ABSTRACT

The state of Rajasthan right from the very beginning is an important region both from the geopolitical point of view as well as for agricultural production and economy. For the state of Rajasthan, 19th century is also very crucial as after the conclusion of the Treaties of 1817-1818 between British East India Company and Rajput States, a new era began. Under the new system, the British exercised power without responsibility while the Rajput rulers were left with responsibility without power. Along with the political reorientation, the process of sub-ordination and integration of the economy of Rajput States with colonial economy was started in Rajasthan. This process of change and transformation was spread over a whole century and every institution underwent a change, and modified to suit the need of colonial economy. With this background, the present work aims at the study of the trends and patterns in the movement of prices of food crops and agricultural products other than food crops.

The present work is based on the various primary and secondary sources, particularly primary sources available in Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner in Rajasthani like Nirkh Bazar, Arhsattas, Chittis, Bahis etc.

The present work forms a detailed study of “Movement of Prices in Rajasthan during the 19th century”. In this regard I have divided my thesis into six chapters which are as follows:
I. Geographical condition and historical background of Rajasthan

II. Agricultural Production

III. Movement of Prices of Food Crops

IV. Movement of Prices of Agricultural products other than Food Crops

V. Usage of Currency (coinage) during the period under review

VI. Land Settlement of the area during the study period

Henceforth, in the first chapter, an attempt has been made to highlight the geographical condition of Rajasthan, geo-political and historical background of Jaipur, in which, we have discussed its topography, the aravalli hills, its drainage, canal system, industrial region, it’s climate, types of soil, it’s deserts and the rulers of Amber (Jaipur) state during the 19th century. The Aravali ranges run across the state from north-east to south-west. The area lying west of the Aravallis is covered by vast stretches of sand, that places interrupted by rock outcrops and inliers. However, the drainage system of Rajasthan was largely determined by the great Indian watershed which divides the drainage into the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea. The small streams were also utilized for the purpose of draining of water while the eastern part is drained by the Banas river with its tributaries and the Chambal river. The canal region covers north-western part of the state, though this area is a part of western arid region but construction of canals (Rajasthan canal, Ganga canal in Ganganagar has changed its geographical condition and subsequently has influenced its economy greatly. There are four macro regions in Rajasthan namely, (1) North Western region, (2) The Aravalli Hills, (3) The South-East

The main seasons or climate of Rajasthan has been divided into three major conventional stages:

(i) Hot weather season (March to mid June)
(ii) The season of general rains (Mid June to September)
(iii) The cold weather season (October to February)

The soils of Rajasthan state can be divided into seven different types: (1) Desert soil, (2) Grey and brown (desert) soil, (3) Red and yellow soil, (4) Ferruginous red soil, (5) Mixed red and black soil, (6) Medium black soil, (7) Alluvial soil.

In Rajasthan, the erratic nature of the rainfall used to affect the progress of agricultural production. The region received between 50 and 100 cm of rainfall annually. Most of it is concentrated in the monsoon month of July to September and about to 20 percent of it during winter season. This rainfall was most significant for agricultural production.

My main focus is on the Jaipur (Amber) region of Rajasthan, because of a tremendous number of local sources about the region. Jaipur was one of the important region of the Rajputana in the 19th century. It is situated in the north-
eastern part of Rajasthan, lying between 25°41' and 28°34' North and 74°41' and 77°13' East. The main rulers of the Jaipur state during the 19th century were Pratap Singh (1778-1803), Jagat Singh (1803-1819), Jai Singh III (1820-1835), Ram Singh (1835-1880) and Madho Singh II also known as Kayam Singh (1880 to 1922). During the reign of Jagat Singh (1803-1819), a treaty was signed with Jaipur by the English East India Company. Later on, few other treaties were also signed between the East India Company and Jaipur rulers.

In the second chapter, attempt has been made to discuss about the various agricultural products such as the food crops viz. Rabi and Kharif in the various villages and their total production in one year. The major food crops were wheat, gram, jowar, barley, rice, bajra etc. and major cash crops were opium, tobacco, indigo, sugarcane, etc. Moreover the various means of irrigation are also taken into account in this chapter for example, Kachha and pucca wells, talabs, nadi, tanks, ponds and nala etc. The water from the baoli was used for both the drinking as well as for irrigation purposes. Oxen, charas etc. were also used in the rural areas for pulling water from the wells. In the 19th century, the state government of that period also spent money for the construction of various tanks and damous etc. for the welfare of the common masses. The British also introduced new techniques of irrigation in Rajasthan during the 19th century which had great impact on the irrigation system of Rajasthan. Famines which occurred in the 19th century in Rajasthan and the causes of these famines viz. failure of monsoons, weather conditions, hail, frost, locusts etc. have also been discussed.
In the third chapter, on the basis of local contemporary records, analysis of the prices of different food corps through the different tables (Appendix I) and graphs per year have been made. On the basis of this analysis, we find that in the 19th century in *pargana* Sawai Jaipur, Movement of prices of different food corps and agricultural products has shown considerable fluctuation in the level of the prices and a picture of overall rise in the prices is slightly emerged. Taking into consideration 1818 as base year in *pargana* Sawai Jaipur, the average prices of major food crops like wheat bajya, wheat katha, gram, bajra and jowar show a slight rise in prices over five decades (1818-1859).

In the fourth chapter, on the basis of primary archival records like *Nirkh Bazar* of different years of the 19th century, I have tried to study the prices of different agricultural products in addition to the food corps. However, we have arranged these records in the form of bar diagrams and tables. These are shown in Appendix-II in the thesis in Tables 29-56 and in figures from 68-105 in the form of diagrams. There we find a considerable fluctuation in the level of prices. Products like oil, gur, pulses of mung, mung deshi, and maida have shown decline in their prices over the years spanning from 1818-1859 A.D. However, in case of sugar, the prices showed steep rise during 1854 and 1858 in the *pargana* Sawai Jaipur. We have also analyzed the trend of prices of agricultural products other than food corps in *pargana* Sawai Jaipur during the period of five decades (from 1818-1859 A.D.). This period can be divided into two phases –
First phase of fluctuation

Second phase of stability.

Between 1836 and 1850, the prices of Besan have shown neither rise nor decline and have remained constant. In the first phase, prices of sugar, were stable but in 1850s prices were fluctuating.

In the fifth chapter, we tried to explain the coinage system in Rajasthan during the 19th century. We find the cost of silver rupee was more costlier than the copper takas during 1835 and 1852 but after 1857-58 the prices of silver rupee declined slightly and ultimately the silver rupee was equal to 19 copper takas because of the disturbing condition in the country. In Jaipur State up to 1869, there were five mints operating. Then, only the Jaipur mint was retained and all others were closed. Gold muhars were being struck in large quantity since the opening of the mints and were current throughout Rajasthan and also in distant parts of India. In 1818, two types of silver coins were current. ‘Madho shahi’ rupees and the ‘Jagat shahi’ rupees. Maharaja Ram Singh also struck silver coins weighing 175 grains. Those struck by Maharaja Madho Singh were known as ‘Hali’ rupees. In the first decade of 19th century, there was a fluctuation in the silver value of copper. This has been shown through the attached appendices III, in the form of various tables.

In the last chapter, we tried to highlight the land settlement of the area during the 19th century. The various settlements and ways of revenue collection viz., lata, latai, muqtai or muqta system, ifaradari, jinsi, zabti system etc. for
revenue assessment were prevailing in Rajasthan. The lata system was interlinked with the Batai system. The other means viz. Muqtai or Muqta system of revenue assessment was also prevalent. The revenue officials collected revenue as jinsi from the village individuals. Moreover Ijara that was fixed revenue realized from a zamindar or cultivator was also prevalent. The revenue was paid both in cash and kind.

Thus keeping all these things in mind, the geographical and historical background of Rajasthan, it’s agricultural production, the prices of food crops and agricultural products other than food corps, usage of currency of the mentioned period, and about the land settlement of Rajasthan, we came to the conclusion that in the 19th century in Rajasthan, there was fluctuation of prices of the various food crops. Uptil now, no major work has been done on Rajasthan that covers the 19th century using local records. Hence it is my humble effort to fill this gap.