of two sides of these zamīndārs/arbābs, who act as subordinates, and also as rulers. According to him, “when they work under the supervision of jāgīrdār, they act as subordinate officials of the state. However, an autonomous zamīndār acted as ruler, refusing to obey the jāgīrdār.” Under ijarāhdārī these arbābs used to agree to take ijarah on very high sums, but when demands of ijarah exceeded the paying capacity of peasants, these zamīndārs/arbābs absconded from the village and took to flight, since they themselves were not very well off, and therefore failed to

³ Tarikh-i-Sind, p. 245
⁴ Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī, vol II, pp. 13, 17, 18
meet their financial commitments. As a result peasants too usually took to flight afraid of the repraisal by the Mughal official as well as of arbāb.\footnote{Ibid, pp. 20-21.}

We come across another term, bhumīas which was a synonym for zamīndārs,\footnote{These bhumīas were "allodial proprietors," whom Colonal Tod identified with the zamīndārs. The Agrarian System of Mughal India, p. 177. Irfan Habib says, "a bhumīa is said to have been a real counterpart of zamīndārs in Rajasthan." P. 172; Tarikh-i-Ṭāhirī also records the presence of bhumīas. P.56.} who are mentioned in Mazhar-i- Shāhjahānī. In Sind the term bhumīas is used for Nuhanis, [the Baluch], who were living at the hilly pass of pargana of Bubakan (in sarkār Sehwan), and were engaged in cultivation, and assisted the Mughal administration in assessing and collecting the revenue of the pargana. They paid a cess called muqṭa‘i to the Mughal officials placed at Sehwan\footnote{Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī, vol II, pp. 135-136.} Later, due to the short sightedness of jāgīrdārs, a large number of them were killed by the imperial forces. As a result they joined hands with Nuhmardis, and in defiance caused destruction of the pargana.\footnote{Ibid. The reason behind this was, that some zamīndārs of Sehwan, who had an enemity towards them, instigated Shamshēr Kān, the jāgīrdār, to lead an expedition against them, despite the fact that these Nuhani bhumīas were very cooperative with the administration. As a result of which, their chief Natalah was}
zamīndārs belonged to same tribes, as a peasants and their interest lied in continuation of cultivation, they are reported to have opposed the destruction of peasants.9

From time to time, jāgīrdār often sought their opinion while dealing with the local tribal population. These zamīndārs also acted as mediator between the imperial officials and the defiant nomads; and helped in running the administration peacefully.10 The jāgīrdār trusted them and took their advice sincerely: he could count upon zamīndārs as his own people.11 Since they were helping in realization of revenue, their remuneration was to be paid by the jāgīrdār from his khālisah.12

'The zamīndār, was at liberty to allow his retainers to any portions of the land they proposed to cultivate, but he was always held individually responsible for the revenue of the entire pargana. The

9 Ibid, p. 131. When Shamshēr Khān planned to attack and kill Samejahs of village Dirā'ūn (Halakhandi), it was opposed by some zamīndārs of Sehwan.
10 Ibid, pp. 132-33. This happened when Shamshēr Khān, the jāgīrdār of sehwan had captured Husrah boatmen, who were troubling travellers, along with the Samejahs. Due to the intermediation of zamīndārs, not only captives were released, but Samejahs had promised to be obedient to the administration.
11 Ibid, p. 107. Bakhtiyār Beg, during his tenure in Sehwan, counted upon these zamīndārs, and did not tax them with oppressive exactions.
12 Ibid, p.20
servants and craftsmen of the village were paid in grain, even the
carpenter who mended the wooden plough or the patwārī who
weighed the grain at the time of bata." Dindār Kháñ followed a very
prudent policy with the zamīndārs. He bestowed a village on every
zamīndār, who could muster some strength, for the maintenance of
law and order, and also when need arose at the time of collection of
revenue. In order to improve cultivation in their area, these zamīndārs
or chiefs dig canals out of their own share without any help from the
administration, or adopted other irrigation devices as erecting a
Persian wheel. They also repopulated the deserted villages, for this
they were rewarded also. Dindār Kháñ, jāgīrdar of Sehwan, gave the
village of Amiri in jāgīr to Sayyed Yūsuf, and arbāb of Sann, and
village Thatta to Sayyed Jung, Sayyed Hasan of village Lak' alwi as a
reward, and ensured the safety of the roads, by keeping away the

14 Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī, vol II, p. 164
15 Ibid, pp. 13, 17-18; *Tārikh-i-Sind*, p. 113; *Tārikh-i-Tāhiri*, p. 58. The arbābs of
Sann and Bubeka planted Persian wheel to improve cultivation of indigo. *E.F.I.*
1646-1650, p. 119.
16 Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī, vol II, pp. 167, 224

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disturbing elements. But there were other times when these zamīndārs themselves created problem for the administration. The zamīndār Rāna Rūkun of Lahari Bandar violently confiscated the property of certain merchants. As a result Zafar Khān, sent son of Amīr Khān, serving in that province, against Rāna Rūkun, and by 7th September, 1655, this rebellious zamīndārs were severely dealt with. In another instance, the arbāb of pargana Kabar, due to his differences with shiqqdar of Halah Kandi, absconded, and joined hands with Samejah Unars, attacked the town of Halah Kandi and caused the death of shiqqdar and the destruction of the town. At that time Husām-al Din Murtaza Khān II was sūbedār of Thatta. He sent his son Sam-Sam al-Daulah. He then imposed heavy indemnity on arbābs of pargana Halah Kandi and Samwati, and obliged them to execute tamassūkāt-i-sh'aria (legal bonds). Unable to fulfill their obligation, they extracted money from the poor, peasants. However, Mughal Emperors instead of taming them sometimes followed the policy of appeasement towards these chiefs, by granting them jūzwī mansabs (petty mansab), and restoring zamīndārī to them on the

17 N.A. Baloch, pp. 315,316.
18 Inayat Khān, Shāhjahānāmā (tr). p. 509
condition that, they will be a helping hand for the governor.\textsuperscript{20} There were other zamīndārs, who had *ta‘luqa zamīndārī", and at the same time were rank holders also: whose zamīndārī was renewed from time to time. Mīr Shāhdād was the zamīndār of Abreja of pargana Hala Kandi, and maintained two hundred and fifty foot and sixty horses. A revenue order of Aurangzēb dated 1705, confirms the *ta‘luqa zamīndārī of Shāhdād Baloch in Pingharo of Gambat circle, pargana Halah-Kandi.\textsuperscript{21} It is already stated that the appointment of zamīndārs by grant from the court was a practice, which comes into particular prominence during Aurangzēb’s reign;\textsuperscript{22} he was largely motivated by the desire to establish loyal supporters, in order to counterbalance the power of the old and potentially seditious zamīndārs.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid, p. 34. Emperor Jahāngīr gave these mansabs to Jām Hāla and Rāna Umar of Kihar and Nakamarah clan, who were involved in robbery.

\textsuperscript{21} N.A. Baloch, pp. 315-328. Mīr Shāhdād was the ancestor of Talpur Mīrs, Mīrs who ruled Sind after the invasion of Nadir Shah. He was confirmed this zamīndārī along with the additional cultivated area, but with the condition that he will guard the safety of *ta‘luqa zamīndārī, and also of highways from Samejah dacoits. After the death of Noor Mohammad, his son Mīr Shāhdād became zamīndār of the area. See Lieutenant Hugh James, *Report on the Pargana of Chandookah in upper Sind*, in R. Hughes Thomas, *Memoirs on Sind*, Delhi, 1985, vol II, p. 712.

\textsuperscript{22} Irfan Habib, *op.cit.* p.386.
There were another category of zamīndārs, the religious persons who were granted lands as madad-i-ma‘ash which became a zamīndārī tenure over a period of time. Captain F.G. Goldsmith (1854), records the presence of Sayyed zamīndārs of Roree (Rohri), who had farmāns of Emperor Shāh ‘Alam (A.D. 1709), granting the zamīndārī rights to them. They were substantial proprietors, whose grants renewed with the conditions that they will clear the roads of robbers, will bring waste land under cultivation an offer prayer for the royal prosperity and permanence. The arbābs and muqaddams were also zamīndārs. These zamīndārs never waited upon Emperor Akbar, or Emperor Jahāngīr. They had obtained muṣammari farmāns in time of Jahāngīr by which, they had secured control over the productive tracts of land; which were cultivated by the peasants, without any help from the zamīndārs. They were among the fourth category of a‘immah class. The zamīndārs, were effectively the rulers of rural

24 This class often bribed jāgīrdār, if they even try to investigate into the condition of a‘immah class, this class of zamīndār came forward, paid them bribe and the same amount they recovered by imposing equal cess. Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī, vol II, pp. 191-92.
Sind. Their position was founded on wealth from their estates but there was more to it than that. Such a zamīndār earned his initial state through the traditional authority his family had built up over the generations, and maintained respect through his personal regulation. His power over the peasants (raʿiyyats) or the landless cultivators was visible and immediate: a word from him would turn out a whole village to repair a bund (embankment) or to pursue incalcitrants and the robbers.

The zamīndārs who were really cultivating the land, suffered sometimes at the hands of tyrant jāgīrdār. This happened when wakīl Qaḍī Pirāh, wakīl of Dindār Khān, forcefully took on undertaking from the arbābs (zamīndārs), to cultivate two to three times more than previous year in the khālisa villages under faujdār Dindār Khān. At the time of harvest, he demanded the amount double of the estimate, and under pressure arbābs and muqaddams agreed to pay ijārah, and charged the entire amount from the peasants, leaving aside their own cultivation. In this situation while some zamīndārs used to abandon

25 Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī, vol II, pp. 171-72. This atrocity were conveyed to the royal court by some Hindus of the town of Bubakan, under the leadership of Parbat, as a result a firman was issued prohibiting ijārah system and re imposition of ghalla-bakhshī.
the place (along with the peasants of their zamīndārī area) while other joined rebel groups, which happened in pargana Bubakan, Kahan, Patar and Akbarabad.26 Thus the peasants and zamīndārs together joined hands, who belonged to same clan, with the rebels against Mughal jāgīrdārs' oppression.27 As a remedy it was recommended that imperial army should put fear in their heart, so that if they harbor rebels or insurgents, they will be dealt in the same manner as the imperial officials deal with the recalcitrant.28 However, there was still a large number of local zamīndārs/tribal chiefs, who would not be supplanted altogether29 It was really important for the imperial administration to control these feudal lords, in which they succeeded to some extent because in Sind generally the farmer was at the mercy of the zamīndārs or arbaḥs and therefore, he followed his lord, and any revolt by zamīndārs meant the revolt of his dependent farmers. They would not dare to oppose them.30 The only option left to them

26 Ibid, pp.163, 172, 177, 198.
27 Ibid, pp.244, 245.
28 Ibid, pp. 197,198.
29 Bakhtiyār Beg had subdued such six Unar chiefs; Pāriyah, Badlah, Maḥmūd, Farīd, Jayūndah and Jūdah. Ibid, p. 94; Tarīkh-i-Sind, p. 125.
30 During the fau̇jdārī of Ahmed Beg, the Pahawar chief Baha-al-Dīn, revolted against him in retaliation to the imposition of gawshumārī tax and branding of
was to take flight from their location. In fact these tribal chiefs or zamīndārs were the real land potentates, who were an important part of rural social structure of Sind. Their contribution made a village prosperous and peasants happy, but their oppressive attitude, either deliberately, or under circumstances, led to the misery of peasants and destruction of villages. Their importance can be realized from the fact that the future ruling dynasty of Tālpur Mīrs was from the zamīndār class itself. The nineteenth century British reports also speak of zamīndārs as wāderō, which Robert Giles, the acting commissioner in Sind, described as, “a title of respect given to large zamīndārs. It could not be conferred upon lesser man. The wāderō already recognize there responsibility in regard to crime and assistance to government, while in no way regarding themselves as government servant.” These wāderōs were unwilling to accept the village headman ship as they feared that they had to recognize British overlord ship by that.” However the position of small land holders was shaken, as they were unable to make a living from their shriveling holdings, and were forced to mortgage their property to banīa moneylenders.

cattle, and when other chiefs supported Ahmed Beg, the rebels killed them. Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī, vol II, p. 155.
31 David Chessman, p. 110.
Gradually their land passed to their creditors,\(^{32}\) which was unthinkable during pre-British period joining agrarian society with these mercantile communities agrarian relations also changed, because earlier when in the rural sector of Sind kinship ties played important role, exploitation was less required. But with changed relationship the mechanism also changed and therefore, the presence of \textit{haris} (landless labourers), and the increased dependency of landed class upon them increased in the nineteenth century. They could not mortgage, sell or otherwise transfer their property as they wish unlike that in Mughal period. Since mostly the moneylenders belong to Hindu community as Muslims were forbidden by their religion to lend money on interest these financial affairs were taken up by the \textit{baniās} of Hindu community they were mostly a part of landed aristocracy. According to an investigation in 1896, Hindus held twenty eight percent of the occupied area in 1895-96 half a century before, they virtually had nothing.\(^{33}\) But Richard F. Burton blames the extravagant lifestyle of \textit{zamīndārs} for their loss of land to merchant-moneylenders. The \textit{zamīndārs}, maintained a lavish lifestyle, and borrowed money from

\(^{32}\) \textit{Ibid}. p.162.

\(^{33}\) David Chessman, Table. 8. p.145.
banias to retain their luxurious lives. As Richard F. Burton has recorded in 19th century, “As long as the zamīndārs could procure his daily bread and dose of bhang [opium], support a wife or two and possibly a dancing girl, wear a sword and ride a horse, he would rarely, if even, concedes end to think or care about his property.”

34 Richard F. Burton, *Sind and the races that inhabit the valley of the Indus*, London. 1851, p. 46
3.2: The Peasantry: Peasants’ relationship with the Zamīndārs and Jāgīrdārs.

The fact that peasantry in Sind was highly stratified as elsewhere in the Mughal Empire is evident in the seventeenth century gazetteer Mazhar-i-Shahjahanī which uses various terms for the peasants such as ra‘īyyat-i-khālis (pure peasants) ahshām-i-ra‘īyyat (peasants of submissive tribes), and ra‘īyyat-i-rēzah (petty peasants), for the peasants in Sind. There were other peasants also who were called muwājibī. The first two categories of peasants are generally consists of tribal people, who had taken up cultivation, got settled at one place, and were acting as owners of land chiefs/zamīndārs, while the latter category was of those peasants, who have means of cultivation i.e. land, cattle and tools, but they were small peasants and

1 Mazhar-i Shahjahanī, vol II, pp.20, 28, 103. There was a village Kahi Majubi, in Sehwan towards the Lakki mountain. Since it was situated at a very dangerous path, some to attacks of hill insurgents and Samejahs, the peasants of this village were given muwajibi (a sort of pension) for keeping the path to Lakki mountain open. This reward was adjusted against the revenue demand during the days of Tarkhāns. However, Qāsim Khān Namkīn adopted the same policy, and Nut Bandah Baluch, who were living in the village Lak ‘Alwi of San pargana [sarkār Sehwan] guarded other side of the path and in lieu of this, they were not charged with revenue demand, and whatever they cultivated was given in in‘ām to them. See p.218.
often belong to same clan, as their zamīndārs. There were agricultural labourers, who being landless were cultivating the lands of others. They were called haris. They were actually agricultural proletariats, who earned their livelihood by working in the field of landholders. They grew in large number, as the pastoral communities were turning into cultivators; the demand for these agricultural labourers also grew. In rural society of Sind, the kinship ties played very important role, besides their functional relations. These kinship ties becomes evident at the hour of crisis; it was due to this bonding that, in spite of much of oppression, the peasants of Sind never revolted against their

2 There is no mentioning of term haris in the Mughal period, but the colonial records frequently mention the presence of haris and the dependence of the zamīndārs on them. David Chessman, Landlord power and rural indebtedness in Colonial Sind 1865-1901, pp.12-73. Though Mazhar-i-Shāhjāhāni, also refer to these agricultural labourers, who worked in the fields of landholders (see p.215), and got share in the produce, against their labour. May be these haris can fall under the category of pai’kasht peasants. For the definition of pai’kasht, see Irfan Habib, The Agrarian System of Mughal India, p.130. Some haris were nomads, while some belonged to a settled population, who did not leave there own abode until there was a more suitable reason. This happened when in 1872-73 hundreds of haris left Sukkur and Rohri, where water supply was undependable, and came to places where supply from desert canal was offered. The desert canal supply was so abundant that haris could pick and choose, where they would work. (David Chessman, pp.74-75). But they were definitely the share croppers, as they have their cattles and ploughs as mean of cultivation.
zamīndārs, but against the arbitrary rule of jāgīrdārs; against whom the headmen zamīndārs, and peasants often stood together. Moreover, besides being point of the expediter class, these zamīndārs themselves harmed their peasants, it was either owing to the disinterest of the jagīrdārs in their territories and thereby adopting ijārah that caused oppression of the peasants by the imperial revenue machinery, or due to the constant raids of the nomads, or the inter-rivalries between ahshām-i-mardūm (tribal people), and ahshām-i-ra’iyyat. Whatever was the case infact the peasants remained the sufferers.

Yūsuf Mirāk often interchanges chiefs with peasants, and chiefs with arbābs and muqaddams, which clearly reflects the upward social mobility of the tribal people, who had settled as peasants, and being the chief of their clan, they acquired larger landholdings and became a part of landed aristocracy. These chiefs provided safety to the peasants at the time of cultivation and

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2. Ibid, pp. 20-21, 103, 155.
3. Tribal called ra’iyyat. Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī, vol II, p.162. The Samejahs had also taken up cultivation in area especially of Sehwan. PP.95, 96, 130-131. chiefs of pargana Kahar in Sehwan, who were engaged in cultivation, were called ra’iyyat. Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī, vol II, p.162. The Samejahs had also taken up cultivation in area especially of Sehwan. PP.95, 96, 130-131.
patronized a class of agricultural labourers. These *ahšām-i-raʿiyat*, were paying the revenue to the imperial officers, and due to their subservient and cooperative nature, they cooperated with the *jāgīrdārs*, and other revenue officials. Since their vested interest now solely lie in the cultivation; its security and improvement became their prime aim. They acted as informer, of about the possible raids of the hill tribes, and time to time informed *jāgīrdārs* about it. In return, the *jāgīrdārs* also awarded them with the reduction in revenue demand, and by giving *in'am* in form of land, or they were given new lands to settle down. The big peasants, who became the part of revenue collection mechanism, benefited by the share in the produce, but the peasants who were cultivating lands for others were also benefited by their share in the produce of the land. Sometimes their

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6 *Ibid*, p. 199. The peasants of *pargana* Darbelah [*sarkār* Bhakkar] cultivated their fields, while the Sahtahs chiefs guarded them with their army, from the fort of Karank against the Samejahs.


9 *Ibid*, p. 66. The Pahawar peasants replaced the *Machchis* of *Nairun Qalan*. This arrangement was basically to get revenue out of this area, as Machchis were defiant and were not paying the revenue.
share for their labour amounted to more than its holder. Similarly, the peasants who were living in the hill, the raids prone area, were supported further with suitable revenue demands, as the peasants of Jankar, Bazaran, Kachi, and of mauzā Nar of pargana Bubacan, who were constant pray to the raids of Chandiyah Baluch and Nuhmardis were assessed on the basis of ghalla-bakhshī, in which share of 5/9 was settled i.e. five with peasants, and four part taken as revenue while the peasants of Kahi Maju‘bi were exempted from revenue.

The peasants, who were working in fields of others, were given aid, and irrigational facilities by the landowners, but the cultivation was done as per the requirement of the landholder. But there are instances which show that small peasants, were cultivating the

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10 Ibid, p.215. The peasants who were cultivating the in‘am lands of the Sayyeds of village Tiri [in sarkār Sehwan], were taking four share, out of five, leaving only one share with the Sayyeds.

11 Ibid, p. 213. They were remitted one extra share so that they arm themselves against hill tribes of Nuhmardis and Chandiyah Baluch of sarkār Sehwan.

12 Ibid, p.191. The arbābs of Sann planted persian wheels as the irrigation device in their fields for the better produce of indigo. See E.F.I.1646-1650, p.119. Since water lift irrigation devices and digging of canal, were expensive ones, therefore the small peasants depended upon the zamīndārs and jāgīrdārs for these facilities. See also Tarīkh-i Sind, p.113, Tarīkh-i Tāhūrī; p.58.
jāgīrdār's khalisa sharīfā [probably without any share],\textsuperscript{13} but they were provided assistance in cultivation by the aiʿmmah class.\textsuperscript{14}

The peasantry of Sind mostly suffered at the hands of was two classes; firstly by those who did not have their vested interest in the cultivation especially the hill nomads Nuhmardis and Chandiyah Baluch, who were pure pastorals and often indulged in rapine, plunder, and abduction of men, and cattle. While they were doing it for their benefit by abducting peasants, their children and cattle, and selling them;\textsuperscript{15} there was another class, of imperial officials, who got benefited by the soil, but did not care about the land and its people; and instead their arbitrary behaviour forced the peasants to sell their children, women and cattle.\textsuperscript{16} The author constantly reminds that peasants are the real treasures, and they were friends of the Emperors and nobles, but they are suffering, while the Emperors, and officials [especially amīls] are passing their time in luxury; luxury which they acquire out of the peasants earning in the form of revenue, without

\textsuperscript{13} Mazhar-i Ṣāḥihānī, vol II, p. 180.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid, p.180.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p.p.17, 133. The hilly people Chandiyah Baluch, raided the 
paraganas of Baghbanan, Kahar and Akbarabad, captured peasants and sold them as slaves.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid, p. 21.
undergoing any toil or drudgery themselves.\textsuperscript{17} As it has been discussed by Irfan Habib that the frequent transfer of the \textit{jägîrdârs} led to the exploitation of peasantry.\textsuperscript{18} This exploitation by \textit{jägîrdâr} or by his officials was carried out mainly in three ways; firstly by the imposition of illegal cesses, secondly, by the imposition of \textit{ijârah}, and thirdly, imposing \textit{zâbî} on the rain irrigated villages, where keeping in view the arid climate of Sind generally \textit{ghalla-bakhshī} was preferred. As regarding the illegal cesses, in \textit{Jamm-i Bâdî}, author says that, “they [the imperial officials] have nothing to do with the prosperity of the peasants or region, they are only interested in raising money by wrong means.”\textsuperscript{19} There is another evidence of imposition of illegal cesses by the \textit{jägîrdârs}; it happened when Ahmad Khân became the \textit{jägîrdâr} of Sehwan (1628-29), he imposed \textit{gaw-shûmârî} (cattle tax), which was already abolished by Jahângîr and was still banned, when Ahmad Khân imposed it.\textsuperscript{20} The author of

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\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Mazhar-i-Shâhjahâmi}, p. 244.
\textsuperscript{18} Irfan Habib,\textit{op.cit}, p.369.
\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Jamm-i-Bâdî}, ff.43a-44a
\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Mazhar-i Shâhjahâmi}, vol II, p.155.
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Mazhar-i Shāhjahānī, is often found saying that the officials should not demand anything other than the, legal demands.21

In regard to the method of assessment, except the *baraṇī*, and *satīlabī* lands which have alluvial deposits or the places, where artificial irrigation devices were being used by the peasants, the peasants of Sind generally preferred *ghalla-bakhshī* as in this they shared the burden with *zamīndārs*, and in case of failure of crop they shared risk with the state, and in crop sharing they cultivated low yield areas also, but whenever the *zaht* was imposed on them even in the rain irrigated area,22 either their rebellion23 broke out, or their condition totally deteriorated; to meet the revenue demand thus imposed, they had to sell even their means of cultivation;24 and their

21 *Ibid*, p.51. There he says that the excessive exactions of *jāgīrdār* should be abolished by a royal decree.


23 The Magnejahs of *parganah* Kakari of Bhakkar *sarkar* revolted against, the imposition of *kānkūt* by Mīr Sayyed Muḥammad, Mīr ‘Adl of Amroha (posted as *hākim*), and fixing the quota of five *mann* per *bigha* irrespective of good or bad quality of crop. See Mazhar-i Shāhjahānī, vol II, p. 9; *Tārikh-i Sind*, p. 245.

24 *Ibid*, pp.146-147, 205-206. The peasants of Kachi village of *pargana* kahan and Bubakan were provided with reduced share in crop-sharing during the period of Shamshēr Khān Uzbek, but after his tenure, the *jāgīrdārs* of that area imposed
destruction further progressed by the raids of opponent tribal group. Their troubles further accentuate by the jāgīrdārs with the imposition of ījārah. The ījārah system was being practiced, due to the frequent transfer of the jāgīrdārs, they instead of collecting revenue through their agents; generally farmed out jāgīrs to arbābs, and muqaddams, and thus caused the suffering to the peasants. Yūsuf Mirāk states that , “this suffering was twofold: since the arbābs and muqaddams in Sind were also not very rich, and by succumbing to ījārah, they did not pay their own share of revenue and even exempted portions of their relatives, and shifted entire burden on the poor peasants. But after sometime, when paying capacity of the peasants totally declined, these arbābs fell short of the ījārah, and to avoid the arrest as a punishment, they rebelled and abandoned their homes and ran away. As a consequence of their flight, the peasants also fled from the area. The author also mentions that in Bhakkar, because of the imposition of ījārah, and the demand of revenue irrespective of the deaths (faūtī), and flights (farārī), had driven the peasants of

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25 *Ibid*, p. 20
Chandukah, Matilah and Takar into rebellion, after their arbâbs were imprisoned by Ḥākim Sālih.\(^{27}\) Here, the peasants supported their chiefs against the jāgîrdâr, the tribal ties perhaps being one of the reasons for this alliance. Sarkâr Sehwan suffered much of destruction of its peasantry at the hands of Mughal jāgîrdârs.\(^{28}\) Being unaware of the peculiarities of the region, they did not understand the problems and basic requirements of the peasants. Some of them were so tyrant that they did not even allowed the presence of waqîa nawîs (news reporter) in Sehwan. During his tenure, Dindâr Khân (1633-34 A.D.) did not accept waqîa-nawîs Na’imatallâh who came from Bhakkar, and second time Abd’al-Bâqî, sent by Man Singh from Bhakkar.\(^{29}\) Similarly he also did not bother to send his qānûngō to the court [with bailiff], when asked to produce account of dehsâla, and reason

\(^{27}\) Ibid, pp. 244-46. Jallô, the arbâb of pargana Matilah, Siddîq and Shâh Beg, the arbâb of the pargana Chandukah, were imprisoned by Ḥākim Sâlih. However, they could not capture Abd’al Wâhid, arbâb of pargana Takar; who was helped by the Samejahs. As a retaliation of the capture of their arbâbs, the arbâbs killed Dayâl Dâs, a relative of Man Singh, the diwân of Bhakkar.

\(^{28}\) Yusuf Mirâk even goes on saying the peasants [of Thatta] were better and prosperous during the days of Tarkhâns; when peasants were happy and were provided with better conditions. P.52.

\(^{29}\) Na’imatallâh was slain under the Sehwan fort but the administration did not bother. Ibid, p.177.
for the desolation of his areas. But the jagirdars who belonged to Sind as Mīr Ma‘āsūm Bhakkarī, Qāsim Khān Namkīn, and Abu’l Bāqā, they tried to improve the conditions of peasants of their area. Mīr Ma‘āsūm Bhakkarī, when appointed as a jagirdar of Darbelā pargana, in the first year of his tenure, according to recorded evidence, only five hundred bighas of cultivated land, belonged to peasantry and a‘immah class. To improve the cultivation he gave encouragement to the peasants, and by the next autumn crop (kharīf) the cultivated land in his area rose to fifty thousand bighas. He also instructed his ra‘ıyāts to not to clear off forest while looking for cultivable land; which suggests that land was in abundance, and he had encouraged the peasants to bring new area under cultivation. He had also got canals excavated from the river to plains, in order to provide better irrigational facilities. Similarly, when Mīr Abu’l Qāsim Khān Namkīn was given Sehwan in jagīr, except pargana Kahan, and

30 Ibid.
32 Zakhirat-ul Khwānīn, vol, p.205.Since there was a willingness of the state to recognize the peasants’ right of occupancy, and its anxiety to prevent him from leaving the land were both natural in an age where land was relatively abundant and peasants scarce.
Juneja and some parts of Khittah, the first thing he noticed was the abandoned villages. He summoned his qānūngōs, and asked for the list of the villages in the area. He called the absconding peasants and settled them in the villages, the peasants of Lakʾalwis of Sann, were also resettled by him; the peasants of Kahi Maʾujubi, were called from Bhakkar, and were resettled, similarly Nut Bundah Baluch peasants were got resettled in Lakki mountain towards pargana Sann, and their produce was given in inʿam to them. He started madad-i-maʿash grants to the scholars. But there were other jagirdārs also, who in order to save their territories from the raids of tribesmen, promoted submissive peasant tribes. As Lakah peasants were patronised and also the Pahawars. Dindar Khān also partially rehabilitated lakahs and Korejahs (submissive tribe peasants), in village Adarbeli of parganah Sann.

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34 Ibid, pp. 73, 108.
36 Ibid, p. 121.
37 To reduce the oppression of Lakah peasants, by the Samejahs, Dindar Khān reduced the state share to 1/4th for lakahs, the policy which was followed by Shamshēr Khān Uzbek but after them jagirdārs’ oppressive nature again revealed. Ibid, see p.p. 229-30 for lakahs, pp. 205-206 for their oppression, and pp. 66, 75-76 for the promotion of Pahawars.
38 Ibid, pp. 74-75.
Despite this fact, the tyranny of these jāgîrdârs remained due to constant transfers, they did not have any affinity with the peasants and the land, and they knew that they will be given another jāgîr, they did not care much sometimes even they were given better jāgîrs. As regarding the peasants though the peasants had their affiliation towards the kinsman zamîndârs, yet whenever other clan, dominated the area, they did not have any other option, but to succumb to new chiefs’ wishes. They sided with the zamîndârs, who were strong and also patronized by the imperial officers. But when these zamîndârs also oppressed them due to greed of jâgîrdârs, these peasants took to flight or sometimes became rebellious. And joined hands with defiants groups like Samejahs, Nuhmardis etc.

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39 *Ibid*, p. 177. Ahmad Beg Khân, whose arbitrary regime reminded the author of the tyranny of Al Hijjaj was simply transferred from Sehwan to Multan, even when the Emperor (Jahângîr) received lot of complaints against him.

40 *Ibid*, p. 80. In the parganah Lakut of Sehwan, the lakahs were the dominating the area, who were revenue payers, and were patronized.

41 Baluch of pargana Babkan, who were quite submissive, joined hands with Nuhmardis. Similarly peasants of pargana Khittah, Sann and Juneja [sarkâr Sehwan] joined hands with the Samejahs, and abandoned their homes and fields. *Ibid*, pp.135-36, 229-30.
and sometimes they took to armed revolt. These types of revolts not only cause the destruction of villages, but increased the strength of the defiant groups, and thus increased the problem of administration. Since the zamīndārs were their kinsmen, sometimes, when jāgīrdār in order to control the defiant tribes had decided to take actions against one or two of their groups, who had surrendered and taken up cultivation; the zamīndārs did not agree to the wrong and inhuman deeds of the jāgīrdār. They showed their affinity towards these peasants; which suited to their interest.

Thus, the oppressive tendencies of the jāgīrdārs and revenue machinery in Sind caused much destruction to the peasants. Not only the peasants, but sometimes the zamīndārs also suffered under their oppression. These two classes of rural society mostly belonged to Muslim faith, the Hindus were mostly engaged in trade but in the later part of the nineteenth century. They intruded into agrarian

\[42\] Ibid, p. 9. The Magnejah peasants of Kakari pargana of Bhakkar sarkār went into rebellion against the imposition of kankūt.

\[43\] Ibid, p. 131. When Shamshēr Khān Uzbek planned to attack and kill Samejahs of village Diraun (Halakhandi), who had given up their arms and taken to cultivation, was opposed by some zamīndārs of Sehwan.

\[44\] Ibid., p. 242. See also David Chessman, p. 162. He says that zamīndārs were mostly Muslims.
relations; and became a part of the ruling class of rural Sind. During the later half of the seventeenth century the peasants suffered the wrath of Mughal jāgīrdaṛs,\textsuperscript{45} not only the peasants, but smaller zamīndārs also suffered, and those who survived, later in the nineteenth century came under the clutches of banīas and sāhūkārs (money-lending merchants) because of their monopoly of rural credit system; and thus their entry into Sind agrarian society. Thus was called “The curse of the cultivators.”\textsuperscript{46}

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\textsuperscript{45} Yūsuf Mirāk, clearly states that, “people of Thatta were happier under Tarkāns, than the Mughal jāgīrdaṛs, and Sehwan had become the land of forsaken of the cruel and of the helpless [peasants] through the oppression of the jāgīrdaṛs.” (Mazhar-i- Shāhjahānī, vol II, pp.52, 173-74).

\textsuperscript{46} David Chessman, p.163.