CHAPTER III
STATE OF AGRICULTURE IN GURU’S TIMES

India has been an agricultural country since time immemorial. Except for a small minority in Guru Nanak’s time, India’s vast population lived in villages as they have lived down to the present period. The main feature of medieval India’s economy was production chiefly for local consumption. So agriculture was mainly a way of subsistence for life rather than a profitable occupation. The peasant or the cultivator was the backbone of this economy. He tilled the soil, and worked hard throughout the year, yet lived in utter poverty and hardship as is evident from Guru Nanak’s Bani. Land refers to the resources provided by nature for man’s aid. By land it is meant the material and the forces which nature gives freely for a man’s aid in land and water, in air and light and heat. Guru Nanak expresses his ideas about land in the following couplets:

‘The earth, the vessel full of resources
has been endowed by God but once,
It depends on the efforts of man
how much he takes out of it.’

An attempt has been made in this chapter to study the system of agriculture during Guru Nanak’s time and Guru’s view points on the same. Section 3.1 discusses
the systems of cultivation, whereas types of crops, owner-cultivator economic relationship, system of irrigation, agricultural credit, agricultural marketing, land revenue and role of State have been discussed in Section 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7 and 3.8 respectively.

3.1 Systems of Cultivation:

There are two basic systems of cultivation, viz. intensive and extensive. In intensive cultivation, labour and capital play a more important role than land. It means that units of labour and capital resources employed are more than those of land resources. Extensive cultivation is that type of cultivation where labour and capital inputs are proportionately less than land. Extensive cultivation was prominent at Guru Nanak's time because of inadequate technological developments and availability of land.

The method employed in agriculture was primitive. At the beginning of spring, farmers started ploughing the land with the help of ploughs drawn by oxen. 'Hala' was used to plough the land. The ploughing was done generally three or four times with a view to making the cultivation more productive. When the land was prepared by ploughing, the work of sowing started. When the crop became ripe, the harvest operation began. After the corns were reaped and bundles made, they were
to be carried to the threshing floor where it was stacked. Then winnowing was done by scattering corn with a winnowing fan or baskets in the direction of the wind. The above system is depicted in Guru Nanak Bani in the following couplets:

When the crop is ripe,
it is cut then,
only the straw and hedge remain.
Alongwith the bristled ears
the crop is thrashed.
and by winnowing
the corn is separated from the crop.
Joining together both the quern stones
People come and sit down
to grind the corn.  

Land cultivation was a round the year occupation. The farmers had to work day and night to cultivate and protect the fields from stray animals and others (including the grain lifters) who might turn up at the harvest times. His busy periods were the seasons of summer and autumn for harvesting and planting, which in Guru Nanak’s Bani have been referred to as Haari and Sauni:

For me, the Harvest of the spring
is the Lord’s Name,
Yea, the Lord’s Name is again
The Harvest I gather in Autumn
The autumn harvest, Kharif, also known as Sauni, started in the middle of September and continued through November. This was quite a busy season for the farmer. He had to harvest the crops in different fields as they ripened and at the same time to prepare for sowing the fallow fields.

Guru Nanak delivers his spiritual message through the system of cultivation in the following couplets:

Make thou God's fear the farm,
purity the water,
Truth and contentment the bullocks,
humility the plough,
Mind the tiller,
meditation the proper condition of the soil
and God's Union the suitable time
The Lord's Name, make thou thy seed
and His grace thine corn heap
Thus shall the whole world
seem false to thee.

The primitive technology was mainly employed to cultivate agricultural land. The wooden plough, the toothed harrow, the smoothing board, the levelling beam, the sowing drill, spades and sickles were the common implements used in the whole process of agricultural production. To increase the productivity of the soil, application of manure was needed. Manures were prepared from animal dung, bones of cows and
fishes, etc. The crops depended mainly upon rainfall and partly on wells and canals. To convey the idea of spiritual upliftment, Guru Nanak uses the common vocabulary familiar to village folks and indirectly portrays the system of cultivation as under:

Let thy mind be the farmer
and deeds the farming
and let thy body be the farm
water it, yea, with effort.
Let the Lord's name be the seed,
and contentment the furrowing,
and let the fence be of humility.
If thou doest deeds of love,
thy seed will sprout and
fortunate will then be thy home.7

The quantity and quality of crop and harvest yields depend on the quality of seeds. To quote, Guru Nanak:

As you sow, so shall you reap.8

At other places Guru Nanak writes:
They, who have sown the seed of the Name have departed with honour.
How can the broken seed sprout now?
If the seed be whole
and there be proper season,
then the seed germinates.9
Sow the seed of truth
in the soil of faith.
Practice thou the tillage
of such a type.\textsuperscript{10}

Preparing the body field,
he puts into it the seed of the Creator.\textsuperscript{11}

Such examples are not wanting in Guru Nanak's Bani. Referring to the human body as a farm, and to the actions of a human being as seeds and the Nam of God as water, Guru Nanak points out the three basic needs of a farmer to have good harvest as depicted in the following couplet:

Thy body is the farm, thy actions the seeds, it is watered by the name of God, in whose hands is the whole earth. Thy mind is the farmer, and when the tree sprouts in thy soul, thou attainest to the State of Nirvan.\textsuperscript{12}

Similar views are expressed in the following couplet:

If good actions be thy farm, and thy seed be the word, and the way of Truth thy water,
the growth will then be of faith.\textsuperscript{13}

Guru Nanak gives a very high position to a farmer, who, to him, is like God, who feeds the entire world without having any distinction between the high and the low or the rich and the poor in his mind as is evident from the following:

The true and wise farmer knoweth, that one sows the seeds only after one hath tilled the land and furrowed it.\textsuperscript{14}

Another busy time for the farmers was the summer harvest, rabi, commonly known as Haari already referred to in an earlier passage.\textsuperscript{15} This was the time when the crop had to be cut, threshed and winnowed, and the grain for the year and the fodder for the animals to be stored.

3.2 Types of Crops

In India a large number of crops were sown and harvested. They may be broadly divided into edible and non-edible products. They may be further classified as (i) cereals, (ii) pulses, (iii) oilseeds, (iv) fibres, (v) dyes, (vi) drugs, (vii) spices, (viii) vegetables, (ix) pot herbs, (x) fruits, and (xi) fodder. This division, however, is not strictly logical as some of the crops fall into more than one category.

Wheat, being the most important agricultural
produce, was extensively cultivated in northern India. It is a Rabi or winter crop. Besides, there were a large variety of food crops such as barley, peas, lentil beans and pulses. Among them barley, wheat, and rice were the staple food of the people. Barley as a cereal was of no less significance. It was abundantly produced in Kashmir.

Oilseeds were also extensively cultivated as oil was an essential cooking medium and was also used for lighting lamps. It was used in medicine in the treatment of mutilations and injuries. Tila (sesamum), sarsapa (mustard) and eranda (castor) were the principal oilseeds. Sugarcane cultivation was also widely practised for manufacturing sugar. Apart from harvesting of cereals, the cultivation of vegetables and green leaves was also practised. India’s fame as an exporter of spices to the distant regions of the globe is legendary.

Therefore, agricultural produce of the country as a whole could not have been very different from what it is today except for the newly introduced cultivation of tobacco, tea, coffee and the extension of jute crop and the like. Some of the important products mentioned in Guru Nanak’s Bani are wheat, rice, sugarcane, oilseeds, cotton, and milk products like curd, butter, ghee (purified butter) and sweets made out of milk, and coarse sugar. Fruits of various varieties were produced in many parts of the country. Some of the
fruits appearing in the Adi Granth are: amb (mango),
angoor (grapes), khajooran (dates), khakhrian (melons),
ber (a big berry fruit), kelay (banana) and dakh
bijoorian (a fruit grown around Bijaur).18

The medicinal herbs, spices and fragrant wood were
grown in large quantities and found a market in and
outside India. Guru Nanak describes various medicinal
crops in the following couplet:

The bitterness of the gourd, colocynth,
colotropis procera, thornapple
and the seed of aza-dirachta,
abides in the mind and mouth of him,
who remembers Thee not, O' my Lord!19

A large number of industries and crafts were fed
on the surplus of agricultural produce of which there
was ample to spend and spare.20 These were cotton,
jute, textiles, unrefined sugar, scents, liquors
manufactured from unrefined sugar, mahwa, handloom
weaving, oil crushing (through the oil process Ghani)
and rice husking.21 Guru Nanak describes the process
of making gur (unrefined sugar) from sugarcane in the
following couplet:

See how they cut up the sugarcane
and bind its feet,
and then, men strong of limbs,
crush it in a crusher,
(and thus the gur is made).22

In a symbolic way Guru Nanak speaks of the distilleries and the raw material out of which country-wine was distilled:

Gnosis thy molasses,
concentration the mahua flowers,
deeds the bark of the kikar-tree,
faith the distilling pot,
the plaster of love,
thus yea, is the elixir of life distilled.23

Therefore, it can be understood that during those days food and commercial crops were plenty. But only surplus agricultural produce was marketed.

In an economy of Guru Nanak’s vision, agriculture is to be made a service oriented industry and not a profit earning one. To quote him:

‘None ever obtains fruit without service,
Service is the most exalted action.’24

Since service to mankind is the objective of agriculture, the farmers are to produce only such commodities as are useful in sustaining the people’s lives and not such ones as harm them. They are not to produce crops like tobacco, opium-poppy and hemp (narcotic) etc. which are hazardous to human health and even life.
3.3 System of Irrigation

Water is indispensable to agricultural production. It has played a vital role in the attainment of abundant and luxuriant vegetation. Advancement of agriculture is directly affected by irrigational facilities. Irrigational works were generally carried out by two systems, viz., natural and artificial. Rains and rivers are the basic natural sources of water. They affect the agricultural production in two ways, negatively and positively. Timely rains and optimum water level of river increase agricultural production, while heavy rains and flooded rivers can prove dangerous to the agrarian economy. But human efforts can exploit the negative aspect of natural sources by making reservoirs resulting in the growth of agricultural production. We find references to irrigation of fields by artificial devices like canals and wells and the like in order to water the land so that they would yield abundant corn. Thus use of artificial means of irrigation is not a discovery of the modern age but it was in practice at the time of Guru Nanak as well. Rainfall was the major source of irrigation during those days. But as the timing and quantum of irrigation was uncertain, cultivation might not be possible for whole of the year. Therefore, system of artificial irrigation had to be resorted to.

If the soil had retained the dampness of the rains
it was easier for the farmer to plough, but if it had not rained he had to irrigate those fields with water drawn from the well or from the Persian wheel. To Babar it was a strange novelty to see such kind of wells in Hindustan which were used for irrigational purposes. In Guru Nanak Bani, these wells are referred to as Rahats or Arhats as conveyed in the following couplet:

As do rotate the buckets
hung on the chain of the persian wheel,
One being emptied and the other filled
So is the play of our God.

Guru Nanak used the symbol of Rahat or Arhat with deeper meanings attached to it indirectly referring to the system of irrigation prevalent in those days. In Rag Basant Hindol he writes:

Make (service with) hands
thy Persian wheel, (Arhat or Rahat)
and the chain and the buckets
and yoke thy mind,
like the bullock to run it,
and then irrigate thy body
with the God's nectar.

'Rahat' or 'Arhat' became quite important because irrigation through ordinary wells was quite a difficult
process. It involved strenuous manual labour to draw water by buckets tied at one end of the string, the other end being in the hands of the one who had to pull the bucket out from the well. This process is conveyed in the following couplet:

Yea, he's like the pot tied to a string
and goeth in and cometh out (of the well)
of the skies and the under worlds.28

Usually such wells were popular with the womenfolk of the villages who drew water from these wells for domestic needs. The domestic animals like cows, buffaloes, etc. also got water from these wells. Apart from these ordinary wells or Persian wheels the land was also irrigated by rivers and canals.29

But main source of irrigation was rainfall. Livelihood and prosperity of the masses in general and the cultivators in particular depended on timely and adequate rainfall. If rainfall was scanty, the consequent draught was always followed by scarcity, misery and distress.30 So the farmers waited anxiously for the two months of the rainy season - Sawan and Bhadon on which depended their existence and also major part of the state's income. The importance of the rains for the farming community can be judged by the following couplets of Guru Nanak:

when it rains there is joy all around;
in water lies the key to all life.
It is the rains that grow food,
sugarcane & cotton
which giveth to all a covering.
When it rains the cow hath grass to graze,
and the housewife the curds to churn;
From this is the ghee with
which is the sacred fire propitiated,
and the Yajna and worship performed,
and all our works are blest.31

Stating further about the importance of rains in
country's life, Guru Nanak says:

'"The famine goeth if it rains well
and the streams are full."32.

Irrigation is fruitful only in case of fertile
land. Guru Nanak describes this in the following
couplets:

Why irrigatest thou the field of saltpeter
and thus wastest thy human life?33

* * * * *

By sowing crop in the calcareous soil
how can one obtain profi t?34

3.4 Owner-Cultivator Economic Relationship
The productivity in agricultural sector is
dependent both on technological and institutional
factors, as both the factors are complementary in the process of agricultural development. The institutional factors such as existence of feudal relations, small size of farms, sub-division and fragmentation, insecurity of tenancy rights, and high rents worked as disincentives to farmers to increase production.

Feudalism was the prevailing system during those days. The King had allotted 'Jagirs' and vast areas of land to the ministers, to the mansabs and other influential people. This was necessary because the King had to keep himself safe and peaceful on the throne. It had resulted in a widening gap between the farmer and the landlord. There was a class of landless agricultural labourers. Further the feudal lords charged the peasantry under their control much higher taxes. Amongst the producing classes, the agriculturists were the worst sufferers. The major portion of the produce of the land went to the state in the form of land revenue and other taxes. A portion of the rest went to the pandha, maulvi, and the priests. Another part went into the pocket of the village sahukar, in the form of interest on loans.34A

Guru Nanak gave profound thought to the ownership principle. He held that the real owner of the whole wealth of natural resources is God Himself who distributes it among His beings as He pleases. To
Guru Nanak, in these words, puts forth a paradigm on which a system of ownership can be evolved in which the Sangat—the representative of God on the earth—is the custodian of the whole wealth of natural resources of the State. It is the Sangat (the congregation of all the people) who will be authorised to distribute the natural resources among the individuals for the purpose of production or any other use. For example, land, which is the major factor of production will be distributed by the Sangat, through its representative body consisting of members selected through consensus, among the local units of the Sangat, however, keeping with it the area of land required for the public utility services and other public sector projects. Each local unit of the Sangat will distribute the land at its disposal among the individuals—the private sector entrepreneurs—for farming, running a factory or any other use. No rent is to be paid on land to anyone, as land is free gift of nature. However, the receiver of a piece of land will not be the owner of it but only a user of it. It will remain with the
entrepreneur only till he uses it for the purpose for which he has got it.

Though Guru Nanak was not against one’s right to own property or business, he advocated for collective ownership of means. The principle of trusteeship was expressed by the Guru:

To make use of all things in this world.
And not to deem them as one’s own
but only God’s property.  

Guru Nanak stressed the need for common ownership of land because individual right to property develops a class of ‘Haves’ and ‘Have nots’ which leads to clashes and tensions.

About the ownership of land, the Guru said:

"The God’s riches belong to all
it is the worldly who create distinctions.
But for this we are ourselves to blame.
For we know not how to manage treasure."  

Accordingly, whatever goods available in the world are to be held in common (by the community) and not individually. Therefore, there is no question of paying rent to the landlord.
Guru Nanak, therefore, favours neither the Zamindari system nor payment of rent. In the words of Kabira, Guru Nanak's contemporary, "Land is God's, the smuggler has occupied it". This statement declares the landlord to be a smuggler who has unlawfully occupied the land which fully belongs to God.

Merciless realization of the taxes without any consideration of the natural conditions resulted in economic exploitation of the peasantry, as is evident from the following passages:

It clothes be stained with blood,  
the garment gets polluted.  
Who suck the blood of human beings;  
how can their mind be pure?38

"The Farmer puts all labour to cultivate to his livelihood but it becomes bonded labour because of severe and heavy taxes levied by the administration. He can't make the payment of these taxes."39

3.5 Agricultural Credit

The main cause of the indebtedness of the farmer was his poverty. The farmer had to borrow for various purposes as he had no savings of his own. Just as poverty forced him to borrow, it was his poverty again that forced him to have so little for paying off his debt. Rural indebtedness was therefore the cause as
well as the effect of the growing poverty of the Indian farmers. The cultivators depended upon the moneylenders (known as Mahajan or Shah) for their financial requirements. Moneylenders themselves were responsible to a large extent for indebtedness. They were more interested in forcing the borrowers to part with their land. So moneylenders freely supplied credit for productive and non-productive purposes (socio-religious rituals) for short and long term requirements of farmers. Village moneylenders indulged in various malpractices. They obtained bonds from their debtors on false pretenses and entered in them the amount larger than actual amount lent. They charged high rates of interest. Those who were once trapped by them became the source of their undesirable high earning. The money lenders had been responsible for many ills in the field of agriculture because their main interest had been to exploit farmers for their benefit and grab their lands. Like a fly in the cobweb which can rarely escape, the farmer once caught by the money lender could rarely come out of his clutches. Loans from the money lenders supported the farmers as the hangman’s rope supports the hanged.

Guru Nanak was much against exploitation as is evident from the following words which he told to a money lender:

"In the worldly success that has come to you, the final end must have escaped your notice. You must have
thought that you can exploit the whole world for your pleasure and benefit regardless of the interest of others trampling down the rivals to conserve your own position.  

He did not approve that the moneylender or for that matter any trader should enjoy a luxurious life at the expense of the society. The "interest" charged by the moneylender should not be allowed to be a means of exploitation. He was not in favour that money should be used as a tool for raising money.

3.6 Agricultural Marketing

The motivation to produce more finally comes from the price that the farmer is able to get for his produce. The disposal of the produce after the harvest and the returns obtained have a significant effect on the production and welfare of the cultivator. Therefore, the purchase of the agriculturist's requirements and the scale of his produce are key activities in the business of farming. Due to the inability of the cultivator to secure a fair deal at these two stages, the average agriculturist is denied the full fruits of his industry.

In traditional economy there was lack of organized agricultural marketing because of subsistence economy and deficient means of transport, communication and warehousing facilities. However, a small fraction of the marketable surplus which was not needed in the
village found its way to traders. Villagers travelled from village to village and bartered some manufactured goods for agricultural products which in turn were sold in the towns. Guru Nanak describes the system of marketing in the following lines:

And as many are the living beings,
so many are the customers.
Yea, when the shops are open,
the trade goeth on,
and no sooner that one cometh from one end
than one quiteth from the other.42

However, these were quite disorganized mandis, mostly seasonal which used to come up at various places temporarily. But the prices,43 weights and measures44 at different places used to be different.

There were many ways by which the farmer might dispose of his surplus produce. The first and the most common method was to sell away his surplus produce to the village money lender cum trader. The trader may buy agricultural produce on his own or he may act as an agent of a bigger merchant.

The second method adopted by the farmer was to dispose of his produce in the weekly or biweekly village markets, known as the 'hat'. Besides, fairs were held in important villages or towns in connection with religious festivals. In 'hats' and fairs the
farmers brought their produce and their livestock and sell them.

The third method of agricultural marketing was through mandis in small and large towns. The mandi might be located at a distance of several miles, and therefore the farmer had to make special effort to carry his produce to the mandi. In the mandis there were brokers or 'dalals' who helped the farmers to dispose of their produce to the wholesalers known as 'arhatiyas'. The wholesalers might dispose of the agricultural produce, which they purchased from the farmers, to retailers or chakki owners.

In order to have the best advantage in marketing of his agricultural produce the farmer should enjoy certain basic facilities like, (i) holding capacity, (ii) adequate & cheap transport facilities, (iii) clear information regarding market conditions and ruling prices, and (iv) reduced number of intermediaries so that the middlemen's profits are reduced.

Judging from references made in Gurbani, the position of agricultural marketing in large part of India particularly Punjab was deplorable. The Indian farmer was very poor, illiterate and ignorant. He did not have enough facilities for storing his produce.

Secondly average farmer was so poor and indebted that he was in no position to wait for better prices. He was forced to sell his produce to the money lender.
or to the trader so as to clear his debts. Such distress sales left the farmer in miserable position.

Thirdly, the transport facilities in rural areas were so negligible that even well-to-do farmers who had large amounts of surplus could not be interested in going to the mandis. Most roads were kacha (unmetalled) and in rainy season they were unusable.

Fourthly, the condition in the mandis was also unfavourable to the farmer. He had to wait till the deal was struck between the dalal and the arhatiya. The dalal was often in collusion with arhatiya and so the price settled was generally to the advantage of the arhatiya and not to the farmer’s. Moreover through the use of false weights and measures, through unnecessary deduction on the plea that his produce was of inferior quality, the farmer often suffered losses in going to the mandis.

The major exports at that time were of medicinal herbs, spices and fragrant wood. The practice of storing the surplus agricultural grains was in vogue. The grain was usually stored in grain pits or Khattees, where it could be preserved for a long time.

3.7 Land Revenue

Indian revenue system throws light on the growth of the King’s power and functions and the consequent burden of taxes on the people.46

It presents King and Peasant in a bilateral
relation which is defined more precisely in regard to
duties than to rights. The duty of the peasant is,
firstly, to raise produce, and secondly to pay a share
of his produce to the King. Performing these duties he
can expect King's protection. The Kings paramount duty
is to protect his subjects, and while he does so, he is
entitled to claim a share of the peasants produce, to
be expanded in accordance with the Law.47

The rate of 1/6th was the customary share of the
king from the produce of the soil. Therefore, 1/6th
was the actual share of the State. This is also
corroborated by Hiuen-tsang's statement that "the
king's tenants pay one sixth of the produce as rent.48
But the observation of Hiuen-tsang seems to be
fallacious as he used the word tenants in place of
subjects49 and confused the land revenue system of
India with the system that prevailed in his own
country. Cultivators appeared to him as the tenants of
the king. Despite this, he specifically mentioned
1/6th of crops as the share of the state. There are
different views about the question of what share of his
produce was claimed by the king? On this question, the
texts differ, a fact which justifies the inference that
practice was not uniform but it may be said that the
rate regarded by the text writers as appropriate was
one-sixth, falling possibly as low as one twelfth and
rising in times of emergency to one fourth or even one
third.50 Taxes were levied on land at varying rates
depending on the nature of irrigation used. These taxes were to be paid even before any expenses had been defrayed. This shows that the cost of the produce was not taken into consideration in fixing taxes in question. The ability of the people to pay was sometimes taken into account but much more was actually collected than merely the revenue fixed at these rates.

Taxation it appears was quite burdensome, however benevolent the rulers might be. A number of taxes connected with land amply testify to the fact. Although all the taxes were not imposed at a time, still their existence explains their frequent extraction. It is in the light of the above facts that one should see reactions of the Guru towards the raising of state revenue.

Revenue is essential for the existence and functioning of the state and meeting the expenses on public services. For the purpose of raising the revenue it becomes indispensable for the people to contribute to the State Exchequer. Contribution to the State Exchequer is, indeed, their responsibility which they are expected to execute voluntarily and with pleasure not only for maintaining and sustaining the State but also for their solidarity with the government. Guru Nanak says:

The ruler puts forth the requirement of the State Exchequer,
The people contribute to it with pleasure -
Thus is ensured
their solidarity with the State. 51

3.8 Role of State in 15th and 16th Century

In traditional India, the state was primarily a feudal state which was confined to the collection of taxes. What the people produced, how they produced, at what prices they sold; the state was not concerned about them. If there were some natural calamities like drought, and if some people approached the state for relief, the relief was granted to the particular farmer(s) but any system of general relief, guidance, improvement was not prevalent. 'Assignment' was the most important agrarian institution, that is to say, the assignee was bound, not merely to loyalty & personal service but to the maintenance, out of assigned income of a body of troops available for King's needs. 52 The prevailing corrupt practices in the administration added to the dependence of the rulers on anti-social elements. Thieves and dacoits were the friends of the ruling clique and they exploited the situation to the fullest. They indulged in looting and arson.

Rulers were either busy fighting wars or indulging in wine, wealth and women. The incidence of taxes was very high and it amounted to exploitation. This has
been pointed out in the following lines:

Kings indulge in pleasures
and gather nothing
but the poison of Maya,
And they crave for more and more
and usurp what is not their due.\textsuperscript{53}

At another place, Guru Nanak comments:

These dogs that despoiled the jewels
and wasted them,
Now in their death
none shall remember them.\textsuperscript{54}

Consequently no improvement in land was made by
them. With the lack of fixed investment from the
state, land continued to lose its fertility and the
peasantry lost interest in its improvement. In the
field of taxation Guru Nanak lamented that even the
State was working as an institution to exploit its
subjects. The farmers, artisans and traders had to pay
heavy taxes to the State. No leniency was shown to the
tax payers even when circumstances and natural forces
had gone against the productive process. Besides heavy
taxes, the people had to pay bribes to the corrupt Kazi
and other officials which is evident from the following
couplet:

Becoming a judge,
he sits to administer justice
He tells the rosary
and mutters God's Name
Taking bribe, he does injustice
If someone asks him,
then he quotes and reads
out some aphorism.55

Guru Nanak has stressed the need of the material prosperity and happiness of the people of the State. Conceiving God as the Supreme King, he puts forward his vision of the Ideal State in these words:

Thou art the Creator and the Cause:
The Self-dependent king, whose subjects are ever in Bliss.56

Material prosperity has been regarded as an essential object of human life. The development of a sound spiritual character can have firm footing only in a sound material society. A materially wretched society may not be able to stand both on the phenomenal and spiritual ground. In other words, materially starved persons are liable to fall victims to the selfish ends of rich people and have to sacrifice noble principles and ideals in order to satisfy their material needs. The history of the Mughal period bears testimony to the above fact as to how economically and politically strong Mughal rulers often used the tool of 'economic benefit' in order to convert the poor amongst
the Hindus to the faith of Islam. Therefore, it is binding on the State to ensure and look after the material well-being of its people properly and not to let them come down to a state of poverty where they can be forced to live at the mercy of the wealthy persons. Poverty becomes a curse upon humanity when it causes starvation, diseases and even deaths. So it becomes the duty of the State to establish and maintain a sound economic order to avoid such a sorry state of affairs. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, "economic insecurity and individual freedom do not go together."

In the economy of Guru Nanak’s vision, agriculture pre-dominates the section of primary industry. Keeping in view the objective of the economy, the agriculture entrepreneurs viz. farmers are supposed to produce plenty of foodgrains, oil-seeds, sugarcane, cotton, fodder, etc. to meet their own as well as the people’s essential needs.
REFERENCES


15. See footnote 4 of this chapter.


   "In Lahore, Depalpore, Sirhind and the neighbouring districts, they water by means of a wheel."
27. Ibid., p. 1121.
28. Ibid., p. 220.
32. Ibid., p. 134.
34. Ibid., p. 303.
34A. Srivastava, M.P., Society and Culture in India, Allahabad, 1975, p. 130. See Roy Choudhary, S.C., Social Cultural and Economic History of India.
(Medieval Age), Delhi 1985, pp. 75-76.


For words like shops & bazaars see *Adi Granth* page 141, 595, 992, 156 and 464.


44. *Adi Granth*, p. 147, 156.


