CHAPTER V
AGRARIAN RELATIONS

Agrarian relations may be defined, as relating to or concerning land and its ownership, cultivation, and tenure, in a system in which the economic relations emerged between zamindars or land-lords, tenants, money lending groups, labourers, artisans and menial castes. By agrarian relations, we mean such economic relations amongst people in the rural society that determine the organization of the resources in agriculture, as well as the pattern of distribution of its yield. Agrarian relations therefore, imply a certain kind social stratification which in the rural society was primarily segmented into two divisions – landowners and the landless, with non-ownership of land providing the basic cleavage in it. The different types of relations between landowners and landless, their mutual obligation for agricultural productions, even antagonistic attitudes towards one or the other group formed the total agrarian situation.

The special characteristics of agrarian societies cannot be ignored from the social framework of the south-east Punjab the region under study. The main features of agrarian relations relate to proprietary rights in land, categories of land holders, land tenure system, different classes of cultivators, social background of cultivating class, and the size of holdings. It also looks into the tenancy system, rent system, relations with the colonial state, and antagonism of peasantry with the state and with agricultural and non-agricultural class, money-lending class, forms of labour, artisans classes, their roles and duties, groups of menial castes, system of wages and the jajmani system. All these aspects along with any change over time would be the concern here.

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The chapter is divided into five sections. First is about the land owners, land tenure, size of land holdings and socio-religious background of the cultivators. In the second, there are the relations between tenants and zamindars and with the government. Third section deals with money lending class and their relations with agriculturists’ class and also their impact on society. In the fourth section, the artisans and menials castes; their duties and dues are discussed. The last section is a conclusion.

The greater proportion of the cultivated land of the Punjab was owned by the small proprietors. The estimated total numbers of land owners in the Punjab was 3.5 lakhs. It may be noted that 58.3 percent of the owners possessed not more than 12 percent of the land while 15.5 percent of owners possessed 61.3 percent of the land. Taking all together 84.5 percent land held by 38.6 percent landowners; in which only 3.7 percent of the owners cultivated 25.7 percent of the land whereas 11.8 percent owners had 35.6 percent of the land. It is obvious that the great majority of these categories did not cultivate their land but simply live on rent. Calvert in Wealth and Welfare in the Punjab, noted that 'Almost every person paying Rs. 20 and upwards described him self as living on rents'. Concentration of land ownership was shifting at a fast rate in the hand of landed proprietors. In 1924, owners of 50 acres and above constituted 3.3 percent of owners held 25.8 percent of land; by 1939, this category, now constituted only 2.4 percent of landowners, and held 38.8 percent of land.

In the 29 districts of the province for which, record is available for 1875-76, the number of cultivating proprietors held 56 percent land, which increased to 59 in 1888-89. By the last decade of nineteenth century, they declined to 45 percent and further to 41.6 in 1936. Several factors have been identified to account for this extension of cultivation, alienation of land to non-agricultural classes who got it cultivated through tenants, popularity of government services among agriculturists who leased their land to relatives and friend during their absence, the complete registration of tenancy since the passing of the Land Revenue and Tenancy Act of 1887, the remodeling of revenue agencies, and

\[\text{\footnotesize \cite{Narayan_1930}}\]

1 Brij Narayan, Indian Economic Life, Low Price Publication, New Delhi, 1990, Reprint, originally published in 1930.)
the land alienation act, among others. The distribution of peasant proprietors was not equal in the districts of Punjub.

In accordance with the land settlements, land owning groups were classified into distinct broad categories, as superior proprietors or land lords, peasant proprietors or self cultivating peasants and tenant cultivator. The overall agrarian change of the nineteenth and twentieth century led to the ownership of peasant properties, which constituted the backbone of the agrarian community and played a prominent role in the development of agriculture.

The south-east Punjab was distinct from the rest of the districts, there was practically a very little land left to be brought under the plough. So it differentiates south-east Punjab from the rest of the Punjab. The differentiation was in the first instance, a very basic geographical one, which led to the differences in the nature agricultural activity as well as variation in government perception and policy. We find this different picture in the region, also because of abundance of cultivable waste and less pressure of population. Zamindar had larger holdings and there was a general cry for cultivators to bring these waste lands under plough. Consequently, zamindars were dominant in this sub-region and there existed varieties of tenants. In 1868, the average of peasant proprietors, over to total agriculturists in the south-east Punjab was almost fifty, while in the central and western Punjab, this was 43. In the south-east Punjab (excluded Ambala), same trend of rest of the Punjab has been followed, as 61

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5 The superior proprietor on non cultivating proprietor or landlord frequently an absentee gave his land to the tenants and was less interested in financing agricultural investment or increasing the value of agricultural output. Landlord means a person under whom a tenant holds lands, and to whom the tenant was, or but for a special contract would, liable to pay rent for that land.
6 Peasant proprietor or self-cultivating personal performed agricultural pursuits primarily with his family labour and his own implements and he was able to facilitate the diffusion of his farming. M.L. Darling, Rusticus Loguitur, OUP, Landon, 1930, 332.
8 Agriculturists included the peasant proprietors, tenants, labourers, shepherds, and herdsmen. The district of central and western Punjab randomly selected i.e. Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Amritsar, Montgomery, Shahpur, Jhang. Punjab Report in Reply to the Inquiries issued by the Famine Commission, vol.i, 1878, 327-29.
percentage land owners were in 1873-74, which decreased to 53 percent in 1922-23.9

The differentiation of landed proprietors was not equal in all districts of the Punjab. The rich landowners formed the bulk of the proprietary class in the districts of Hissar, Delhi and Sirsa. The percent of those paying less than 50 rupees in revenue per annum was only .54 in Hissar, .90 in Delhi, 3.02 in Sirsa against the provincial average of 80.96, whereas the percentage of those paying 5001 rupees upwards in revenue was of average almost 4 in the district of Delhi, Hissar, Karnal, and Gurgaon against provincial average was .0067. The total land proprietors or superior proprietors or big zamindar were 12 percent residing in the south-east Punjab as against only half in the central province. Twenty percent of the totals landed proprietors of the Punjab were residing in the south-east Punjab. The population was also nearly the same. However, the land holdings were higher than the rest of the Punjab.10

Proprietary rights in land basically determined the nature of agrarian relations. That the peasantry of the Punjab followed a land-settlement that defined the proprietary rights of the individual cultivator has by now been firmly established. Even though, Ibbetson wrote:

"I think there can be little doubt till the English rule, individual property in land, in the sense in which we understand it, was unknown in the tract (District). Each village held the area surrounding its homestead, the dividing boundaries being hardly been defined. Land was plentiful, cultivators were scarce, almost anybody was welcome to break up as much as he could cultivate, and the owner who induced a tenant to settle and bear a share of the burden of the revenue conferred a benefit on the community at large."11 The land was carefully divided according to quality so that each should have his fair share and the same rule was observed when a new comer was admitted to cultivate. The long dividing lines at right angles to the contours of the country which mark off the valuable rice-land into minute plots and the inferior sandy soil into long

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10 See the table 5.2.
narrow strips including a portion of each of degree of quality and the scattered nature of each man’s holding still show how carefully this was done.¹²

The land was owned in severalty, but was also invariably divided among individuals on the occasion of separation of property, in strict accordance with ancestral shares. Sons only were representatives of their dead fathers. In the absence of them, the widow took an interest strictly limited to her life time of tenancy. If there was no widow, or after her death, the brothers and brother’s sons, however, distantly related could succeed. In these absences the mother took a life interest. Failing all these property went to the nearest branch in the male line. Daughters, if unmarried, had a claim to maintenance only.¹³

The inheritance of land was common among the Jats and Gujars of the south-eastern and central districts of the province. Those who inherited and cultivated land were generally known as the zamindars. Jats were generally synonymous with zamindars. In many of the south-eastern districts, the members of the proprietary body were ‘often united by real or assumed ties of kinship’ and their rights duties over village lands were generally measured by ancestral share. In attesting the record of common customs the whole countryside has declared that where there were three sons by one wife and one by another, all four shared equally (pugband). In the Rajput areas where the division has been by wives it was called (Chundaband). An illegitimate son neither be legitimized nor could he inherit.¹⁴

An evolutionary theory of tenures was put forth by Edward Princep, which took into account the variability and complexity of village tenures. He enunciated that collective property always preceded divided property; the clan originated in the tribe, the village in the clan and the joint family in the village. Joint ownership of all the members of the village community was followed by a division of the village into tarafs, each forming a section of the commune; each taraf or patti was divided into plots, first on ancestral and then on customary shares, and lastly on the basis of possession alone. In the Punjab, as in the

¹³ DG Karnal District, 1883-84, 120.
¹⁴ Women’s separate property (stridhan) was unknown. For details see, DG Karnal District, 1883-84, 114-22.
south-east Punjab, the tribe was represented by quam or clan, and the clan by got; one single got could cover a hundred villages, but also a single village could have ‘proprietors of several gots’. This theory accounted for the division of villages in patties, or tarafs, the existence of the members of different clans in the same village and the individual proprietor’s rights with or without his share in common property of the commune or the government.\textsuperscript{15}

Land was held under a distinct system of tenure, which was provided for by the Land Revenue Act. The old settled districts of the east, the soil, but not always the mineral beneath it, was held in full proprietary right, which was subject to the payment of revenue, by the village community in common. The state was supreme land lords and retained important rights of resumption for public purposes. The full rights of village community were seldom disturbed and the rights of the state were apt to give way to the duties and responsibilities of great land-lords.\textsuperscript{16}

As far as the tenures of the south-east Punjab concerned, there were classified into four categories: (1) \textit{Zamindari} (2) \textit{Pattidari} (3) \textit{Bhaichara} (4) Mixed or imperfect \textit{pattidari} or \textit{Bhaichara}.\textsuperscript{17}

The \textit{zamindari} was possessed with full proprietary right by a single owner; \textit{pattidari} was meant to cover cases in which land was divided and held ‘in severalty’ by different proprietors according to ancestral or customary shares; and in \textit{bhaichara}, land was held ‘in severalty’ without reference to any ancestral or customary shares. In the fourth or mixed \textit{bhaichara / pattidari}, the lands are held partly in severalty and partly in common, the measure of right in common land being the amount of the share or extent of the land held in severalty. In the \textit{pattidari} tenure, each share was regulated by the revenue payable; in the \textit{bhaichara} tenure, the revenue payable regulated the share. In the 1870s and 80s the tenure of land in Delhi district was not complex.\textsuperscript{18} Of the 810 villages in the Delhi district, nearly twelve percent was of \textit{zamindari}, 41 percent was of

\textsuperscript{15} For Princep’s theory of tenures and some comments on it, see C.L. Tupper (ed.), \textit{Punjab Customary Law}, vol. ii: Statement of Customary Law in different Districts, 50-63; see also, Indu Banga, \textit{Agrarian System of the Sikhs}, Manohar, New Delhi, 1978,183-85.


\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Panjab Land Revenue of Assessment Report}, 1873-74, 64.

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Settlement Report of Delhi District}, 1872-80, 69.
pattidari, and 46 percent of Bhaichara tenure.\textsuperscript{19} In Karnal District, of the 833 villages classified, for the purpose of settlement, 7 percent were of zamindari and 93 percent of mixed or imperfect pattidari or bhaichara.\textsuperscript{20} In Hissar district also, three classes of village tenures existed as 25 percent of zamindari, 15 pattidari and 60 bhaiyachara.\textsuperscript{21} In Gudah, Fazilka and Khadar land in Sirsa district as 358 totals, 85 percent of zamindari, 14 pattidari and 1 of bhaichara. In Gurgaon district, out of 1233 total villages, there was of 13 percent of zamindari, nearly 1 percent of pattidari, 26 of bhaiyachara and 60 percent of mixed or imperfect.\textsuperscript{22}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Zamindari</th>
<th>Pattidari</th>
<th>Bhaiyachara</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnal</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hissar</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sirsa</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurgaon</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the whole, zamindari dominated in Sirsa (85 percent), was about 25 percent in Hissar while Gurgaon and Delhi, had just 12-13 percent zamindari, Karnal had the lowest proportion at 7 percent. About 40 percent tenures were pattidari in Delhi with Hissar and Sirsa about 14 percent. Bhaiyachara was most prominent in Hissar (60 percent), followed by Delhi (46 percent) and Gurgaon with 26 percent. Mixed tenure was almost wholly found in Karnal and Gurgaon with 93 and 60 percent respectively (Table 5.1).

A proprietary entire share in a village was considered large at 200 or 250 pucca bighas and ordinary small share was about 7 bighas. A share could even be as small as 2 bighas. The pucca bigha was 49.5 square yards and kacha

\textsuperscript{19} Settlement Report of Delhi District, 1872-80, 60.
\textsuperscript{20} SR, Karnal District, 1872, 95 and DG Karnal District, 1883-84, appended to the DG, x.
\textsuperscript{21} Settlement Report of Hissar District, 1887-92, 79.
\textsuperscript{22} DG, Gurgaon, appended to the Gazetteer, x.
bigha of 5/24 of an acre. A zamindar\textsuperscript{23} was of the first rate that had four ploughs, otherwise he was considered as part of group that united their means and cultivated lands.\textsuperscript{24}

Two groups of land holders have been identified in the south-east Punjab those having 1-20 acres and those having 25–over 50 acres.\textsuperscript{25} Former is taken because 1-20 acres are easily accessible and easily operated and latter is being taken because above 25 acres cannot be easily operated, would have to take support from laborers, and had long-term consequences.\textsuperscript{26} As far as the first category is concerned, all the districts, excluding Hissar, had almost 18 percent of the land which by held by owners of 1-20 acres, or slightly more (up to 1-2 percent) in operation. These agriculturists were hard working and did their agricultural work on their own, as the proverb remarked their importance;

“(Kheti khasman Seti”
(Agriculture is better by his own effort).

In the second category (25-over 50 acres), the uniform pattern was that the land holdings, between owned and operated, were decreasing. It means these owners did not do their work of their own but by the help of tenants and laborers. In a review of the district wise position in the 1920s, it may be noted

\textsuperscript{23} A zamindar is a Persian compound word, but was not use in Persia. In India it was used in the fourteenth century by the Persian historians, Barani and Aff, to denote Hindu chieftains, but the term was not then revenue-administrative category and the official terms for land holders of various types within the Delhi Sultanate were khuts, muqaddams and chaudhuri. Irfan Habib, The Agrarian System of the Mughal India, (1556-1707), Bombay, 1963, 10; Ziadun Barni, Tarikh-i-Firozshai, trans. in H.M.Iliot, The History of India as told by its own Historians, vol. III. London, 1871, 182-83; In Punjab, those who inherited and cultivated land were generally known as the zamindars. Himdari Banerjee, Agrarian Society of the Punjab, I.

\textsuperscript{24} Delhi Residency and Agency Records, 1807-57, 75.

\textsuperscript{25} Mridula Mukherjee, Colonizing Agriculture, The Myth of Punjab Exceptionalism , New Delhi, 2005, Table 4.4, See also BEIP, Rural Section, Pub. Nos. 4 and 11, H. Calvert, The Size and Distribution of Agricultural Holdings in the Punjab, 1925, and the Size and Distribution of Cultivators’ Holdings in the Panjab, 1928.

\textsuperscript{26} However, I have some kind of differ attitude to Calvert. He said in 1937: ‘owners of land up to 12 to 14 acres cultivate it them selves, owners beyond this and up to 25 acres cultivate part at least of their land. Beyond 25 acres, there begins a tendency to rent the whole, but it would hardly be safe to assume this before the 50 acres holding begins’. But Calvert said this after 10-12 years when community cropping has began to be decreased.
that the increase between owned and operated ranged to 1-7 percent in the first category, while this percentage is 1-5 in central Punjab in the same category. However, in the second category, the south-eastern districts registered a decrease ranged 16-72, while in the central Punjab, 33-66 in Jullandhar and Ludhiana only, but in Hoshiarpur, Ferozpur and Amritsar, it was increased to 96, 14, 46 percent respectively.

Table: 5.2
Percentage Holding owned and operated in Various Size Categories: South - East and Central Punjab Figures (1920s).27

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>owned 1-20 acres operated</th>
<th>increase/decrease in Percentage</th>
<th>owned Opera25-over50 operated</th>
<th>Increase/decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Hissar</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>(-5.7)</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rohtak</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>(+7.6)</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Gurgaon</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>(+6.9)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Karnal</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>(+1.0)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ambala</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>(4.2)</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Central Punjab

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>owned 1-20 acres operated</th>
<th>increase/decrease in Percentage</th>
<th>owned Opera25-over50 operated</th>
<th>Increase/decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Hoshiarpur</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>+0.03</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Jullundur</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>+1.74</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ludhiana</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>+5.31</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ferozpur</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>+5.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Amritsar</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>+2.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Besides the actual owners of the soil, among whom the village lands were either divided or undivided and with whom alone rested the right of property as heirs to those of remoter days, there were four classes of cultivators identified in the mid nineteenth century – the old residents (ryot), the itinerants (pahee), the hired (kamera) and the partial cultivators (pahee).28

This was the pattern of pre-1858. After 1858, there were also four types but

the names were different as landlords, peasant proprietors, and occupancy tenants and tenants-at-will. James Douie remarked that peasant proprietors were of two types; (a) superior proprietors and (b) inferior. The tenants were of three types (i) tenants with right of occupancy (ii) holding with conditions, and (iii) with no permanent rights. Among the non-agricultural classes were the Brahmins and Banias, and the indispensable class of menials who received at the harvest time a certain acknowledgement dues for which they rendered fixed service besides pursuing their special calling. These were divided into two classes. Those who labor was intimately concerned with agricultural, viz. the blacksmith, carpenter and tanner; and secondly, those whose service were rendered in other ways and less regularly, just as the weaver, barber, potter, waterman, washman and sweeper.

The peasant-proprietors of this tract were largely Hindu, with a small group of Muslim and Sikh cultivators. In the south-eastern region, the proportion of Hindus was substantially higher at about seventy percent of the total population in the middle of the nineteenth century, while in the Punjab province as a whole, they were 34.78 percent. Muslims formed 28 percent of the population in the south-east Punjab as against 51.35 percent in the whole province, while small proportions of Sikhs, constituted one percent in the south-eastern districts as against 6.5 percent in the whole province.

According to a district wise distribution of peasant proprietors, it may be noted that, Hindus existed in all south-eastern districts with a dominant position. Muslims were found mainly in Gurgaon and to some extent in Karnal district. Sikhs were located mostly in Ambala and Karnal districts. The
cultivators of the south eastern tract belonged to a variety of castes, 36 in the case of Hindus and 18 among the Sikhs. Some agriculturists groups cut across boundaries of religion while at times were specific to a particular religious group. For instance, farmers from caste like Jat, Rajput, Saini, Mali, Gujar, Ror and Gaud Brahman belonged mainly to the Hindu religion. Darji, Dhobi, Shinwar, Gujar, Sunar, Teli, Mochi, Nai, Mirasi was common to Hindus and Muslims, while Arora, Bawaria, Saini and Ramdasia cultivators were found among both Hindus and Sikhs, Chamars were found among Hindu, Sikh and Bodh. In comparison with the Punjab proper, the agriculturists of the south-eastern districts were mainly Hindu and came from several castes backgrounds. The agricultural castes may be divided into two groups i.e. (1) major agricultural caste as Jats and Rajputs (2) minor agricultural castes as Ror, Ahir and Sansi. Bishnoi was also an agricultural caste according to Darling.36

In 1881, Jats were the dominant agrarian caste forming over 19 percent of total population whereas the Ror caste was in minority at less than 1 percent. In fact, the Jats were more than the all remaining agricultural castes put together which was nearly 16 percent.37 The Rajputs were also an important agriculturist group. By 1931, we find that there was an increase in all categories of cultivators. The Jats remained the dominant group at 21 percent, increasing by around 2 percent. The Rajput retained second position at about 11 percent showing a 3 percent increase, while the minor groups decreased by 2 percent in between 1881-1931. In the total population of Jats and Sainis however, we find that it had decreased by 4 and 12 percent respectively between 1881 to 1931 (given in italics in table), but when we see the percentages, over to total population of Jats and Sainis, they increased. Jats were included in Hindu, Muslim and Sikh agrarian groups; Rajputs in Hindu, Sikh, Bodh, Muslims, Christian; Gujars in Hindu, Sikh and Muslim; Ahir and Saini in Hindu and Sikh, and Ror in Hindu only.

36 But it was not notified as agricultural caste in the Land Alienation Act of 1901; see for detail, Prem Chowdhry, 'Customs in Peasant Economy'.
37 Computed from the Report on the Census of 1881, 1882, Table No. –II.
Table: 5.3
Showing Agriculturist Caste’s Population in Total Population of the South-East Punjab\textsuperscript{38} according to 1881 Census.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Castes</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percentages in total population of south-east Punjab</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Jat</td>
<td>819484</td>
<td>19.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Rajput</td>
<td>34339 4</td>
<td>8.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Gujar</td>
<td>131974</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ahir</td>
<td>106603</td>
<td>2.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Saini</td>
<td>64747</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Ror</td>
<td>39621</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: 5.4
Showing Agriculturist Caste’s Population over to Total Population of South-East Punjab according to 1931 Census.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Jat</td>
<td>781535 (-4)</td>
<td>3592639</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Rajput</td>
<td>392362 (+14)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>10.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Gujar</td>
<td>137543 (+4.21)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>3.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ahir</td>
<td>114508 (+7.41)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Saini</td>
<td>56377 (-12.92)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Ror</td>
<td>406065 (+2.63)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{38} Total population was 4286314.
In the seven districts of the south-eastern tract, i.e. Delhi, Gurgaon, Karnal, Hisar, Rohtak, Sirsa and Ambala, Jats were dominant (33 percent) in Rohtak and in remaining districts this proportion was 26 in Hissar, 25 in Sirsa, 16 in Ambala and Delhi, 15 in Karnal, and 10 in Gurgaon. In the case of Rajputs, who were dominant in Sirsa, districts with 18 percent population, and 12 percent in Hissar, 8 percent each in Ambala and Karnal 5 in each in Delhi and Rohtak and 4 percent in Gurgaon. Gujars were dominant in the Ambala district with 38 percent and in the remaining district this proportion was 5.4 in Hissar, 4 in Delhi, 3 each in Gurgaon and Karnal, and 14 percent in Sirsa. Thus, Jats were dominant in Rohtak, Hissar and Sirsa, whereas Rajputs in Sirsa, Hissar and Karnal. The Gujars were dominant in Ambala, Hissar and Karnal. Rors and Sainis were dominant in Karnal and Ambala districts respectively.

II

Tenancy means a parcel of land held by a tenant of landlord under lease or one set of conditions. There were two types of tenants in the south-east Punjab as occupancy tenants or hereditary cultivators and tenants at will. The area under occupancy rights in the Punjab province was 10.3 percent in 1887-88, which decreased to 8 percent in 1935-36. However, the area under tenant-at-will substantially increased from 28 percent to 49 during the same time. In the mid nineteenth century, the occupancy tenants were 16.3 percent and 26.9 tenants-at-will of the south-east Punjab. The numbers of tenants-at-will rose to 29 percent by 1873-74 and to 35 percent by 1922-23.

39 The percentages are based over to total population of individual district for example, Total population of Delhi; 643515 divided by the Hundred and the total population of the Jats of Delhi District i.e. 107075. Computed from the 1881 Census.
40 J.M. Douie, Settlement Officer, Karnal and Ambala, Legislative Department, Oct. 1887, Para No. 142.
41 PLRAR, 1887-88 and 1936.
42 Hissar was not included, because no mention in PLRAR, 1859-60, Statements, xxi.
43 Calculated from the PLRAR, 1872-73 and 1921-22.
The principle generally adopted was to define tenant right by a term of occupancy, and an occupation of twelve years was assumed to found a hereditary right. The terms ‘hereditary’ and ‘non-hereditary’, as applied to the tenants, expressed the difference between the tenants having occupancy right and those merely tenants at will. The former by a clause in the village administration paper, had been protected from ejectment so long as they cultivated the land and paid the rent. On the other hand tenants at will were regarded as liable to summary ejectment or enhancement note. The status of tenants-with-right of occupancy was recognized in the Settlements Report of Punjab, but in 1868, it was recognized, though after a great controversy, and defined by the Punjab Tenancy Act XXVIII of 1868.\textsuperscript{44} The Act defined that the status of tenants-with-right-of-occupancy could not be acquired by mere lapse of time, but it was open to any tenant to claim it in a civil court, if he could prove certain facts regarding his tenure which were detailed in the Act. The entry of the name of any tenant in the settlement records as having a right-of-occupancy constituted a presumption in his favour which could only be set aside by a regular suit.\textsuperscript{45}

However, an occupancy tenant could no longer do according to his will and pleasure with the waste land because it was handed over as a gift to the proprietary body.\textsuperscript{46} The first regular settlement declared that tenants would henceforth have no right to break up the waste land without the prior consent of the proprietors. With the development of cultivation and the rise in the value of land the proprietors became aware of their power and asserted their right under the tenancy Act (XVIII) of 1868. And when a tenant wanted to clear more waste land he found that the proprietors were now interfering and would not let him

\textsuperscript{44} PLRAR, 1875-76, 34.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{46} Prior to the commencement of the first regular settlement there was no restriction on the power of individual colonists to break up as much of the waste they can, on condition of paying the customary rents and dues on their cultivation, and in practice each cultivator held the land retained by him undisturbed so long as he made these payments. Extract from the Abstract of the Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India, Legislative Department, June, 1886, No. 67.
have it without permission and a higher rate of rent payment. During the period of thirty years from 1852 to 1882, it was found that a considerable number of tenants at will had taken land and cleared some 26500 additional acres of waste in the Sirsa areas of the south-east Punjab.

The proprietors felt secure under the Tenancy Act of 1868, but when they heard that settlement would soon be revised, they now began to fear that rights of occupancy might be conferred on the tenants of those lands, just as those rights had been granted to the tenants of the lands, broken up before 1852. They realized that unless they asserted their rights the same procedure might be followed at the revised settlement, as had been adopted at the regular settlement and the tenants might be recorded as having right of occupancy in all the lands cultivated by them. On the contrary, among the tenants the expectation of a grant of occupancy right at the revised settlement refused to pay higher rents which were demanded by the landlords from them since the breaking up of the waste lands. Consequently, the proprietor issued notices of ejectment in increased number, for example, 540 in 1876 to 1882 in 1881-82, i.e. 248 percent.

So the proprietors and tenants played an important role in agrarian society. To show their roles, in comparison with the other categories, especially with the tenants (as the non-cultivating proprietors were less interested in this matter), the two tables are viewed together.

47 Dipak Chattaraj, ‘Antagonism in Zamindar –Tenant Relation in the South-Eastern Punjab under the Tenancy Act (XVI) of 1887’.
48 In Sirsa, the land cultivated by tenants-at-will increased from 49121 (1852) to 435708 (1882) i.e.787 percent and deduct occupancy tenures converted to tenants-at-will increased to 121776, thus the net increase was 264811. Source: NAI Minute by SIR C.U. Aitchson, Lieutenant – Governor, Punjab Dated 14th June, 1882, Department of Revenue and Agriculture, Revenue – A, August, 1882, Proceedings No. 33-34.
Comparison between the Roles of a Peasant Proprietors and a Tenant.

A Peasant Proprietors  
A Tenant

(i) Kept finer-breed of cattle, wastage of minimum human and cattle power and produced maximum.

(i) Except a larger one, unable to keep strong and efficient cattle (due to poverty) and the wastage of both power (man and cattle) in his case was maximum;

(ii) Levelled ground, rooted out weeds, followed careful rotation, allowed more fallows and used more organic manure;

(ii) Did very little in these regards;

(iii) Ploughed better, used better seed sand artificial fertilisers;

(iii) Tilled his land not so good as a peasant proprietors and scarcely use high yielding seeds and artificial or organic manure.

(iv) Bricked his well and equipped with the iron Persian wheel.

(iv) Left his well unbricked and performed his agricultural activities with the traditional apparatus;

(v) Tried to apply latest scientific and technology innovations.

(v) Lagged for behind in this respect than a peasant proprietor.

It was an undeniable fact that the position of peasant proprietor was better than a tenant as several factors were in his favour. The size of holdings was generally larger; his cultivated areas were relatively better; and his economic condition was comparatively sounder than that of tenant. For political consideration and Imperial interest, the British Government was conducive to him. Concessions and exemptions offered by the government, or incentives given in agricultural, or public investment, or in other words, almost every 49 Means a person who holds lands under another person, and was, or but for special contract would be liable to pay rent for that land to that other person. Source: Punjab District Gazetter, Karnal, 1918, 107-09; H.R. Calvert, The Wealth and Welfare of the Punjab, Lahore, 1922, 89-90, M.L. Darling, Rusticus Loqurtor or the Old Light and the New in the Punjab Village. London, 1930, 332-33, Latifi, A Industrial Punjab, Lahore, 1911, 194-95. Cited in Dipak Chattaraj, Agricultural Development in later Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries South-East Punjab, The Panjab Past and Present, April, 2000, 72-73.
initiative of government regarding agriculture went largely to the favour of the peasant proprietors.\textsuperscript{50}

Actually the small tenants were worse off in every respect. Viz-agricultural implements, plough, cattle etc. than the self-cultivating peasant proprietor.\textsuperscript{51} They, in majority case, ploughed under the system popularly known as dangwara (agricultural partnership), where two tenants each owned one bullock ploughed their respective holdings on alternative days, which resulted in a lesser number of ploughings than by the owners. The cultivation of such tenants was distinctly inferior\textsuperscript{52} to that of self-cultivating peasant proprietors. Perhaps the larger tenants were capable of playing an important for the development of agriculture, as they possessed enough agricultural implements, plough, bullock etc., like the peasant proprietor. They had however, shown little interest in this respect. For instance, the proprietors

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{50} NAI, Department of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue-A, April, 1901, Proceeding No. 25-26.
\item \textsuperscript{51} In the plains of the south-eastern Punjab, there were two types of peasant proprietors (a) Superior proprietors (b) Inferior proprietors. Inferior-proprietors, who regularly paid 'a tenant as several factors were in his favour. The size of his holdings was generally larger; his cultivated areas were relatively better; and his economic condition was comparatively sound than that of tenant. For political consideration and imperial interest the British Government was conducive to him. Concessions and exemptions offered by the Government, or incentives given in agricultural, or public investment, or in other words, almost every initiative of Government regarding agriculture went largely to the favour of the peasant proprietor, 'Malikana' or rent to the superior proprietors. The latter in such cases were not the village communities but individual families. Both sometimes lived in the same village. Apart of the village land was owned by the superior proprietors and the other by the inferior proprietors. The amount of the 'malikana' was unusually from five to ten percent of the land revenue. J.M. Douie, \textit{Punjab Settlement Manual}, 98-99 and C.H. Spitta, \textit{Manual of Law for the Punjab}, 140-42. In fact the word zemindar is here only applied to the Jats. Himadri Banerjee, \textit{Agrarian Society of the Punjab}, 36.
\item \textsuperscript{52} Small Cultivators and kamins, (discuss later). Being poor try to exaggerate their poverty, and in some cases figures were quoted which were incredible. In all cases in which many had been borrowed from moneylenders (agriculturist and non agriculturist) residing in the village, the statements made verified by reference to basis (account book). The ignorance of the borrower of his financial position is shown by the fact that in many cases the amount entered in the bahi was different from the account, which the borrower thought he owned. \textit{The BEIP, Gihit}, 1932, 98.
\end{itemize}
as well as the tenants used manure in the cultivation of sugarcane and cotton but the farmer frequently did it on larger scale than the later. That is why the tenants were less interested in manuring “because, the manuring of land for a particular crop is also of advantage for the next crop, eg. a plot for manure for sugarcane will yield a good crop of wheat”.  

In the south-east Punjab, there were two types of rents, first, rent payable to the landlord and second, payable to the government. In Hisar, Karnal and many other districts, the tenant had to pay, apart from the share of batai, an additional allowance (kharcha), generally 1 seer to 2.5 seers per maund. In the pre-British period, however, this customary payment was made to the village headman. Now the proprietors were keen to retain the custom for the convenience it offers in raising and lowering the rent. In spite of raising the batai, the proprietors could increase the kharcha to be paid, thus, making a ‘gradual and almost imperceptible rise’ in the rate of rent.

The changes in the rent in different regions during the period i.e. 1858-1947 had no fixed pattern. The recurring harvest failures in Rohtak, Gurgaon and Hisar led to a fodder famine and a decline in cultivated area. Vast acres remained uncultivated in this region, as a result the increase in grain prices and the demand for fodder led to an extension of cultivation and a rent increase in the secure tracts. The famine of 1897-98 illustrates this point. It was reported that in regions affected by the drought ‘rents on batai land have been

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54 Means, what was payable to a landlord in money, or kind or service by a tenant on account of the use or occupation of land hold by him.
55 The system of batai (share cropping) was definitely obstacle to importance of land. Famine Commission Report, 1880; ‘Rents were so high that inferior lands can not be cultivated.’ H. Calvert, Wealth and Welfare of the Punjab, 196. From this system, the share of the land-lords in the net income for the land for exceeded their share in the gross produce. According to one estimate, on an average of good, bad and indifferent years, 80 percent of the net income of a holding under batai went to the land-lord and only 20 percent was retained by the tenant only. See, Mridula Mukherjee, Colonializing Agriculture, 121.
very much reduced owing to the difficulty of finding tenants.\textsuperscript{57} The causes of rent increase were shifting of tenants to secure regions; a competition among tenant, lack of industrialization, decline of traditional craft, population growth, and consequently the pressure on agriculture went up sharply. In the fifty years from 1890 to 1941 population increased by 52 percent but the total cultivated area by 34 percent.\textsuperscript{58} In spite of this, agricultural labourers began to be easily available. One of the foremost reasons behind this was that, the artisan's classes left their traditional occupation had shifted towards agriculture.\textsuperscript{59}

Cash rent was characteristic in the south-eastern region with uncertain harvests and low yield. In the arid tract in the late nineteenth century, cash rents were ‘at once, most common and most stable’.\textsuperscript{60} In Hissar, the settlement officer observed that ‘cash rents’ were of great importance. They are practically always taken on the \textit{karipari} system (whether cultivated or not).\textsuperscript{61} In Sirsa, cash rents are the rule, and grain rents the exception. In Gurgaon District, kind rents were reported to be unknown in Tehsil Palwal and ‘rare’ in Nuh and Firozpur Tehsil.\textsuperscript{62}

The rate of increase in the rents however, varied. In the south-east it was lower than in the central Punjab. Even in the 1880s, over large areas in Rohtak and Karnal ‘revenue rate’ was the norm. A continuous rise in rents was reported from Gurgaon, but the actual increase was not spectacular between 1838 and 1881-82. Cash rents increased by 14 percent in tehsil Palwal, 13 percent in Nuh and 8 percent in Rewari. Only after the


\textsuperscript{58} In the 20 years from 1921-41 population increased by 37 percent and cultivated area only by 8 percent. Mridula Mukherjee, \textit{Colonializing Agriculture}, 123.

\textsuperscript{59} Consequently, the population was 32 percent in 1881 Census, which decreased to 21 percent in 1931 Census.

\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Land Revenue Assessment Report of Punjab, 1896-97}, 25, Para, 8.

\textsuperscript{61} It was the \textit{golmol} perception of the colonial state; literally means whether lying or stand, probably means that either the crop was lying or stand, it was revenue able. It is another example of colonial regressive form of taxation.

1880s was there a significant rise in rents in this region.\textsuperscript{63} In the late nineteenth century, cash rent was charged from about 80 percent of the area held by tenants-at-will in Rohtak, Hisar and Gurgaon (Table 5.5). Since long-term leases were rare, rents could be increased in correspondence with the rise in prices of the total rents collected. The cash rent in 1878-79 was 75 percent and kind was 25 percent, which changed to 51 and 40 percent respectively by 1922-23.

Table: 5.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>1878-79 Cash</th>
<th>1878-79 Kind</th>
<th>1890-91 Cash</th>
<th>1890-91 Kind</th>
<th>1902-03 Cash</th>
<th>1902-03 Kind</th>
<th>1912-13 Cash</th>
<th>1912-13 Kind</th>
<th>1922-23 Cash</th>
<th>1922-23 Kind</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hissar</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rohtak</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurgaon</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnal</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This regional variation shows the contrast in the dominant forms of rent, which existed in districts with secure harvests on the one hand, and those with uncertain certain harvests one the other. Within the south-eastern districts, cash rents tended to decline with the extension of irrigation. In Gijhi village of Rohtak, cash rents disappeared in irrigated circles; the yield as assumed in irrigated areas and high price of produce makes \textit{batai} the preferred form of rent from the standpoint of the owners. This feature was observed in Rohtak much earlier; ‘In irrigated land, they (i.e kind rents) were everywhere of importance and specially so in the best irrigated tract’ that was in tahsil Gohana and northern parts of Sampla and Rohtak. The cash of \textit{barani} tracts is different.\textsuperscript{64} In Hissar, most tenants at will paid cash rent, but it was noted that ‘no land inundated by the Ghaggar, the Joiya or the Rongoi even pays cash rent. It is all

\textsuperscript{63} Neeladri Bhattacharya, The logic of Tenancy Cultivation’ 149.

\textsuperscript{64} Neeladri Bhattacharya, ‘The Logic of Tenancy Cultivation’ 149.
subject to batai’. In Karnal, where rainfall was less precarious and irrigation more extensive, the proportion of area under cash rent was lower, it declined from about 55 percent in 1890-91 to about 4 percent in 1922 (See table 5.6)\textsuperscript{65} In Hissar district, the kind rent was only 4 percent whereas, 35 percent was in cash rent during 1887-92. Rents were ordinarily, paid at a bigha rate on the whole areas in the tenants possession, whether he cultivated or not. Such rents were collected regularly, whether the seasons were good or bad.\textsuperscript{66} After his survey of Karnal, Ibbetson found that cash rent was charged for those crops which were not collected at one time and spot, so that division would be difficult and dishonesty easy.\textsuperscript{67} Therefore, the cash rents decrease where irrigation facilities are available. However, in the non-irrigated area, it increases. For example, in irrigated tract, Karnal, Rohtak, cash rents decreased whereas, the Gurgaon and Hissar have registered an increase during the 1878-79 to 1922-23.

It not only did the mode of rent undergo change there also emerged a struggle over rent between proprietors and their tenants as in Sirsa, Gurgaon and Hissar. In Gurgaon, for example, before the revision of the settlement (1872) the great majority of tenants paid their rent at the customary rate, which was often below the revenue rate. With revision of assessment in the late 1870’s proprietors insisted on a higher rate of rent. They were prominently active in Palwal tahsil where the value of land rose remarkably during these years owe to the opening of Agra canal. ‘The Deputy Commissioner remarks that the landlords are in consequence attempting to eject as many old tenants paying at customary rents’. Further there was also evidence that rents in kind were giving balance to cash rents in all the five tahsil of the district.\textsuperscript{68}

The tenant right controversy had become an increasing phenomenon not only in Sirsa and Gurgaon but also in Hisar, Rohtak and Delhi. In Hisar, the relationship between the landlord and the tenants was

\textsuperscript{66} Calculated from PLRAR of Punjab, for relevant years.
\textsuperscript{67} SR, Karnal, 1872-80, Para, 260.
\textsuperscript{68}Himadri Banerjee, Agrarian Society of the Punjab, 152.
cordial as the former, in many cases, entirely depended on the latter for cultivation of their lands. During the 1870s and 1880s the old relationship between the two gradually came to an end. The vast majority of tenants, Hisar paid cash rents. The rise of the cash rents, on the one hand, affected them severely and on the other, led then to an open contest against the landlords. The landlords, with a view to ejecting them from their holding, issued notices of ejectment. The number of such notices under section 23 of the Tenancy Act of 1863 served on the tenants increased from 298 in 1875-76 to 3213 in 1881-82\(^{69}\) i.e. 979 per cent.

In Delhi and Rohtak, the enhanced rates of rent embittered the relationship between the landlord and the tenants. The tenants of these districts paid nothing but revenue demand of the Government and nominal fees of *malikana* of the landlords. In the changing circumstances the landlords were no longer satisfied with the existing rate and they began to increase it. When the tenants refused to pay the new one it instituted notices of ejectment. In 1875-76, the number of notices served against the tenants, in Delhi was 359, and in Rohtak, 302. Later on, especially at the approaching termination of the first regular settlements, the suits increased rapidly.\(^{70}\) Thus, in 1875-76 Gurgaon occupied the first place of the south-eastern Punjab districts regarding the number of notices of ejectment 559 instituted by the landlords.\(^{71}\) In other districts this ranged from 300 to 400. The minimum was in Hissar district which was almost half the Gurgaon district.

\(^{71}\)Gurgaon was regarded to be ‘one of the most embarrassed districts of the Punjab province’.

*Here lands were mostly passing out of the hands of the peasant proprietors, commonly known for their slovenly cultivation. On many parts of this district, particularly is its Rewari Tehsil, a large area of land, was transferred to Banias and Dhunsars. It was a common practice among then to sublet these lands to the zamindar mortgagors at a rack rent or ejecting them and putting in stringers as their tenants. But these remained still more areas transferred by poorer zamindars to the well their members of the same brotherhood who possessed *at the tone most means of cultivation at their disposal* Himadri Banerjee, *Agrarian Society of the Punjab*, 123.*
Table: 5.7

Number of notices of Ejectment in South-Eastern Punjab Districts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name of the District</th>
<th>Number of Suits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1875-76</td>
<td>Gurgaon</td>
<td>559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875-76</td>
<td>Sirsa$^{72}$</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875-76</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875-76</td>
<td>Rohtak</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875-76</td>
<td>Hissar</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: LRR for 1875-76, 34

Even the Act of 1887 could not save the occupancy tenants from the case of enhancement of rates of rents. Where many laws were suits (for enhancement of rents) in the south-eastern Punjab districts that were registered in the period mentioned above. Thus, we may safely conclude that more and more competition, tension, bitterness; ill blood and antagonism were the controllers of the relationship between the zamindaras and tenants even after the enforcement of the Tenancy Act of 1887. Tenancy problem was still a burning question which ultimately led to tenant movement in Chhuchakwas – (Rohtak), Skinner’s estate (Hissar), Ingran estate (Gurgaon) and village Talao (Rohtak). In the 1930s this conflict escalated further.

The alienation of land increased to alarming proportions and the Government was forced to take ‘paternalistic’ legal action in the Punjab.

$^{72}$ The condition of tenants was very misery type and their ejectment was so hardship for him as the following verses (abstract) in Punjab on Tenant–right were composed during Settlement operations by Ialu, tenant of Dabwali Dhab.

“Jisdi hui bedabhili Sari;
Used waste sabhti bhari;
Jidhar jawe bab proi mari;
Kiyamal badle desi sari
Orak sabbru lesi mar
Be dabhili nahi darbar”

(Wherever is ejected from all his land: for him it is great hardship; wherever he goes everyone hits him; the day of judgment will give full reparation; in the end will strike down everyone; ejectionment is not right). Final Report of the Division of Settlement of the Sirsa District in the Punjab, 1879-83, Calcutta Central Press Calcutta, 1884, XII.
Alienation of land Act 1900. The Act introduced agricultural and non-agricultural groups, led to *benami* – transactions, expropriation by ‘agricultural tribes,’ emergence of agricultural moneylenders, but did not alleviate the poverty of the zamindar or indebtedness. The Government, however, declared the ‘success’ of the Act, though indebtedness increased to alarming proportions by the 1930’s.73

It keenly denied the fact of a ‘dichotomy of interests’ between the big landlords and the petty peasants which had become by now a prominent feature of the rural Punjab, especially south-east Punjab, and confused the entire issue by labeling them all as ‘Zamindars’ (owner of land) and giving to them, for popular consumption, the name of ‘Zamindar League.’ Often enough, the conflict of interests and other criminal activities were associated with the league, for example, thirty-nine dacoities in 1926, along with nine murders of mahajans, between the two sections of ‘Zamindars’ came in to the open. In Rohtak alone, outward migration of *banias* from the district, were attributed to the activities of the Zamindar League.74 There were also direct confrontations between agricultural laborers recruited from scheduled castes and zamindars, as also between agricultural labour, and peasant-cum-tenants and the landlords. Punjab showed by 1930 a substantial increase of numbers among economically poorer sections of agricultural classes like the tenants and the labourers. Although the Unionist Government knew about this but it not only ignored it but also denied its very existence through pious propaganda made to the contrary. The four agrarian measures were enacted in 1938, called the ‘Four Golden Laws,75 The Unionist Party therefore, denied the existence of any class division within the agricultural community. These laws, consequently, did not touch even the fringe of the problem and the domination of the rich agriculturist

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75 The opposition declared these four agrarian acts as ‘Kale Bill’, or ‘Black Bills’. 
over the poorer section of the ‘agriculturists’ continued, undiminished, in the rural south-east Punjab.\textsuperscript{76}

The four agrarian acts passed by the Punjab Legislative Assembly were, the Punjab Restitution of Mortgaged Lands Act, 1938, the Punjab Alienation of Land (further amendment) Act, the Punjab Alienation of Land (III Amendment) Act, '1938, and the Punjab Registration of Money-Lenders Act. On 28\textsuperscript{th} August, 1938, was observed in the Punjab as 'The Golden Day' by the protagonists of the programme of the Unionist Party. The Unionist Government prided it self on passing these four acts within a short period of four months. Which it said the 'Congress cannot pass in 14 years; it was claimed that the Acts would most benefit 'the backward and poor classer like Kisans, Mazdoors, and the untouchables. The claim however, was belied by the facts. The rural conditions prevailing at the time of the enactment of these bills would indicate a complete divorce of the laws enacted from the realities of rural conditions. Neither the calculated impact of this packet of four agrarian laws, nor all claims of the 'Classless Zamindar Community', could keep hidden the inherent class contradiction in the rural society further perpetuated by colonial policy and law.\textsuperscript{77}

The improvement of the lot of peasants in the south-east Punjab had become a part of the Congress programme too. A conference of peasants and workers was held at Rohtak on 9-10 March, 1929; it was a great event as Jawahar Lal Nehru and Moti Lal Nehru actively participated in it. Neki Ram Sharma and Duni Chand of Ambala delivered speeches and passed resolutions against begar and the non-payment of land revenue.\textsuperscript{78} The Kisan Movement started in Hissar and Rohtak districts for the redressal of genuine

\textsuperscript{76} Prem Chowdhry, 'Rural Relations Prevailing in the Punjab at the time of Enactment of the so called 'Golden Laws' or Agrarian Legislation of the Late Thirties,' \textit{The Panjab Past and Present}, Vol. X-II.

\textsuperscript{77} Jat Gazette: (Urdu tr.), 31 Aug. 1938 (hereafter referred to as J.G.) 5,7. \textit{Jat Gazette} was a weekly paper in Urdu, started by CH. Chhotu Ram in 1916 from Rohtak, was one of the chief mouthpieces of the Unionist Party, till Chhotu Ram's death in 1945. Please note that next mentioned as J.G. means Jat Gazette which whole cited in Prem Chowdhry. 'Rural Relations and Golden Laws'.

\textsuperscript{78} Hari Singh, 'Congress and the Kisan Movement in Haryana,' \textit{PHC}, 19\textsuperscript{th} Session, Publication Bureau, Patiala, March, 1995, 412. For detail see, the Tribune, 13\textsuperscript{th} march, 1929.
grievances of the tenants. It was intimately connected with the Congress Movement. Pandit Neki Ram Sharma took some peasant volunteers to Lahore Indian National Congress Session, 1929, from Hansi, district Hissar.

The first issue was the amelioration of the conditions of the tenants of Skinner’s Estate in Hansi. The tenants’ life here had become miserable; they had to pay heavy land revenue, bribes and presents and could be easily evicted from the land. The land revenue was also raised, at a time when famine conditions and economic depression was prevailing.’ At such a juncture, Neki Ram Sharma organized the peasants on the pattern of Gandhian Satyagrah. He chaired a meeting of about ten thousand Kisans of the Skinner Estate, assembled at Garhi, in Hansi Tehsil where four resolutions were passed. The most important was that the peasants would not pay land revenue till their demands were accepted. Another Panchayat conference of kisans was held in October, 1929, Col. Stanely Skinner made false promises and the peasants paid their land revenue. Later, some peasants were implicated in false criminal cases and got imprisoned and the ‘big’ landlords followed a policy of repression.79

The Congress leader in south-east Punjab also took up the cause of the suffering tenants of Chhuchakwas. The dispute was between the Muslim landlords and Ahir tenants. The chief grievances of the tenants were that the rent paid by them to the landlords was excessive and they had to do begar. The landlords took away all the milk of the village on the eve of id. Besides this, the tenants had to give a certain number of bundles of jowar (poolas) and dung cakes, at a specified times.80 The Congress leader Sri Ram Sharma, Neki Ram Sharma and Mangli Ram organized a big Panchayat at Chhuchakwas on 9, 1930, which was attended by about 5000 people from villages of Salahwas, Beri, Jhajar of Rewari tehsil and from the Dujana and Jind states. Representatives from 70 villages attended this Kisan Conference.81 The main reasons for conflicts was identified by the untouchables who complained that

79 Haryana Tilak, 22nd October, 1929, 6 cited in Hari Singh, ‘Congress and the Kisan Movement in Haryana’, 413.
on an average 12 Chamars and 12 Chamaris were made to perform ‘Begar’ (free service) every day.\textsuperscript{82} The second complaint, common to both the tenant and agricultural labour, was with regard to enhance of tax on the dwelling units. According to custom long reduced to writing, i.e., ‘Kodi Kamini,’ the amount charged per year for houses constructed on the land owned by the big landlord was Rs. 2/- only but Chamars and Sweepers complained of being charged Rs. 3/- per year.\textsuperscript{83} The third common complaint was the right of the zamindar to claim ownership of almost everything in the village. Chamars revolted against the right claimed by the landlord over a drinking well, which had been improved and made fit for drawing water by their own efforts and money. The tenants also had numerous complaints against the landlords on this account.\textsuperscript{84}

The Congress leaders also organized \textit{panchayats} of the kisans in village Puthi Mangal Khan (Hissar) on 10\textsuperscript{th}, 11\textsuperscript{th}, 13\textsuperscript{th} March 1930. These panchayats showed that the Kisan and Congress movements had become identical. These panchayats were held in this village to persuade the menials not to do the work of those who did not join the Congress Movement. As a result, nearly the half of the chamars of the village gave an undertaking that they would not do any work for those who had not joined the congress fold. All the dhanks, carpenters and barbers of the village decided not to work for men with anti-Congress views. The poor and lower classes in general joined the movement for national liberation, as the Congress championed their causes.\textsuperscript{85}

The confrontation between Odes, a section of agricultural labourers, and the zamindars, was the subject of frequent discussion in the Provincial Legislative and in the Press. Odes were a nomadic scheduled caste tribe, hired by the zamindar as agricultural labour.\textsuperscript{86} Possessing hordes of sheep, goats and donkeys, the Odes traded in raw wool and hides. There were reports from several districts of crops having been burnt, Zamindars having been attacked, wounded and even killed, especially from the districts of Karnal, Ambala,

\textsuperscript{82} J.G., 6 November, 1929, 2.
\textsuperscript{83} J.G., 6 November, 1929, 2.
\textsuperscript{84} J.G., 23 October, 1929, 5.
\textsuperscript{85} Sri Ram Sharma, \textit{Oral Interview Transcript}, 82. NMML, New Delhi, Cited in Hari Singh, ‘Congress and Kisan Movements in Haryana,’ 415.
\textsuperscript{86} J.G., 12 January 1927, 7.
Rohtak, Hissar and Gurgaon. Fazal-i. Husain, the then Revenue Member of the Punjab Governor’s Executive Council, mentioned 20 cases which had been registered with the police in the district of Rohtak, Hissar and Karnal in the year of 1927-28. The Minister of Public Works gave a statement in the Assembly in 1940 about clashes between Odes and the Zamindars, between 1st April 1937, to 15th September 1938. The report showed 14 clashes in Hissar, of which 11 cases were sent up for trial. Rohtak and Gurgaon had one clash each, both sent up for trial. The report also indicated that in 16 cases the local inhabitants of Hissar and Karnal also sided with the Odes against zamindars. Instances of confrontation between kashtkars (tenants) and landlords were also reported. The tenants of Labhpur, tehsils Bhiwani and Hansi, threatened non-cooperation and non-payment of rent to the landlords who in their turn tried to suppress the tenants with outside help.

Besides the above-mentioned peasant agitations, Kirti Kisan Sabha Conference was held at various places on 21 March 1939, under the Presidency of K. A. Desai of Bhiwani, who unfurled a red flag, which had, hammer and sickle inscribed on it. He raised the slogans of ‘Long Live Revolution’ and ‘Down with Imperialism’. It was suggested that unless the farmers and labourers worked for freedom. India could not be freed. In December 1938, Zamindara Party workers uprooted the Congress flag, stood against the Congress and started beating drums loudly as the conference started. Then the Congress workers who had vowed to remain peaceful were beaten with lathies. Fifty persons from the Congress were seriously injured; even women leaders like Srimati Kasturi Bai, Mehti Devi and Parbati Devi were beaten. In early 1939, again about 200 persons attacked the peaceful Congress workers with lathies and agricultural implements.

88 J.G., 1 May 1929. 2.
90 J. G., 28 March 1925. 4. 20 May 1925, 4.
The Survey of the period 1929-39 shows that Congress leaders at the centre and regional level made sincere efforts to win the peasants to their side. The socio-economic programme of the Congress, mainly inspired by Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, was taken up by the Congress leader of south-east Punjab. In their own way, they used their influence and organizational skill to get the redressal of the grievances of peasants with considerable success, in spite of the opposition from the ruling Unionist Party. The four agrarian Acts of the Punjab Government were, therefore, ‘Golden’, only for the agriculturist and the agriculturist moneylenders of the Punjab, who ruled the province through the Unionist Party. The exploitation of the agriculturist labourers, tenants and small zamindars by the landlords and the agriculturist moneylenders, continued. In the second part of the nineteenth century, there were not cordial relationship between the zamindars and tenants which aggravated in the twentieth century.

III

All the agricultural groups were impacted by the money-lender who occupied a dominant position in the provision of credit to agriculture in India. Even in a province like the Punjab where agriculture was the dominant profession, they were most important financing agencies. The money-lenders profits, said Calvert in Wealth and Welfare in the Punjab, “Probably exceed those of all the cultivators put together”. Besides him, the professional class is inconsiderable; the industrial class is insignificant; even trade and commerce take second place” and after agriculture money-lending was the most important industry in the Punjab province. One out of every four income-tax payers was a

94 Ibid., 417.
95 Money-lenders were not only peculiar to India. In fact, small scale farming by an illiterate peasantry and money-lenders seemed to go together. Exploitation of farmers by the money-lenders was as common in Central Europe, before the advent of the co-operative movement, as it was in India before independence. Thus, “in Italy if a poor peasant wanted money, the usurer was delighted to supply it—at from 10 percent to 1200 percent often with a Sunday dinner thrown in as a prescriptive condition.” Wolf, People’s Banks, 296 cited in B.V. Narayananaswamy and P.S. Narasimahan, The Economics of Indian Agriculture, Pt. I, Rochhouse Press, 1943 Madras, 73.
96 Ibid; 73.
money-lender, and it is impossible to say how much capital was invested. In money lending, but in 1928-29 the total amount in it by the moneylenders assessed to income tax was over 22 crores. The magnitude of rural moneylender’s operation was well indicated by total agricultural debt, which exceeded 100 crores. In many districts the money-lender was becoming a very important element. In speaking of the rural moneylender we have in mind not only ordinary money-lender or sahukar but also the agriculturist moneylender.97

The chief problem of banking in the Punjab was the problem of money-lender. In 1922, Mr. Calvert calculated the number of money-lenders at about 40000. It was impossible to calculate the number of women who lended, but the evidence of the inspectors, co-operative societies, showed that it must be considerable, for about 5 percent of the 2000 members of the women’s co-operative societies apparently made a practice of it. The Census Report of 1921, on the other hand, stated that the number of ordinary money-lenders had almost certainly declined. If we set off the number of women who lended against this decline we were still left with 59000 money-lenders.98

There were two broad categories of moneylenders-urban money-lender and rural money-lenders. The latter was further of two types i.e. traditional moneylender (sahukar) or Banya, and agriculturists moneylender. The rural money-lender was even more important than the urban money-lender and in 1928-29 represented nearly 20 percent of the income-tax assessed of the province. In that year 5998 were taxed upon on income of 170 Lakhs produced by 13 crores of capital. His stronghold was in the south-east and the south-west, and in three districts- Karnal, Rohtak 99 and Gurgaon-he contributed 60 percent or more of these taxed. A note describing his position was submitted to the Royal Commission on Agriculture in 1927. Their replies summarized and gave good general idea of money-lenders present position, which reflects in picture also.100

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98 Report on Provincial Enquiry Committee, 129.
99 In the Rohtak Village the number of agricultural money-lenders was double that of all classes of money-lenders put together. Ibid, 139.
The rate of interest charged by the agriculturist moneylenders was 24 percent (in the case of cash advanced). In the case of mortgages without possession, 24 percent was charged: on loans secured by jewelry, 18¼ percent, only half the value of jewelry will be advanced. Strangers paid higher rates.\(^{101}\)

Therefore, the regions of the Punjab, consequently, become very conspicuous in having a predominance of agriculturist money-lenders. In the year of 1927-28 a total of 3042 total agriculturist money-lenders existed in the region, around 64 percent of these money-lenders\(^{1959}\) were located in south-eastern Punjab districts. The largest numbers of 562 were recorded in the Rohtak district and least numbers were found in Ambala with 85.

Table: 5.8

**Return of Capital Employed and Interest Earned in 1927-28 by the Agriculturist Moneylenders to income tax compare to South-East and Rest of the Punjab in 1928-29.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Number of money-lenders</th>
<th>Total Capital Employed (Lakh Rs.)</th>
<th>Income for Money-lenders (Lakhs) Actually taxed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rohtak</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>13.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnal</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>17.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurgaon</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>7.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hissar</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>11.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambala</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-East total</td>
<td>1559</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>52.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amritsar</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferozpur</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>13.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujranwali</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ludhiana</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoshiarpur</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of the Punjab total</td>
<td>1083</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>27.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{101}\) *Ibid* : 227-28. An official inquiry showed that land’s price was low as compare to other parts of the province. Provincial average was Rs. 206.3, but in the backward south-east Punjab’s districts it was Hissar Rs. 52.9; Karnal Rs. 83.3; Gurgaon, Rs. 138.3.
Noticeably, south-eastern region headed the list of Punjab districts with the higher number of agriculturist money-lenders as compare to the rest of the Punjab they also operated the largest amount of capital in their profession.\textsuperscript{102}

The traditional \textit{Sahukars} (Bania) popularly known as ‘Bohra’s ‘ controlled the village economy in the south-eastern region, having the vast majority of the peasantry at their mercy for all their economic needs.\textsuperscript{103} The Sahukar or professional money-lender- merchant exercised a greater hold in the south-east Punjab. Of the total districts of the province, 84 percent of the Banyas were living in this sub region in 1881, which decreased to 77 percent in 1921. The Banyas of this sub-region were well known to the northern Indian population for their commercial enterprise since medieval times. They spent their lives ‘mostly in their shops, and the results were apparent their poor physique and utter want of manliness’. After the Land Alienation Act, the class of agricultural moneylenders emerged and invested more capital and increased their hold on land. Consequently, the \textit{sahukar} or Banya tended to reduce their business, and leave their villages to seek their fortunes in the towns. The \textit{sahukar} were weakened also because of growing importance of volume of the land mortgage business. As the combined effects of de-industrialization, population growth, development of education, commercialization, and the Act of 1901, thus the sahukar lost his traditional position with that of the agriculturist moneylender was strengthen. Over the period of colonial rule, the transfer of land both by sale and mortgage reflects a changing pattern.

\textsuperscript{102} Prem Chowdhry, ‘The Advantages of Backwardness’, 283-84 and for detail see, \textit{The Punjab Provincial Enquiry Committee}. 332.
It is calculated that agriculturist moneylenders substantially increased their hold on land by 756 percent in regard to the sale of land during the year in 1876 and 1947, whereas non-agriculturist decreased i.e. 93 percent during the same years. Mortgage of land increased, almost doubled, i.e. 1622 percent to agriculturists as compare to 756 percent of land of sale. The mortgage of land by non-agriculturist decreased almost 95 percent during the above mentioned years i.e. 1876 to 1947.

In these circumstances, the economy was more or less disturbed and affected the life of cultivators. The hard hit peasantry came under the grip of the shrewd money-lender. He charged a high rate of interest from him. Many instances of this form can be seen in the agricultural records. As a result tenants and share-croppers, as a homogeneous class, were usually impoverished and indebted. Consequently, Rs. 31 per head debt was noticed in the four districts of the south-east Punjab. Ultimately, we can only remember the famous statement: cultivator’s birth was in debt, live in debt and died in debt.

A specific inquiry into the money-lender's income tax in Rohtak district was conducted by the government and Sardar Chanda Singh income-tax. The note gave the results of statistical inquiry based upon the account of 338 rural money-lenders assessed to income tax of their capital of nearly 60 lakhs, 25% was deposited with mahajans in towns and mandis at an average rate of 6½ percent, and the balance was invested in loans to agriculturists at varying rate was 16½ percent out of which, however, only 13 percent was finally adjusted in the accounts. The difference represented the concessions made by the money-lender to his clients. The inquiry was defective in one respect: it made no allowance for bad debts. But the income-tax officer stated that, after discussing the question with many rural money-lenders and examining the accounts of thirty money-lenders in Hissar for five years, he was opinion that the nowhere else did we heared of large sums deposited by rural with urban money-lenders. He added that the whole inquiry was characteristic not only of Rohtak, but also of Hissar and a good part of Gurgaon.

The report of inquiry came and remarked that for the southern Punjab then it may be said that over a period of five or ten years the rural money-lender on the average made 12 percent net upon his capital. In districts where the unsecured loan was more usual than the secured, and where the common rate was 24 or 25 percent, net profit was probably as high as 15 percent. The position of sahukrar was deteriorating as admitted by the income-tax officer and Assistant Registrar. In Rohtak, relations between him and the zamindars were said to be strained, the result, it would seem, of communalism, propaganda, and rivalry with the agriculturist money-lender. In welcome contrast to this, the leader of the zamindars who waited upon us at Bhiwani; assured is that relations there were most friendly, and he spoke with warm gratitude of generosity shown by local Mahajans in providing there cattle with large

105 “A zamindar will lend more money to bad deals than the sahukar as the latter cannot get his land in return for a loan,” evidence of the zaildars and co-operators of Rohtak District, The Punjab Provincial Enquiry Committee, 872-74.
106 Ibid; 136-137.
quantities of free fodder during the present scarcity. On their side, the money-lenders who met us (officials) admitted that, owing to the scarcity, 70 to 75 percent of the cultivators could not repay their loans for lack of funds.

IV

A lowest strata of this south-eastern region’s agrarian society was the artisan and menial. The artisans may be defined as the handicrafts men who specialized in certain crafts, inherited in family groups or as individuals. The important among them, forming nearly 18 percent of the total population of the British Punjab, were the blacksmith (lohar), carpenters (tarkhan), weavers (julaha), potters (kumhar), leather-workers (chamar), goldsmith (sunar), oil pressers (teli), and metal burnishers (shikligar). In the south-east Punjab, all these groups were also prevalent except metal burnishers who were not so common. The most important among the sepidars were those whose assistance in agrarian operations was vital like the carpenter with the raw materials supplied by the jajman were required to make and repair all wooden agricultural implements and articles for domestic use. The blacksmiths furnished and repaired iron implements like the datri, hal, kahi, kuhara, khurpa, karaha, for boiling sugarcane-juice, and several other metal wares used by agriculturists. The potter supplied earthen pots, called tind, used for drawing

107 Many times the Mahajan did not pay the tax as in the case of inquiry in high village in Rohtak where inquiries were made about the income of several leading money-lenders in the village, but no decline replies were received: only something like the following, “Sir, we have nothing; you can see for yourself that we are clothed in rags; we starve”. It appeared, however, that the Mahajans in the village were fairly well to do without being prosperous, but the agriculturist money-Lenders were certainly well-off. Some of them have pucca houses built recently: those of those houses costed Rs. 20000/-, Rs. 10000/-, Rs. 8000/- respectively. Punjab Village Survey No. 5, ‘Gijhi- A Village in Rohtak Distrit,’ Lahore, 1932, 103.

108 Under Land Improvement Loans Act 37 percent of the amount advanced in Gurgaon and due for recovery was in arrears. The Punjab Provincial Enquiry Committee, 135.

109 ibid, 138.

water from wells for irrigation purposes. These vessels were tied round the persian wheel in a row. The leather workers or the chamars supplied shoes, leather, blinders for bullocks and harnesses and whips. Sunar supplied the gold and silver ornaments to the agriculturists. The teli supplied the oil to the agriculturists and to the other groups of society.\footnote{111} Numerically; their position fluctuated in this sub region. Firstly, they accounted for 32 percent of the population in 1881,\footnote{112} as against the provincial average was 18 percent. Secondly, they substantial decreased to 21 percent as against 9 percent overall increased in 1931.\footnote{113} The changing trend also varied from group to group. Between 1881-1931, as chamars (+35), teli (-14), lohar (-16), sunar (-17), Kumhar (-26), tarkhan (-34), julaha (-47). The causes behind the deduction of artisans as the complementary group to agriculture and industry in rural area was disrupted by the new developments, and within half a century of the coming of the British the landowners began to prefer manufactured goods from the market for cash price. However, at the outset of British rule, the agriculturists were dependent on village artisans for their domestic requirements. By the early twentieth century, new sugarcane crushing mills, Persian wheel, ploughs; fodder cutters and other important implements were available in the market. Agricultural growth was another reason because surplus helped to the agriculturist from kind to cash.\footnote{114} Consequently, they preferred modern equipments instead of traditional. The reason was to shift to agricultural labour due to the colonial situation and also migration to big cities i.e. to Delhi and Shimla.

\footnote{112} The total numbers of artisan’s classes, in this sub-region, with Individual numbers were chamars = 510140, julaha = 63818, tarkhan = 109850, kumhar = 114501, lohar = 61193, teli = 65806, sunar = 33203. *Census of India, Punjab, 1881*. Actual figure is 958511 in the south-eastern region and 2910185 in whole Punjab in 1881, which decreased former to 689174 and latter increased to 3172339 in 1931.
\footnote{113} The individual numbers were chamars = 362897, julaha = 33853, tarkhan = 72785, kumhar = 84253, lohar = 51434, teli = 56410, sunar = 27542. *Census of India, 1931, Part ii, Tables*, Superintendent of Census Operations, 1932, 282-300.
\footnote{114} For example, in 1912, when first wages survey introduced, 58 percent villages of the Punjab purely cash rates, and 40 percent villages on partly cash and partly grain rates, and remaining 2 percent villages purely on grain rates prevailed.
The Kamins (menial castes) were indispensable associates of the Zamindars in their agricultural operations all through the year. They have been defined as 'those village servants, the blacksmiths, carpenters, potters, water carriers etc; with whom there is a sort of perspective contract to do the work of their respective trades for agriculturist, who pays them a certain fixed portion of the produce of his field.' The Kamins were usually divided into two broad groups according to the nature of their functions: those whose labour was 'intimately connected with agricultures', generally known as vaddee kamins or kamin proper and those whose services were less regular who the zamindars called khangi kamins or house menials. The former generally included kamins like lohars (blacksmith), sunars (jewelers), and chamars (leather workers) while churas (sweepers), dhobis (washer men), nais (barbers), etc. represented the latter in south-east Punjab. The dues were calculated differently in the different villages, either at so many seers per crop, or at so much per plough, or at a defined fraction of the produce of cereals and pulses. They were higher in the irrigated portions of the districts where they were heavier crops to be handled and more assistance was required from the menials.

The jajmani system was prevalent in south-east Punjab during the nineteenth century. The agriculturist castes were called the jajmans, meaning the hosts. The other view is 'yagman' which means 'yaj + Maan; Yaj' means 'do the work and 'Maan' means 'honour'. So the menial did the work for the upper castes (honorary person) and received goods and services in return. These lower castes received services from the upper caster and they also called the kamins, the menials. Therefore, the lower and upper strata live

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115 See for detail, on remuneration taken by menial castes, appendix-E.
116 Himadri Banerjee, Agrarian Society of the Punjab, 175.
120 Interview with Deshraj, Village Khalila, District Panipat, age 87, years, 7.8.2001
121 Kamin from Persian word kam (less) i.e. those who owned less property, see, Oscar Lewis, Village Life in Northern India, New York, 1965, 56.
and worked jointly, locally called 'Bhaichara'; and services taken by menials called 'Sheodi'. The main purpose of the jajmani system was to ensure constant labour supply for the agriculturist castes. The appendix portrays a clear picture of the system figuratively.

With the passage of time, the control of the upper castes on the lower castes gradually started breaking up due to various factors like destruction of traditional and rural economy and transition to money or market economy in the colonial society under British rule. The changing economic necessities and gradual enlightenment of the menials as a result of the gospel preaching the reform movements, the lower castes also showed a sign of mobility of crossing the caste barriers. Some of them left the villages and started taking up other odd jobs in the urban areas which widened their outlook more and they started breaking the shackles of bondage. A few of them saved money and took a piece of land on mortgages which turned them to mean as agriculturists. It raised their status and relieved them of the jajmani duties, thus giving a blow to the system. The protection given by the administrative and judicial machinery of the British Raj also contributed towards the weakening of the jajmani system. The support from him as a agricultural labourers seems to be continuing even in recent times.

The rates of rural wages were those paid in the open market to men who were contracted freely. The rural wages in the province were varying in form and also un-even in the south-east part of the province. Taking the lowest figures returned, a daily wage of 1 anna was said to still obtained in any village in Gurgaon, while 2 annas were paid in a few instances in Rohtak, Delhi.

122 Interview with Zile Singh (Brahman) Village Khalila, District Panipat, age 69 years on 7.8.2001. A menial was, "one of those who for certain clearly defined regular dues provided certain services. He may of course receive such payment as may be agreed upon, but this in no way altered his position." Rohtak Settlement Report, 1881, 96-97.
123 Oscar Lewis, Village Life in Northern India, 56.
125 W.H. Wiser, Hindu Jagmani System, 146.
126 SR Rohtak District, 1873-79, 1880, 67.
127 SR Karnal District, 1872-80, 48.
and Karnal. In the rest of the province, 3 and 4 anna rates were the lowest.\textsuperscript{129} The highest rates which have been brought to notice were moderate in Rohtak and Delhi (4 annas), Gurgaon (4½ annas), Karnal (5½ annas).\textsuperscript{130}

Table: 5\textsuperscript{131}

Rural Wages in the Sout-East Punjab as Determined by Enquiry in December, 1909.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unskilled labour</th>
<th>Carpenter by day</th>
<th>Blacksmith by day</th>
<th>Mason by day</th>
<th>Ploughman by month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash Grain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range of Typical Rates</td>
<td>Most Value Weight of Common Typical Rates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annas</td>
<td>Annas</td>
<td>Annas</td>
<td>Seers</td>
<td>Annas</td>
<td>Annas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hissar</td>
<td>5 to 6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3 gur</td>
<td>8 to 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rohtak</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>7 to 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurgaon</td>
<td>2 to 3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 to 3</td>
<td>3 sers</td>
<td>6 to 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>3 to 3.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6 to 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnal</td>
<td>3.25 to 4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambala</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8 to 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The typical cash rates of unskilled labour varied between 2-6, for example, 2-3 in Gurgaon and 5-6 in Hissar. The same trend was followed in most areas. In cash rates, Hissar retained the highest value. Among other groups the carpenters enjoyed the highest rate in Hissar and Ambala i.e. 8-12 annas, in the remaining district; they took 6-8 annas by a day. Mason enjoyed the highest rate, for example, 16 annas by a day in Hissar, whereas 6-8 annas in Gurgaon in 1909.

\textsuperscript{129} The highest rates in the remaining Punjab were Rawalpindi 6 annas, Attock, 6.5 annas, and 8 annas for the remaining districts. It means the more wages in irrigated area unlike unirrigated area.

\textsuperscript{130} Memorandum by W.C. Renouf, Esquire Director of Agriculture, on the Wages Survey of the Punjab taken in December, 1909, Civil and Military Gazette, Lahore, 1910,1.

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., table ii.
The agricultural labourers, on the other hand, clearly increased over time. The actual number of agricultural labourers is difficult to calculate with any measure of precision. We have of course the usual figures in the Census and other enquiries. The agricultural labourers in the selected four districts (Hissar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Karnal) were on average of 9.4 percent in 1881, which increased to almost double in the 1931. This is the example of male agricultural labourers only. In the female agricultural labourers this percentage was only 5.8 in 1901, which decreased to 3.6 in 1931. It is interesting fact that women’s role in south-east Punjab in agricultural pursuits was substantial but in the case of agricultural labourers, they were in a bad seat. In the district wise pattern, we find, on an average, the maximum labour in Karnal district (20 percent), followed by Gurgaon (17) and almost 10 in Hissar and Rohtak during 1881 to 1931. The maximum female labour was in Gurgaon (17) followed by Karnal (6), Hissar 5 and 2 in Rohtak.

Table: 5.11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>South-East Punjab</th>
<th>Male Labourers</th>
<th>Female Labourers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1881</td>
<td>1901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hissar</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rohtak</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurgaon</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnal</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For detail see, K.N. Raj, et.al, *Essays on the Commercialization*, Neeladri Bhattacharya, ‘Agricultural Labour and Production: Central and South-East Punjab,’ OUP, Bombay, 1985, 130-31. Note:- (1) For 1881, the figures for female are not available. In the subsequent censuses we do get the figures for women, but as evident in the table, they are utterly unreliable but interesting thing is that they are upper as compare to central Punjab districts. (2) Seventy-five percent of the unspecified labour category in the centers has been added to calculate the figures of total agricultural labourers. For 1881, Neeladri have added all those classified as general labour (in Villages) to the agricultural labour category. (3) Since only the figures for actual workers or earner (1931) have been considered here, Neeladri had to leave out the figures for 1891 which refer only to population supported by an occupation. Source: *Census: Punjab, 1881*, table XII; *Census: Punjab 1901*, Pt. II, Table XV; *Census: Punjab, 1911*, Pt. II Table XV; *Census: Punjab, 1921*, Pt. II, Table XVII; *Census: Punjab, 1921*, Pt. II, Table X.
Early Settlement Reports clearly reveal that at the outset of British rule a specially favoured non-Proprietary class of cultivators existed in the Punjab. The second point is that the tillers of the land (rayyats) have to fight to their fellow zamindars at the one hand and to the government on the other. Thirdly, the artisans and menials class continued to provide their traditional work to the agriculturalist for their honorary dues.

Thus, the agrarian relations mainly impounded to social stratification. The land owned in severalty, but was only invariably divided on the occasion of separation of property, in strict accordance with ancestral shares. The tenure system of this region was divided into four groups as Zamindari, Pattidari, Bhaichara and Mixed or imperfect pattidari. The cultivators were also divided into four classes-the old ryots, the itinerants (pahhe), the hired (kamera) and the partial cultivators (kameen). This was the situation of early nineteenth century. In the late and early twentieth century, these groups replaced as land lords, peasant proprietors, occupancy tenants and tenants-at-will. During this time, land-lords were the emerging economic power. If we view the demographic position, we find that, Jats increased from 19 to 21 percent, Rajputs 8 to 10, Gujars 3-4 percent, Ahirs 2-3 percent, Saini, the same and Rors marginally declined by 1 percent between 1881 to 1931. Jats were the dominant agriculturist caste. The land holdings were varied in the region Hissar had maximum land holdings. There were two types of payments broadly, first, rent payable to the landlord and second, payable to the government. The so-called rent was the bone of contention between tenant and land lords and also the government. In the south-east Punjab, cash rent was popular. Kisan Movements also started in this region. Money-lenders occupied a pivotal position in the south-eastern region. Around fifty percent of the moneylenders lived in the five districts of the south-east Punjab as compare to fifty percent in remaining twenty two districts of the Punjab province. The artisans and menials castes were indispensable associates of the zamindars in their agricultural operations all through the year. With the passage of time, the control of the upper castes on the lower castes gradually started breaking up due to various factors like destruction of traditional and rural economy and transition to money or market economy in the colonial society of the south-eastern region. The rural
wages were varied in the region under reference. The male agricultural labourers were desperately increasing whereas the female labourers were on the decline. The changing scenario of the region as a result of politico and economic changes had far reaching effect on the agrarian relations of the cultivating classes in south-east Punjab. This was not a structural or functional change but flexibility within the given framework. Agrarian relations among the peasantry however were not uniform and exhibit a varying status over the different districts of the south-eastern tract.