CHAPTER IV

FAMINES OF 1880-1901

NATURE, EFFECTS AND RELIEF MEASURES.

The period from 1880-1901 was marked by two severe scarcities and two famines during the years of 1883-84, 1891, 1896-97 and 1899-1900. In this chapter, an attempt has been made to critically examine these calamities in regard to their nature, effects on socio-economic life and relief measures taken by the British Government. The Native States have also been included in the study. The discussion will begin with the scarcity of 1883-84.

THE SCARCITY OF 1883-84

In December, 1883, a severe scarcity was felt in the west, south-west and the south-east districts of the Punjab. But the intensity of distress was mainly confined to the districts of Ambala, Gurgaon, Karnal, Delhi, Hissar, Sirsa and Rohtak. However, a great mortality among cattle caused considerable anxiety in the districts of Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Jhang, Montgomery and Multan. The Native States of Patiala and Jind were also affected.

2. PRAR, 1883-84, Para 1, p. 1.
3. SG, Patiala, op. cit., p. 137.
The scarcity was the product of various factors which included the exports of foodgrains, previous bad harvests, failure of rainfall and high prices. Throughout the tract the rainfall of 1883 had been much below the average. The Kharif crop promised well up to the middle of July, 1883, but a break in the rains lasted for six weeks from the middle of July till the beginning of September. As a result, a large part of the crop withered away. A heavy and general fall of rain in the first week of September saved some of it but the out turn of the produce came out to be very poor. The September rain, however, enabled a considerable area to be sown for rabi but the winter season was rainless, and by March, 1884 the unirrigated crops had almost wholly perished. In the great part of the tract, the previous harvests had been poor and the exports of foodgrains from the province further depleted the stocks. At this time came the report of a deficient wheat harvest from the United States (nearly 24 percent) on which the English consumers

5. For rainfall fluctuations, See Table IV.1.
7. Ibid., The character of five harvests with the rabi of 1884 was as follows: (in terms of fractions of a rupee, 16 annas representing an average harvest).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1882</th>
<th>1883</th>
<th>1884</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rabi</td>
<td>Kharif</td>
<td>Rabi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurgaon</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hissar</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rohtak</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. The Aftab-i-Punjab (Lahore), dated 27th Aug., 1883 wrote, "that export of grain by European traders resulted in the scarcity of grain. Prices had risen considerably; wheat which was selling at 34 or 35 seers per rupee, now was available at 17 or 18 seers/rupees". Similar views have been expressed by Sadig-Ul-Akhbar (Bahawalpur), dated 23rd Aug., 1883; SNNPP during the years 1883-84. For export of foodgrains, See Table IV.2.
### Table IV.1

**PUNJAB : District-wise Distribution of Rainfall compared with the Average, 1882-83.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region/Distt.</th>
<th>Average 1882</th>
<th>Rainfall During 1883</th>
<th>Rainfall During 1884</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Himalayan</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangra</td>
<td>124.90</td>
<td>+ 5.05</td>
<td>-39.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simla</td>
<td>71.24</td>
<td>-11.52</td>
<td>-15.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Sub-Montane</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambala</td>
<td>35.14</td>
<td>-15.04</td>
<td>-16.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoshiarpur</td>
<td>35.28</td>
<td>-6.93</td>
<td>-15.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujrat</td>
<td>30.27</td>
<td>-7.27</td>
<td>-4.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sialkot</td>
<td>36.85</td>
<td>-6.49</td>
<td>-8.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Salt Range</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rawalpindi</td>
<td>31.79</td>
<td>+ 5.38</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jhelum</td>
<td>24.64</td>
<td>+ 5.96</td>
<td>+ 5.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bannu</td>
<td>12.95</td>
<td>- 3.60</td>
<td>- 5.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peshawar</td>
<td>13.30</td>
<td>- 1.85</td>
<td>- 1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kohat</td>
<td>19.50</td>
<td>+ 1.25</td>
<td>-4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazara</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Eastern Plains</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurdaspur</td>
<td>31.33</td>
<td>+ 3.51</td>
<td>-13.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amritsar</td>
<td>26.32</td>
<td>+ 7.08</td>
<td>- 2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferozepure</td>
<td>22.53</td>
<td>- 0.03</td>
<td>- 6.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jullundur</td>
<td>28.24</td>
<td>- 4.15</td>
<td>-18.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ludhiana</td>
<td>31.56</td>
<td>- 6.82</td>
<td>+ 3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahore</td>
<td>21.64</td>
<td>+15.79</td>
<td>- 0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>26.92</td>
<td>- 2.03</td>
<td>- 9.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurgaon</td>
<td>26.14</td>
<td>-12.26</td>
<td>- 7.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnal</td>
<td>29.34</td>
<td>- 4.44</td>
<td>- 7.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rohtak</td>
<td>19.80</td>
<td>+ 0.06</td>
<td>-3.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hisar</td>
<td>15.54</td>
<td>- 3.80</td>
<td>-6.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Western Plains</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multan</td>
<td>7.07</td>
<td>+ 0.73</td>
<td>+ 1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jhang</td>
<td>11.04</td>
<td>+ 4.16</td>
<td>- 6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery</td>
<td>10.46</td>
<td>+ 2.84</td>
<td>+ 0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujranwala</td>
<td>25.63</td>
<td>- 1.63</td>
<td>+ 2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shahpur</td>
<td>14.97</td>
<td>+ 2.93</td>
<td>+ 0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.I.Khan</td>
<td>8.46</td>
<td>+ 6.53</td>
<td>- 2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.G.Khan</td>
<td>7.03</td>
<td>+ 4.63</td>
<td>- 5.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mujaffargarh</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>+ 1.92</td>
<td>- 2.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unit = Inches

+ = Increase
- = Decrease

Table IV.2
PUNJAB: Imports And Exports of Foodgrains, 1882-83 to 1884-85.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Imports (in Kaunds)</th>
<th>Exports (in Kaunds)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881-82</td>
<td>7,085,885</td>
<td>5,855,895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882-83</td>
<td>6,343,237</td>
<td>10,284,979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883-84</td>
<td>7,474,712</td>
<td>13,837,532</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: PAR, 1882-83, P. 5; PAR, 1884-85, P. 3.)
depended. Consequently, the Punjab wheat trade assumed a position of importance in 1881-82 which continued throughout the 1880's. As a result prices rose high and the scarcity prevailed. Great anxiety was felt due to shortage of fodder, as a result a considerable number of cattle died. However, the situation was averted from turning into a severe famine by the heavy rainfall at the end of July, 1884 that helped in furnishing an ample supply of grass and for sowings of the next crop.

In the Delhi district the distressed area was confined to the west of the Balbgarh tahsil and the south-west of the Delhi tahsil adjoining Gurgaon and Rohtak district. The rainfall for the past year had been much below the average. There was a six week's break from 18th July to 3rd September, good rain then fell over the district, but there had been no rain since September. The harvests had been very poor since rabi 1882. The break of August withered up the greater portion of the Kharif crop, and the rain which fell in September was not sufficient for the rabi sowings. As a result the rabi crops had totally failed in unirrigated lands.

9. Himadri, op. cit., p.54. The export of wheat from Punjab during 1882 to 1885 was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Export (in thousand maunds)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1882-83</td>
<td>4,101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883-84</td>
<td>5,187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884-85</td>
<td>9,688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885-86</td>
<td>14,924</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. For prices of Cereals, See Table IV.3.


The scarcity was very severe in the Gurgaon district and was confined to the Nuh tahsil and Punahana bazar. The district suffered greatly from the scarcity of fodder. The previous harvests were very poor and the district had not recovered from the great losses of 1877-78 famine. The Deputy Commissioner of Gurgaon wrote that "he visited portions of the Gurgaon and Rewari tahsils. In parts of the Hathin and Punalana parganas the people appeared to be badly off, and a good many Meos had left their homes in search of work. Fodder was very scare, and the people had used up most of the Kiker and raungh loppings." 14

In Sirsa district the scarcity of fodder was very great. Prices of foodgrains rose high because of the failure of rainfall and the continued export to the Gurgaon district and the port of Karachi. 15 The distress in Hissar district was confined to the south and east of the district. Failure of rains and the exports led to high prices. Fodder was selling at a very high rate. The pressure of scarcity was felt in Barwala, Hissar, Fatehabad, Bhiwani and Hansi. Cattle from Barwala were being sent to Patiala, Bikaner and to the grazing grounds in the Tarai. Most of the people sold them at cheap rates. A considerable number of menials left their villages in the northern part of Barwala to work on the Sirhind Canal. 16

In Rohtak district the scarcity was so severe that "many were reduced for a time to one short meal, while others substituted

13. Ibid.
### Table IV.3

**Prices of Cereals in Gurgaon District From Aug.1883 to Oct.1884.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month/Year</th>
<th>Wheat</th>
<th>Barley</th>
<th>Bajra</th>
<th>Gram</th>
<th>Jowar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S C</td>
<td>S C</td>
<td>S C</td>
<td>S C</td>
<td>S C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August,1883</td>
<td>18 0</td>
<td>24 8</td>
<td>20 0</td>
<td>20 0</td>
<td>23 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>20 0</td>
<td>27 0</td>
<td>20 0</td>
<td>22 0</td>
<td>25 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>20 0</td>
<td>27 0</td>
<td>22 0</td>
<td>22 0</td>
<td>23 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>20 0</td>
<td>26 8</td>
<td>21 0</td>
<td>22 0</td>
<td>24 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>20 0</td>
<td>26 8</td>
<td>21 0</td>
<td>23 0</td>
<td>29 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January,1884</td>
<td>19 0</td>
<td>26 0</td>
<td>21 12</td>
<td>23 0</td>
<td>24 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>19 0</td>
<td>26 0</td>
<td>22 0</td>
<td>23 0</td>
<td>24 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>19 0</td>
<td>27 0</td>
<td>22 0</td>
<td>23 8</td>
<td>24 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>19 8</td>
<td>28 8</td>
<td>22 0</td>
<td>23 0</td>
<td>24 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>20 0</td>
<td>27 0</td>
<td>22 0</td>
<td>22 0</td>
<td>20 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>20 0</td>
<td>25 8</td>
<td>20 0</td>
<td>22 0</td>
<td>20 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>19 8</td>
<td>26 0</td>
<td>22 0</td>
<td>22 8</td>
<td>20 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>21 0</td>
<td>30 0</td>
<td>24 0</td>
<td>25 0</td>
<td>24 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>21 8</td>
<td>30 0</td>
<td>25 0</td>
<td>26 0</td>
<td>26 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October,1884</td>
<td>20 8</td>
<td>20 8</td>
<td>35 0</td>
<td>23 0</td>
<td>28 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Progs. G.O.I. Rev. & Ag. Deptt., Famine A, September 1885, Nos. 3-4)
on the pickings from the fields after the corn had been cut. The barwa flower (Copparsis aphyila) found in abundance in the jungles, helped some to eke out their scanty supplies 17. Cattle were being fed on branches of trees cut up and mixed with old jowar. Large number of them were sold at nominal prices to Banjaras and butchers. Large number of them were sold at Jehazgarh fair and there was tendency among people to get rid of cattle. It was reported that there were so many cattle for sale at the fair that the demand was less and consequently prices of cattle fell down, while there was no grass and the people were grubbing up roots and feeding the cattle on leaves, yet much old fodder was being exported from Rohtak and Sampla tahsilis towards Delhi by Banias and speculators who found it fetched a better price there 18.

The area of distress in Karnal district was confined to the west of the western Jamuna canal 19. The tahsilis of Kharar and Narsingarh of the Ambala district suffered great loss of cattle as a result of the scarcity of fodder 20.

In Patiala State great scarcity of grain was felt in Sambat, 1940 (A.D. 1883) but it was not very serious and did not affect the whole State 21. In Jind State the spring harvest of Sambat, 1940 (A.D. 1884) also failed, as a result in the drier tracts of Jind and Dadri tehsilis there were no crops. The fodder

17. Agricultural Distress in Punjab, op. cit.
21. SG. Patiala, op. cit., p. 137.
famine was so acute that the cattle had to be driven off the hills, many of them never returned. Loss of bullocks and cows was very great. Prices of wheat rose to 8 seers per rupee.

The main characteristic of this scarcity was the failure of fodder crop and consequently of cattle mortality. A large number of cattle migrated to areas where grass or fodder was available and a large part of that never returned. The destruction of cattle had been severe in the districts of Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Jhang, Multan, Montgomery and parts of the Hissar division, particularly of Hissar and Rohtak districts. In Dera Ghazi Khan 50,000 head of cattle died in the year 1883-84; while in Dera Ismail Khan one-third of all the cattle in the 'Thal' and a full half of those in the Daman lands had perished. In Karnal district 26,200 cattle died of starvation and disease; while 76,500 head of cattle migrated to the Jamna side, or 44 percent of the total number of cattle before migration commenced. Of this twenty-four percent or 18,200 were said to have died. In the Ballabgarh tahsil of Delhi district, about 5,000 cattle had been migrated. However, it is difficult to find out the total number of cattle deaths in the Punjab because of the scarcity, as the

23. FRAR, 1883-84, Para 3, pl 2.
24. Letter No. 274, dated Delhi, 16th May, 1885, op. cit.,
Government kept no statistics. Neither the figures regarding human mortality are available. But the famine commission of 1898 claimed that during this scarcity no starvation death occurred in the Punjab because the people of the South-east part were familiar with drought and were prepared for migration; secondly, the proximity of the canal tracts offered abundant employment to the unemployed and provided surplus grain at low prices; and thirdly in the lightness of the land assessment 26.

Migration of people from the affected territory to the areas of work or food actively took place during this scarcity. In Karnal district 30,300 people left their houses; while in Gurgaon district some Meos left their homes 27. Thirteen Biswadars of Jhajjar (in Karnal district) with their families and live-stock left their homes and went away towards Sirsa in search of railway employment 28. The figures for other districts are not available, though a considerable number of people migrated.

There occurred an increase in crime against property as theft, robberies and dacoities show an upward trend 29.

Moneylenders, rich persons and owners of substantial houses in towns and villages took the opportunity, as labour was cheap and plentiful, to repair old houses and built new ones 30.

While the scarcity of grain and fodder affected the poor including artisans, labourers and peasants, the banias or grain-

26. FCR, 1898, Ch.II, Para 15.
27. Letter No. 274, op. cit.
29. The total number of offences reported in 1882 were 90,920 which rose to 95,446 in 1883; an increase of 4,526 cases, PAR, 1883-84, p.5
dealers, big peasants and fodder traders, benefited out of it by selling their commodities at a high rate. They hoarded the stocks of grain and fodder but sent to those places where they were expected to get more profit.

No change was made in regard to the policy of the British Government to cope with the scarcity and the basic principles remained as earlier. The relief measures comprised of: (1) suspension of land revenue demand, (2) grant of loans for digging wells and later on when the rains of 1884 broke out, for the purchase of seed and cattle to the agriculturists, and (3) provision of work at roads, tanks, canals and railways for the unemployed at the ordinary rate of wages.

For the relief of the unemployed the provision of work on roads and tanks were started by the District Boards in the affected districts at the ordinary rate of wages. In addition to these a considerable amount of earth-work was in progress on the canals and railways which afforded plenty of work to the needy. In the canal tracts the harvesting of the spring crop also gave good and remunerative work to many. A scheme of major works for relief purposes was prepared in case the rains of 1884, should fall, and circle relief in accordance with the famine code was mapped out against the same contingency. But as the rains of 1884 were good, it was not found necessary to put these measures into operation. In no district was the demand for employment great.

31. FCR, 1898, Paras 12-14, pp. 6-8.
32. Ibid.
In Rohtak district relief works on tanks, roads and bunds were started, but the attendance was not very large. A large drainage work was started in May, 1884 in one part of the Rohtak district, but very few labourers came to it, and it was closed after two-three months. In the end of May, 1884 there were employed throughout the district 2,509 persons on different relief works. The people were reluctant in leaving their homes and preferred working at tanks and other works in the immediate neighbourhood of their villages. The peasant class showed an aversion to work on relief works, unless the works were in other districts, or so isolated as to preclude their being seen by their friends and relations.

In Delhi district the people were employed on the construction of tanks, wells and bunds. The district Board spent Rs. 52,546 on the construction of irrigation bunds and tanks. In June, the rains broke, when plentiful employment in the fields became open to all classes. By the end of July the works had generally closed.

The District Board spent Rs. 21,380 in excavating 169 tanks in the Gurgaon district, while Rs. 19,626 were spent on bunds. The number of persons employed on such works were 3,200 in May, 1884.

People were employed on ordinary works on railway construction on canal villages and at cattle farm Hissar. Among the special

34. Letter No. 16, op. cit.
35. FCR, 1898, Paras 12-14, pp. 6-8.
works started here were the repairing of tanks and roads. The number of persons employed on such works were 750 in May, 1884.

In Karnal district the relief works started were excavation of tanks where 2,18,181 labourers were daily employed between October, 1883 to July, 1884. The amount spent was Rs.20,150 which was provided by the District and Municipal Funds.

The largest amount of land revenue suspended was in Rohtak district, where Rs.2,29,000 of the Kharif demand of 1883 and Rs.2,23,000 of the rabi demand of 1884 were suspended. In Gurgaon district the Kharif and rabi suspensions amounted to Rs.1,16,000 and Rs.1,15,000 respectively. In Delhi and Karnal districts Rs.40,000 and Rs.45,000 of the rabi demand were suspended.

In Hisar district practically the whole demand was realised, but Rs.12,996 were suspended for the rabi of 1884-85. No remissions of revenue were made in the Punjab.

Agricultural advances were made for the construction of wells. But the Government refused to advance money in the early period to keep the cattle alive on the ground that it would be cheaper as well as in keeping with the general custom and habit.


38. Letter No. 97, dated 6th May, 1885, from The Deputy Commissioner, Karnal, to The Comm. & Supdt., Delhi Division; Progs. Rev. & Ag., Famine A., September, 1885, Nos. 3-4.

39. FCR, 1898, Paras 12-14, pp.6-8.

40. Ibid., Para 15, p.8.
of the people of the area to purchase cattle at the commencement of rains rather than keep them alive over the scarcity period. 41. However, after the drought money was paid for the purchase of new cattle. Money was also granted in the year 1883-84 and Rs.70,000 in 1884-85, sum of Rs.85,000 was advanced in the year 1883-84 and Rs.70,000 in 1884-85 under Act XXVI of 1871 in the three districts of Rohtak, Gurgaon and Delhi. 42. The taqavi advances made for the purchase of seedgrains and bullocks amounted to Rs.35,000 in the Punjab. 43.

However, these measures were marked by some shortcomings. First of all, the Government was slow in opening relief works for the affected people. It made no arrangements for the high status people who were generally reluctant to join such works because of their family pride or social status. No provision was made for the supply of fodder, as great mortality occurred among cattle, and

41. Ibid.
42. PAR, 1883-84, p.23.
43. These were given as follows:

Delhi division - Rs.1500; Hissar Division - Rs.21,000; Ambala division - Rs.500; Amritsar division - Rs.6,500; Rawalpindi division - Rs.1,000; Multan division - Rs.4,000 and Derajat division - Rs.500, (Total: Rs.35,000).

to check speculation in fodder and grain trade. The amount of taqavi advances were inadequate compared with the loss of cattle. The suspensions, which were not adequate, were collected immediately in some parts, while no revenue was remitted. The Government still did not show any seriousness to the question as no detailed statistics regarding nature of relief works, its administration, period of works, the number of people employed and the amount spent were kept by the Government. Similarly there is lack of data relating to mortality among cattle and men.

The relief measures in the Jind State were comprised of suspension of land revenue demand. While in the Patiala State, it was said that the scarcity was not so serious as to initiate any relief measures 44.

To sum up, the scarcity of 1883-84 severely affected the districts of Hissar, Karnal, Gurgaon, Rohtak, Sirsa and Ambala. However, scarcity of fodder extended the distress to the districts of Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Jhang, Montgomery and Multan. The Native States of Patiala and Jind were also afflicted.

Since 1880's the demand for wheat from the Punjab to England increased because the United States, on which Britain was dependent, was facing failure of harvests. As a result the continuous and increasing exports of wheat and other foodgrains to Europe, especially to Britain, completely diminished the stocks. When failure of rainfall occurred, prices shot up high. As a result,

44. SG, Phulkian, op. cit., p. 229.
scarcity prevailed, but the timely rainfall averted the situation from turning it into famine. However, the grain-dealers and fodder dealers aggravated the problem by stocking the materials and exporting it to those places where they were expecting that these would fetch more profit.

The relief measures included the advancing of taqavi loans, suspensions of revenue and provision of work. But these works were not popular as the people from high social status did not feel to join such works because of their family pride and were feeling ashamed of working in front of their relatives. Moreover, no arrangements were made for the supply of fodder as the cattle mortality was so high. In fact, the Government showed little interest as to maintain the statistics regarding area and population affected, nature of relief measures and its administration, human and cattle mortality and the movement of foodgrains in and outside the Punjab.

THE SCARCITY OF 1891

In the beginning of the year 1891 some of the districts of the Punjab suffered from a severe scarcity. These districts were Rawalpindi (Pindigheb, Attock and Fatehganj tahsils), Jhelum (Chakwal and Talaganj tahsils), Hazara, Simla, Kangra and some parts of the Gurdaspur district, namely, Shahpur, Kandi Taluka of the Pathankot tahsil.


The scarcity was the result of failure of rainfall and the previous bad harvests since 1887-88 except 1889 which turned out to be a good one. The spring crops of 1890 was an unfavourable one, while the succeeding autumn harvest equally turned out to be below the average. In 1891-92 again the wheat harvest was below the normal resulting in the rise of prices. In such prevailing conditions the locust attacked Punjab during the year 1891. Swarms of locusts appeared first in large numbers in the Jhelum district and did much damage to the young crops. In fact, in a large portion of each of these tracts, the crops which were most promising, were destroyed completely by these locusts. Later on in the month of March locusts spread more widely and laid eggs in immense numbers in all the districts of Peshawer, Derajat and Rawalpindi division, and also in some districts of the Lahore division, causing enormous loss to the standing crops.

The rise in prices of foodgrains, especially wheat was no less precipitated by the various military movements along the extreme north-western Frontier of the province. In this background came an extraordinary demand for wheat from the European markets where wheat either failed or threatened to fail, leading to a steady price rise particularly in the United States. This steady European demand for wheat at a higher price induced the exporters not only to buy up old stocks largely, but also to make 'forward' purchases of wheat to be supplied from the new crop at similar prices. Thus, an

47. For rainfall fluctuations, See Table IV.4.
48. Himadri, op. cit., p.54.
49. For Price fluctuations, See Table IV.5.
50. Provincial Reports on the Material and Condition of the People (Punjab), 1881-1891, p.17.
### Table IV.4

**PUNJAB: Rainfall During the Year 1891.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Average Normal Rainfall (Inches)</th>
<th>Average Actual Rainfall (Inches)</th>
<th>% variation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Punjab, South</td>
<td>11.32</td>
<td>7.67</td>
<td>-32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Punjab, Central</td>
<td>18.93</td>
<td>20.50</td>
<td>+8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Punjab, Sub-Montane</td>
<td>23.57</td>
<td>17.41</td>
<td>-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Punjab Hill districts.</td>
<td>56.90</td>
<td>55.01</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Punjab, North-West.</td>
<td>15.07</td>
<td>10.90</td>
<td>-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Punjab, West</td>
<td>5.90</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>-35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Report on Meteorology of India During the Year 1891-92, PP. 13-14).
Table IV.5

Prices of Cereals in Kangra District During the Year 1891.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Wheat</th>
<th>Barley</th>
<th>Rice</th>
<th>Maize</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 15, 1891</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 31st, 1891</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 15th, 1891</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 20th, 1891</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: No. 1-6, dated Lahore, the 21st May, 1892, from The Senior Secretary to the Fin. Comm. of the Punjab, to The Rev. Secretary to the Govt. of Punjab; Pros. Rev. & Ag., Famine A, June, 1892, Nos. 22-24).
enormous amount of wheat was purchased at a higher price to be exported to Europe resulting in a general depletion of stock within the province. One European Company, named, Messrs. Ralley Brothers & Co., purchased the standing crops to be exported to Europe. The local trader or bania as usual raised the prices of grains, thereby caused distress in almost all the districts of the Punjab. This depletion of wheat stock greatly affected the food-supply of the provincial population. Now the cry was that food could not get enough food to eat because exports to England had pushed up prices to famine rates. The price rise was often

51. There was loud cry against the export of wheat to Europe by Messrs. Ralley Brothers & Co. and of consequently rise in prices of foodgrains in the vernacular press, see: The Lahore Punch (Lahore), 1st April, 1891; The Imperial Papers (Lahore), 11th April, 1891; The Mehbub Alam (Ferozepure), 16th April, 1891; The Wazir-i-Hind (Sialkot), 19th April, 1891; The Delhi Punch (Lahore), 22nd April, 1891; The Durbin (Lahore), 26th April, 1891; The Akbar-i-Am (Lahore), 22nd April, 1891; The Bemisal Punch (Delhi), 24th April, 1891; The Chulta Purt (Delhi), 24th April, 1891; The Lahore Gazette (Lahore), 25th April, 1891; The Aftab-i-Punjab (Lahore), 22nd April, 1891; The Dost-i-Hind (Bhera), 1st May, 1891; The Mulla-Do-Piazza (Lahore), 27th April, 1891; The Ashraf-ul-Akbar (Delhi), 1st May, 1891; The Ghani-Khwar-i-Hind (Lahore), 2nd May, 1891; The Siraj-ul-Akbar (Jhelum), 4th May, 1891; The Kohinoor (Lahore), 9th May, 1891; The Khair-Khwa-i-Alam (Delhi), 8th May, 1891; SNPP during the year 1891.

52. The Taj-ul-Akbar (Rawalpindi) of 28th March, 1891 wrote that the banias of Peshawar have come to an understanding among themselves to sell foodgrains at famine prices. Similar views regarding the role of banias in raising prices and exploiting the situation have been expressed by some of the Native Papers: The Lahore Gazette (Lahore), 1891; The Rahbar-i-Hind (Lahore), 9th April, 1891; The Dost-i-Hind (Bhera), 3rd April, 1891; The Mehbub Alam (Ferozepure), 16th April, 1891; The Singh Sahaj (Amritsar), 10th June, 1891; The Wazir-ul-Mulk (Sialkot), 12th June, 1891; SNPP during the year 1891.

raised a storm of protest in the Native Press. The Atalq-i-Hind, in its issue dated 22nd December, 1891, gave an account of the distress prevailing in parts of the province, and requested the Government to 'allow the export of only the surplus produce of the country'. But this appeal went practically unheeded and the trade in wheat export showed signs of increase. At the same time the influx of starving immigrants from Rajputana to many districts of the Punjab only accentuated the problem. Thus, the previous bad harvests and failure of rainfall resulted into scarcity which was aggravated by the wholesale exports of wheat to Europe, particularly to England, which led to therise in prices in every district of the province. While the attitude of the local grain dealers of hoarding and speculating in grain trade made the situation more miserable. As a result, famine prices prevailed in those areas also where no failure of rainfall occurred. The attack of locusts in many districts of the Punjab destroyed the budding crops. Similarly, hordes of starving migrants from Rajputana into Punjab put additional burden on the resources of the state. However, the rainfall of October, 1891 and a good prospects of the Kharif harvest greatly revived the situation.

The high prices of foodgrains which were mainly caused by the exportation, affected a large section of the rural population

56. See Table IV.6.
Table IV. 6

PUNJAB : Export of Foodgrains During 1885-86 to 1891-92

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tons of Foodgrains exported</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Wheat alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885-86</td>
<td>7,37,337</td>
<td>5,26,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886-87</td>
<td>2,71,335</td>
<td>1,45,164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887-88</td>
<td>2,05,814</td>
<td>1,43,698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888-89</td>
<td>3,33,282</td>
<td>2,13,977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889-90</td>
<td>4,73,499</td>
<td>3,64,342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-91</td>
<td>5,61,939</td>
<td>3,72,116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891-92</td>
<td>6,85,156</td>
<td>5,92,937</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Moral and Material Progress Condition of India during 1891-92, P. 440.)
who were already indebted to the moneylenders and consequently were living in a state of poverty. People were forced to indulge in crimes while thefts and robberies were increased. As the Khair-Khwah-i-Alam of Delhi wrote that "numerous decoities and robberies are being committed owing to famine being prevalent throughout the country. Bad characters, being reduced to great straits don't shrink from committing the most serious offences, as a specimen of the murder of the Moradabad post-runner". Similarly Taj-ul-Akhbar of Rawalpindi wrote that "two bags containing wheat were stolen last week from Lala Ujagar Mal's compound". The Kaiser-ul-Akhbar of Karnal commenting on the facts that "several thefts have occurred in the houses of Europeans at Lahore", remarked that "so long as the thieves contended themselves with robbing natives the matter attracted no attention. Now however, that the thieves have commenced to rob the Europeans, the latter will be convinced that a famine prevails among the people who have been reduced to great poverty".

58. The Native Press loudly against the poverty of the masses, particularly of the cultivators, for instances, See: The Peta Khan (Lahore), 8th January, 1890; The Punjab Punch (Lahore), 2nd January, 1890; The Paisa Akhbar (Gujranwala), 21st Feb., 1890; The Wazir-ul-Mulk (Sialkot), 21st Feb., 1890; The Akhbar-i-Kesri (Jullundur), 1st March, 1890; The Punjabi Akhbar (Lahore), 19th March, 1890; The Kohinoor (Lahore), 1st April, 1890; The Aftab-i-Punjab (Lahore), 18th April, 1890; The Rahbar-i-Hind (Lahore), 18th June, 1890; The Mulla-Do-Piazza (Lahore), 16th March, 1891; The Akhbar-i-Am (Lahore), 8th Nov., 1890; SNNPP during the year 1890.

59. The Khair-Khwah-i-Alam (Delhi), 24th March, 1891; SNNPP during the year 1890.

60. The Taj-ul-Akhbar (Rawalpindi), 4th April, 1891; SNNPP during the year 1891.

61. The Kaiser-ul-Akhbar (Karnal), 19th December, 1891; SNNPP during the year 1891.
The effect of scarcity was so great in some districts that people were compelled to commit suicide. "A man in Kangra district having been reduced to great straits determined to kill himself and his family by taking poison. But the Thanesdar became aware of the fact, gave him Rs. 25 from his own pocket and thus saved the lives of the whole family" 62. "A respectable man and his family at Shuja Nagar (Lahore) being reduced to great straits had to go without food for two days. Thus, driven to desperation he committed suicide. His wife followed his example, leaving the number of children utterly unprovided for" 63.

The Himala of Rawalpindi reported that "people in Phalia tansil of the Gujrat district were compelled by the scarcity to live on grass. Some of them had deserted their women and children. The people of the Bar had arrived on the banks of the Jhelum where they got grass in plenty to eat" 64.

Migration of people was reported in some districts. In the Pindigheb tahsil of Rawalpindi district about 15 percent of the rural population migrated to areas of work or of food; while in Jhelam district about 5 to 10 percent of the ordinary rural population migrated 65.

The scarcity affected the Zamindars (peasants) to such an

62. The Aftab-i-Punjab (Lahore) of 12th August, 1892; SNNPP during the year 1892.
63. The Atalig-i-Hind (Lahore), of 29th August, 1892; ibid.
64. The Himala (Rawalpindi) of 7th October, 1892; SNNPP during the year 1892.
65. The Aftab-i-Punjab (Lahore), 12th February, 1892; SNNPP during the year 1892; Progs. Rev. & Agri., Famine A, November, 1891, Nos. 10-14.
extent because of huge loss to their cattle that they were forced to sell or mortgage their lands, and they were reduced to work as labourers in the towns 66.

The increasing indebtedness of the peasantry, because of recurrent famines or scarcities, compelled many people to murder their creditor. It was reported that "scarcely a week passed without its having to record one or two cases of murder in the Rawalpindi district. Two murders were committed last month and it is now reported that another mahajan (moneylender) named Pritam has been murdered at Mūza Phulgran. Apparently it has become a common practice with the zamindars to get rid of a creditor by murdering him if he presses for payment of debts" 67.

The social customs were also affected by the scarcity. The festivals of Shab-i-barat, Holi and Charagan fair were not observed with the usual 'eclat' this year owing to the prevalence of scarcity 68. Thus, the high prices aggravated problem of poverty by inducing people to sell or mortgage their properties, crimes increased; while people were forced to migrate and abandon their families, but no figures are available regarding the deaths of the cattle and human beings.

The policy adopted from the relief during this scarcity was based on the existing famine codes. This was for the first time that the Famine Codes were tested and the Government recognised the idea

66. Ibid., 10th August, 1891, SNNPP during the year 1891.

67. The Himala (Rawalpindi), 9th June, 1893; SNNPP during the year 1893.

68. The Lahore Gazette (Lahore), dated 28th March, 1891; SNNPP during the year 1891.
of providing relief to the wanderers from other States who migrated to the Punjab. However, the Government insisted on the policy of non-interference with private trade 69.

The relief measures were comprised of: (1) the suspensions and remissions of the land revenue; (2) provision of work to the able-bodied; (3) village relief or gratuitous reliefs; and (4) advancing of taqvi loans. Relief works were started in the districts of Hissar, Rohtak, Sirsa, Delhi, Gurgaon, Karnal, Ambala, Ferozepure, Lahore and Hazara, in which people were employed for the making of roads and excavation of tanks. The number of people employed on these works were 45,633 in total 70.

Rs.5,000 were expended on house-to-house relief in the Talaganj and Chakwal tahsils of the Jhelum district. But the Commissioner of the division forbade the Deputy Commissioner that no gratuitous relief of any sort was to be given in case of scarcity, except to save a person from being dying of starvation 71.

The Government granted remissions of revenue in the Rawalpindi district (Tahsils Pindigheb, Fatehganj and Attock) amounting to Rs.67,000 and Jhelum District (tahsils Chakwal and Talaganj) amounting to Rs.71,124 only 72. The amount of revenue suspended was

70. Letter No.84 dated Lahore, 21st April, 1888 from H.C.Fanshave, Esq.,Offg. Junior Secretary to the Govt.of Punjab, to The Secretary to G.O.I.,Rev. & Ag.,Famine A,May,1891,Nos.41-59.
71. Diary No.1545, General, Prog.Rev. & Ag.,Famine A, August,1891, Nos.41-42 and of November, 1891, Nos.10-14.
The taqavi advances for the purchase of bullocks were given only in the Jhelum district amounting to Rs. 4,000 only. The Government at the end of the scarcity claimed that "a remarkable satisfactory feature of the administration of the present scarcity was the extent to which the Local Government and administrations had made use of their powers to grant advances for works of agricultural improvement as well as for the purchase of seed and cattle." But the fact is that Government remitted very few amount of revenue, made few suspensions, granted few taqavi loans, provided no gratuitous relief and started insufficient works as the following papers will reveal:

The Mulla-Do-Plaza of Lahore wrote that "people are bitterly complaining against the prevalence of famine, but that unfortunately the Government is treating the matter with supreme indifference. If timely measures are not taken for averting a serious famine the people will be goaded to desperation and may then do some mischief."

The Khair-Khwab-i-Zamindaran of Buria wrote that "the system of advancing taqavi was defective. Not only did great delay took place in making the necessary inquiries prior to granting an advance, but the Zamindars are subjected to ill treatment at the hands of the tahsil officials, who make use of threats in order to

73. The Rehbar-i-Hind (Lahore), dated 4th July, 1892; SNNPP during the year 1892.
74. Progs. Rev. & Ag., Famine A, November, 1871, Nos. 10-14; SNNPP during the year 1891.
76. The Mulla-Do-Plaza (Lahore), 20th April, 1891; SNNPP during the year 1891.
extort money from them. It is for this reason that the agriculturists prefer to borrow from the moneylenders at exorbitant rates." 77.

The Rahbar-i-Hind of Lahore wrote that "the amount granted by way of suspensions of revenue does not appear to be sufficient for 31 districts of the province... The tahsildars and Deputy Commissioners should not be allowed to grant remissions of revenue only to those Zaildars and Lamberdars who carry favour with them." 78.

Thus, the scarcity of 1891 was in fact turned to be a famine as regards the prices of foodgrains were concerned. It affected almost all the districts of the province. The forcible collection of grains by Messrs Ralley Brothers & Co. 79 made the scarcity to turn into famine. While other factors like failure of rainfall, previous bad harvests, the attack of locusts and the advent of migrants from Rajputana were the only secondary factors. The whole-sale export of wheat resulted into high prices which prevailed throughout the province causing great hardships to the poor, who were forced to migrate, abandon their families in starvation, compelled to murder the Shahukars and indulge in petty crimes. In acute needs they sold their properties like cattle, ornaments

77. The Khair-Khwa-i-Zamindaran (Buria) dated 26th Oct. 1891; during the year 1891.
78. The Rahbar-i-Hind (Lahore), 4th July, 1892; SNNPP, during the year 1892.
79. "It was reported in Ludhiana that an agent of Messrs. Ralley Brothers & Co. was beating a villager who had refused to part with his grain", The Singh Sahai (Amritsar), 1st June, 1892; SNNPP, during the year 1892.
and lands or mortgaged them 80.

The measures adopted by the Government were based on the existing Famine Codes, but marked by low amounts of revenue were permitted and suspended. Taqavi advances were few. Only small amount of gratuitous relief was provided and no systematic relief works were opened. Consequently, people of the Punjab especially the poor suffered a lot by high prices which resulted into increasing their indebtedness and poverty.

**THE FAMINE OF 1896-97**

During the years of 1896-97 the Punjab was again in the grip of a 'terrible famine of the century', 81, that affected an area of 11,960 square miles or 47 percent of the total area, and population of 3,207,030 or 45 percent of the total population 82. The Indian Famine Commission of 1898 gives these figures as 11,439 square miles and 3,057,000 respectively 83. But Report of the Central Executive Committee, Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund, 1897 gives more accurate figures. According to the Report, 46,900

---

80. The transfers of lands during 1890-91 to 1894-95 were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sales (in acres)</th>
<th>Mortgages (in acres)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1890-91</td>
<td>106,049</td>
<td>33,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891-92</td>
<td>126,953</td>
<td>47,660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892-93</td>
<td>124,493</td>
<td>45,849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893-94</td>
<td>151,200</td>
<td>52,814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894-95</td>
<td>158,666</td>
<td>51,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

81. This title was later on given to the famine of 1899-1900; Bhatia, *op. cit.*, p.239.


square miles were affected of which 16,800 square miles were 
famine affected, and 30,100 square miles where famine was not 
severely felt. Similarly, the population affected was 10,698,000 
which included 4,139,000 of the famine affected and 6,559,000 of 
the scarcity prone area 84. The intensity of famine was very
severe in the districts of Hissar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Delhi, Karnal 
Ambala, Ferozepure, Lahore and Gujrat 85. Besides, some of the 
Native States affected were Patiala 86, Jind 87, Mandi 88 and 
Malerkotla 89.

The famine was caused initially by the failure of the 
monsoon in 1896 90, preceded by failure of crops in several dis-
tricts of the Punjab. In June, 1896, there were fair rains enabling 
sowings to be made, but the whole of July, August and September 
were practically rainless, as a result the Kharif crop failed. 
There was no sowing for rabi on rain lands and there was literally 
no crop in these villages 91. Previously the Kharif harvest of 
1895 and the rabi of 1896 had been particularly bad. The failure 
of rains and crops consequently resulted into fodder famine. As a 
result the prices of foodgrains during 1896-97 rose to a level 
ever previously attained 92. The continuous exports of the food-

84. Report of the Central Executive Committee, Indian Famine
85. Report on the famine in the Punjab, 1896-97, Para 31, p.17; See 
also, Appendix I(c).
86. SG, Patiala, op. cit., pp.137-38;
87. SG, Phulkian, op. cit., p.299.
88. SG, Mandi, 1908, p.57;
89. SG, Malerkotla, Vol.XV A, 1904, p.22.
90. For rainfall variations, See, Tables IV,7 and IV,8.
92. Report on the famine of 1896-97, Para 1 and Paras 9-10, 
For price variations, See Table IV,9.
## Table IV. 7
**PUNJAB : District-wise Distribution of Rainfall, 1893-94 to 1896-97.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region/District</th>
<th>Rainfall During</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1893-94</td>
<td>1894-95</td>
<td>1895-96</td>
<td>1896-97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Himalayan</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangra</td>
<td>158.91</td>
<td>199.35</td>
<td>124.23</td>
<td>112.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simla</td>
<td>63.14</td>
<td>97.49</td>
<td>64.54</td>
<td>51.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Sub-Montane</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambala</td>
<td>35.62</td>
<td>42.92</td>
<td>32.48</td>
<td>24.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoshiarpur</td>
<td>52.10</td>
<td>51.92</td>
<td>29.12</td>
<td>25.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujrat</td>
<td>42.55</td>
<td>25.35</td>
<td>19.61</td>
<td>15.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sialkot</td>
<td>49.68</td>
<td>34.08</td>
<td>26.02</td>
<td>17.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Salt Range</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rawalpindi</td>
<td>14.47</td>
<td>38.46</td>
<td>17.44</td>
<td>27.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jhelum</td>
<td>50.49</td>
<td>42.72</td>
<td>19.17</td>
<td>20.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bannu</td>
<td>17.65</td>
<td>13.76</td>
<td>8.51</td>
<td>4.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feshawer</td>
<td>12.65</td>
<td>14.91</td>
<td>9.02</td>
<td>7.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kohat</td>
<td>19.51</td>
<td>25.81</td>
<td>11.28</td>
<td>14.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazara</td>
<td>82.36</td>
<td>63.79</td>
<td>41.90</td>
<td>39.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Eastern Plains</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurdaspur</td>
<td>59.31</td>
<td>69.44</td>
<td>38.17</td>
<td>26.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amritsar</td>
<td>34.60</td>
<td>33.47</td>
<td>15.90</td>
<td>18.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferozepure</td>
<td>27.63</td>
<td>27.45</td>
<td>17.46</td>
<td>5.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jullundur</td>
<td>48.49</td>
<td>52.03</td>
<td>16.40</td>
<td>19.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luchana</td>
<td>29.20</td>
<td>36.54</td>
<td>20.17</td>
<td>15.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahore</td>
<td>31.21</td>
<td>19.57</td>
<td>9.94</td>
<td>9.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>33.48</td>
<td>40.42</td>
<td>16.15</td>
<td>22.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujranwala</td>
<td>30.09</td>
<td>32.82</td>
<td>20.20</td>
<td>14.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnal</td>
<td>41.44</td>
<td>40.46</td>
<td>32.53</td>
<td>17.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rohtak</td>
<td>46.71</td>
<td>34.96</td>
<td>12.75</td>
<td>9.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hissar</td>
<td>26.65</td>
<td>14.90</td>
<td>10.90</td>
<td>6.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Western Plains</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fultan</td>
<td>12.70</td>
<td>6.57</td>
<td>10.84</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jhang</td>
<td>10.65</td>
<td>7.04</td>
<td>14.35</td>
<td>7.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery</td>
<td>9.64</td>
<td>7.84</td>
<td>13.36</td>
<td>9.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujranwala</td>
<td>43.32</td>
<td>28.42</td>
<td>20.36</td>
<td>12.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shahpur</td>
<td>16.40</td>
<td>17.99</td>
<td>14.32</td>
<td>13.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.I.Khan</td>
<td>9.02</td>
<td>13.01</td>
<td>9.82</td>
<td>4.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.G.Khan</td>
<td>10.35</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>7.45</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mujjaffargarh</td>
<td>8.96</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>6.81</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unit = Inches.

(Source: Punjab Administration Report for the years 1893-94 to 1898-99).
### Table IV.8
PUNJAB’s Distribution of Rainfall in the Nine Famine Districts, 1895-97 (Unit: inches)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Kharif, 1895</th>
<th>Rabi, 1895</th>
<th>During Kharif, 1896</th>
<th>Rabi, 1897</th>
<th>Kharif, 1897</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hissar N</td>
<td>14.18</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>14.18</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>14.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>10.68</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>23.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>-3.50</td>
<td>-4.04</td>
<td>-9.26</td>
<td>-3.02</td>
<td>+8.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rohtak N</td>
<td>17.48</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>17.93</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>17.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>9.28</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>19.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>-6.93</td>
<td>-4.01</td>
<td>-8.65</td>
<td>-5.54</td>
<td>+1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurgaon N</td>
<td>23.65</td>
<td>7.23</td>
<td>23.65</td>
<td>7.23</td>
<td>23.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>18.38</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>17.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>-5.27</td>
<td>-4.56</td>
<td>-10.65</td>
<td>-4.86</td>
<td>-6.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi N</td>
<td>25.11</td>
<td>8.04</td>
<td>25.11</td>
<td>8.04</td>
<td>25.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>14.36</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>21.23</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>20.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>-10.85</td>
<td>-5.20</td>
<td>-3.88</td>
<td>-6.81</td>
<td>-4.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnal N</td>
<td>25.70</td>
<td>8.71</td>
<td>25.70</td>
<td>8.71</td>
<td>25.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>31.60</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>16.56</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>20.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>+5.90</td>
<td>-6.93</td>
<td>-9.14</td>
<td>-7.31</td>
<td>-5.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambala N</td>
<td>29.32</td>
<td>7.40</td>
<td>29.32</td>
<td>9.40</td>
<td>29.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>31.02</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>22.60</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>23.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>+1.70</td>
<td>-7.94</td>
<td>-6.72</td>
<td>-7.45</td>
<td>-6.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferozepure N</td>
<td>15.38</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>15.38</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>15.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>15.88</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>8.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>+0.47</td>
<td>-3.71</td>
<td>-12.66</td>
<td>-2.64</td>
<td>-6.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahore N</td>
<td>14.73</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td>14.73</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td>14.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>7.49</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>7.42</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>12.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>-7.24</td>
<td>-3.06</td>
<td>-7.31</td>
<td>-2.25</td>
<td>-1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>18.34</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>11.35</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>9.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>-1.49</td>
<td>-7.98</td>
<td>-8.48</td>
<td>-4.45</td>
<td>-10.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


N = Normal (+) Increase,
A = Actual (-) Decrease,
V = Variation.
grains since the year 1891 onward to the year 1896 depleted the stocks, and when the failure of rainfall occurred, the prices shot up. The baniyas seeing the scarcity hoarded the available stocks and caused prices to rise high in those areas where no failure of rainfall occurred. Because the demand of grains to the famine area increased. As a result a severe famine broke out which was further aggravated by the starving influx of immigrants from Bikaner. Locusts made their appearance in many parts and destroyed the maturing crops. While the people were suffering from a severe famine, the outbreak of plague in October, 1897 acted as a bolt from the blue resulting in heavy mortality among people. However, the disease, which broke out first in a village in Jullundur district, remained confine for the next three years in the districts of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur.

Failure of the Kharif harvest of 1895 drew the attention of the Government to revise relief programmes in the insecure districts of Kangra, Hoshiarpur, Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Gujrat, Jhelum, Rawalpindi, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan. Early in 1896, the scarcity was felt in Sharakpur tahsil of the Lahore district. Scarcity was the result of the failure of the fodder supply and consequent mortality of cattle upon which the population mainly

93. For Exports of foodgrains, See Table IV.10.
95. Ibid.
### Table IV. 10

**PUNJAB: Imports and Exports of Foodgrains, 1892-93 to 1896-97.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Imports ( Thousand of Tonnes )</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Net Exports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1892-93</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893-94</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894-95</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1,071</td>
<td>1,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895-96</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896-97</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

depended, both as graziers and for the working of the wells, upon which the food-supply of the people was grown. People began to migrate with their cattle and all their belongings to the Chenab Canal, the banks of the Ravi, and Satlej, and the sub-montane tracts of Sialkot and Gurdaspur. Relief works were started here in March, 1896 with a view to provide for those who remained in the tahsil and to prevent further emigration.

Meanwhile, in July, 1896, the Commissioner of Rawalpindi reported the existence of famine in the Phalia tahsil of the Gujrat district. The greater part of this tract was situated within the bar or uplands between the Chenab and the Jhelum rivers and the cultivation was largely dependent upon rainfall. As in Sharakpur, the trouble commenced with a fodder famine dating from September, 1895. The subsequent failure of the rabi harvest of 1896 was met by the grant of liberal suspensions. Taqavi loan were advanced for the Kharif sowings. These measures did not suffice. The people began to wander in jungles (forests) in search of Pilu berries. The Government opened relief works here in August, 1896.

The months of September passed practically without rains. A state of famine in all districts was officially declared in November, 1896. Many test-works were opened in the districts of Ludhiana, Sialkot, Rawalpindi, Jhelum and Multan other than the nine in which famine was very severe. The showers of rain in

98. Ibid., Para 16, P. 10.
99. Ibid., Para 18, p. 11.
100. Ibid.
the end of December and in January improved the rabi harvest a
little bit except in the Delhi division 101. But in the second
week of March, 1897 the high water-mark of the famine was reached.
The situation became so critical that riots at many places took
place. In Delhi and Multan people had gone so far to assert that
the Deputy Commissioners ordered the famine stricken inhabitants
to loot the grain-shops. In another case a kotha of a grain
belonging to a Shahukar was looted in the Gujranwala district 102.
In Delhi a few grain dealers closed their shops for a few hours
under some apprehension of disturbance 103. At Rawalpindi about
60 sepoys, chiefly Pathans, attacked bankers and other shops in
bazaar for purposes of loot. The Government ordered shooting in
which four persons were injured, but none was killed 104. The
situation was so critical that there was 'nothing to eat for men
or beast; the moving masses of famished men, women and children
seeking nourishment in indigestible herbs, leaves and roots; lean
cattle left to stray and to die for want of fodder; hungry people
moving forward from village to village in the hope of finding food
they could not get at home..." 105

By the beginning of May, 1897 the 'famine districts' had been
reduced to seven, and of these two outside the Delhi division,

102. The Paisa Akhbar (Lahore), 26th September, 1896; SNNPP during
the year 1896; Letter No.46, from Viceroy to Queen Empress,
dated October 7, 1896, Elgin Papers, M.F.Reel No.1.
103. Letter No.46, Ibid.
104. No.15, Telegram, 29th Nov., 1896, from Viceroy to Queen Empress,
Elgin Papers, M.F.Reel No.1.
105. The Tribune, (Lahore), 31st October, 1896.
Gujrat and Ferozepure gave no cause for anxiety. In Ferozepure
district, it came to an end by the third week of August. With the
break of monsoon in July, 1897, relief operations were closed
everywhere in the province in September, 1897. The season from
September to February was favourable and specially rain was fairly
normal in February, 1898. The famine was then officially said to
have ended with the good rabi harvest of 1898.

Before proceeding to the effects and relief measures taken
by the Government, it would be appropriate to study the nature of
famine in different districts of the Punjab. In Sharakpur tahsil
of the Lahore district, the actual rains of 1895 ceased very early,
with the result that the Kharif crop of that year withered before
it was ripe. From the same cause a scarcity of fodder, especially
grass, began to be felt in the last three months of the year 1895.
The inhabitants of a larger portion of the tahsil, comprising of
portions of the Rohi and Kalarathi and the whole of Bar circle,
depend mainly on their cattle for means of subsistence, only growing
sufficient grains for their own requirements, and on these, there­
fore, at first the scarcity of fodder bore most heavily. In
November and December, 1895 the cattle in this part were suffering
severely and in January and February great numbers of them died of
starvation, or were taken away by their owners to places outside
the tahsil. On 31st January, 1896 the Deputy Commissioner reported,
"that the people have left in large numbers with their cattle for
the Chenab Canal and other part of the province; several villages

are entirely deserted in the northern part of the tahsil. There is great scarcity of fodder and the cattle being mostly fed on Sirkana grass cut in pieces mixed with leaves of trees. Large number of cattle died in December and January from starvation and exhaustion, only one-fourth of the living stocks is fit for use, while the rest are quite unfit for work 107. The effects of exportation and mortality of cattle soon began to be felt on the prospects of the rabi crop because the wells fell out of order and much of the standing crops, which would otherwise have been saved, perished for want of water. In order to keep alive the few cattle that remained with them, the inhabitants were forced to feed them on the standing crops, with the result that in many villages virtually no rabi crop was harvested. The Kharif crop of 1895 having also failed by the end of February, 1896, the inhabitants of the affected villages were left with very scanty means of subsistence, and the poorer classes were almost entirely dependent for their support on the banias. These latter, seeing their chances of repayment for some time to come to be small, became more and more chary of making advances, doing so only in return for mortgage of land, and in many cases refusing altogether. During February, 1896, the scarcity of grain and fodder became more severe. The grain stores in villages were exhausted, emigration of people and mortality among cattle, became more marked, and the general condition of the tahsil was so bad that on 28th February, 1896 it was decided by the Government to start relief works 108.

108. Ibid.
In Delhi district, the scarcity was chiefly felt in the Delhi city among the poor, artisans and skilled workmen who were thrown out of employment, because of the fall in demand of their supplies. The Rewari tahsil of Gurgaon district suffered from huge cattle mortality and high prices affected the people in towns and villages. In Rohtak district great loss to cattle and much distress among the poor was felt.

The distress in Hissar district during the month of June, 1897 was very critical. The intense heat made the tanks dry and the drinking water was available in miles apart. In Sirsa and Fatehabad tahsils the majority of people deserted their villages.

In Karnal district the tract known as the Nardak, Kaithal tahsil and Nalli tract were severely affected. In Ambala district, loss of cattle was enormous but the distress was chiefly felt among the poor of the towns who did not go to join the works because of their high social status.

The export of grain and failure of rainfall led to the rise in prices of the foodgrains which caused great distress to poor and agriculturists in villages and towns of the Ludhiana district.

110. Ibid., Para 88, p. 452.
111. Ibid., Para 89, pp. 452-53.
113. Ibid., p. iv.
115. Ibid., Para 95, pp. 456-57.
Owing to scarcity of fodder, there was loss of cattle in most parts of the Hoshiarpur district, including the hilly tracts running round the Una Valley, where the villagers depend entirely on rain, and where the land and people alike were poor. A severe strain on the poor classes caused partly by a poor rabi and a bad kharif in 1896 on the unirrigated areas of the Ferozepure district, but mainly by a sudden and abnormal rise in prices of foodgrains, beginning in September, 1896. The sudden rise was due not to short supplies in the district, but to high prices prevailing in the north-western frontier, leading to a large local exports. The holders of stocks anticipated that the rabi of 1897 would be a failure and that the prices would rise still higher. In Ferozepure city the dealers formed a 'ring' which had the effect of raising the rates in all the neighbouring grain centres. The suffering was, therefore, mainly due to the forcing up of prices, which could not have happened had the rain failure been only local. The poorer and thriftless Muhammedans in the Satlej Bet felt the strain most. The worst sufferers were the poorer classes in Ferozepure city and the kamins or village servants in tahsils Zira, Ferozepure, Muktsar and Fazilka. Distress in the city of Amritsar was greatly felt due to high prices of foodgrains and absolute cessation of demand for the products of the numerous industries which flourished in Amritsar.

116. Ibid., Para 96.
Distress caused by high prices was felt in the districts of Jullundur, Multan, Simla, Kangra and Kulu. In Jhang and Montgomery districts great loss occurred to cattle and the poor people suffered because of high prices. Distress was also felt in parts of the Jhelum and Pind Dadan Khan tahsils ofthe Jhelum district. There was serious loss of cattle, while the agriculturists were reduced to such straits that they sold and mortgaged their lands to procure cattle and seed to cultivate the remaining small pieces of lands 119.

In the bar up lands of the Shahpur district, the want of grazing for their cattle, on which they mainly subsisted, was as severe a calamity as could occur. People abandoned their villages with their cattle in search of the pasture and migrated towards the Hazara district or the riverain tracts of the district picking of such substances as had been spared by others 120. Besides, great scarcity of fodder and high prices was felt in the districts of Sialkot, Gujranwala, Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Bannu, Peshawer, Mujaffargarh and Gurdaspur 121.

Among the Native States, famine made its appearance in Sambat, 1953 (A.D. 1896) in the Patiala State. Rain fell in Sawan (July-August) and crops were sown, but dried up for want of rains in the following months. As a result the price of wheat rose to 8 seer packs per rupee and famine prevailed, while the loss of

119. Ibid., Para 103, pp.463-64.


cattle further impoverished the people. Famine was felt in Jind States and it was as severe as in other parts of the Punjab. In Mandi State the produce of 1895 was below the average. The spring crop of 1896 was poor. The next monsoon failed and the prices went up. In Malerkotla State the failure of rainfall resulted into high prices. The want of fodder led to high mortality of cattle.

Besides famine, plague broke out in the Punjab in an epidemic form that claimed hundreds of lives. The first outbreak occurred in October, 1897, in a village Khatkar Kalan in Jullundur district. And for the next three years remained confine to the districts of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur. The drastic measures taken to cope with the epidemic by the Government caused some local outbreaks and severely tried the resources of the Punjab Government.

The extraordinary rise in prices of foodgrains and scarcity of fodder badly affected all classes of people in varying degree. The high prices created pressure on the landless classes, the day labourers in the villages and the poor inhabitants of the towns. In Delhi, the effect of famine was felt among the art workers. The Brahmins had lately published an edict prohibiting any Hindu weddings, as the year was an 'unpropitious one'. This had a disastrous effect upon the wire-drawers and embroiders of Delhi, as the lack of demand for wedding garments had to a very large extent stopped their means of subsistence. "I drove to

122. SG, Patiala, op.cit., p.137.
123. SG, Phulkian, op.cit., p.299.
124. SG, Mandi and Suket, op. cit., p.57.
125. SG, Malerkotla, op.cit., p.22.
127. T.W. Holderness, Narrative of Famine in India during 1896-97, pp.8-10.
the Chandni Chowk", wrote Merewether, "which was the principal street of Delhi, and where the larger purveyors of Indian merchandise and goods had their shops... I first went to the shop of Ram Chand Hazari Mal, who kept on the premises some 40 to 50 workmen. There I saw few men at work... The proprietor, however, told me that his orders had fallen off considerably in the last six months, and lamented his lack of customers. He pointed to several empty places in his workshop and told that men had been obliged to give up and had gone on the relief works... Fancy these effeminate, delicate and nimble-fingered gold-makers obliged to handle the rough "Khodalis" in search of their daily bread... I then went into various works in different parts of the bazar, and very queer places. There were too, I found many of the places deserted. Besides art-workers, the descendants of the royal Mughal family and of nobility which were living in Delhi numbering three to four hundreds were also badly affected. They were in receipt of a small pension from the Government; but this time of high prices they found that the state allowance was totally inadequate to provide with the barest means of subsistence. Additional money was given to these poor and deserving 'remnants of a departed royal dynasty.'

In Hisar district there was no food-supply in the 'country' and fodder was being imported for the few cattle that still existed. But this was only being done by the wealthier Zamindars. There had been an enormous amount of cow-killing in the

129. Ibid., p. 226.
130. Ibid., p. 232.
considerable friction between the Hindus and Muhammedans of the community; in fact, their had already been one or two minor riots and bearings between these two classes, which had been more or less, suppressed, and there was a very distinct under current of feeling prevailing amongst the 'bigoted and zealous Hindus' 131.

The high prices of foodgrain also led to serious rise in crimes. While the Government reports show that the increase in number of cases of crimes was below 10 percent, but the Newspapers spoke that great increase in crime took place 132. The number of offences reported against property were increased from 1,72,162 in 1894 to 1,92,652 in 1896. The number of thefts increased from 11,218 in 1895 to 13,507 in 1896; while robberies increased from 404 in 1895 to 550 in 1897133. In several places the feelings against the banias and grain-dealers, who were accused of raising prices for their own ends, was very strong. Grain-riots occurred at some places such as Delhi. In Ferozepure, the starving poor people were compelled to take to plundering and the owners of grain-stores asked for a military guard to prevent a disturbance134.

The poor people had been reduced to such straits that they were selling their children in order to save their own lives. Many instances occurred of men deserting their women 135. The Hindu

131. Ibid., p. 232.
132. See, Sat Dharm Pracharak (Jullundur), 13th Nov., 1896; The Punjab Samachar (Lahore), 9th January, 1897; SNNPP during the years 1896-97.
133. PCJR, 1897, Para 2, P.1 and p.9.
134. The Kaisri Akhbar (Jullundur), 16th Oct. 1896; SNNPP during the year 1896.
135. The Siraj-ul-Akhbar (Jhelum), 23rd Nov. 1896; Taj-ul-Akhbar (Rawalpindi), 9th January, 1897; The Punjab Samachar (Lahore), 9th Jan., 1897; SNNPP during the year 1896-97.
parents, who otherwise cling to their children, not only abandoned them, but they themselves, despite religious prejudice, handed them over to the Catholic priests. The protestents received countless children to educate, while the rich muslims for a piece of bread peopled their harams with unfortunate girls.

The Taj-ul-Akhbar (of Rawalpindi) wrote that "some persons have sold their children, others have killed and eaten them, and others have committed suicide. In some places the famine stricken people have taken to plunder with the result that some of them were beaten to death by the Police." 136

The Fazl-i-Am (of Delhi) stated "that a woman being hard-pressed by hunger and starvation committed suicide by hanging herself in the Sadar Bazar on 6th June. She has left behind her two or three children. On enquiry the Police came to the conclusion that hunger was the cause of her death."

No statistics are available regarding the migration of people, but it was reported that 1,700 families in the Sharakpur tahsil migrated to the area of food, fodder and work. 139 While immigrants from Bikaner only added to the grievances of the suffering people.

The moneylenders at an early stage began to refuse credit


137. The Taj-ul-Akhbar (Rawalpindi), dated 9th Jan, 1897, SNNPP during the year 1897.

138. The Fazl-i-Am (Delhi), dated 16th June, 1891, SNNPP during the year 1897.

to the poor needy people and undoubtedly took advantage of the famine to secure the immovable property of the debtors. To obtain the means of keeping themselves and their families from starvation the unfortunate small peasant proprietors were forced to alienate their lands on any terms provided they could procure money or grain. As a result sales and mortgages of land occurred on large scale.

The poor people in the districts of Ambala and Hissar were compelled by circumstances to eat jungle products. In Ambala, Mr. Hailey, Assistant Commissioner made raid on the food stores of a chamar community. He obtained from their hearth-stores samples of nine different substances constituting their daily food; only one rotten gram was a wild product.

140. Ibid., Appendix I, p. ix.

141. The sales and mortgages during 1891-92 to 1896-97 in terms of acres of land:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Sales</th>
<th>Cultivate Sales</th>
<th>Total Mortgages</th>
<th>Cultivate Mortgages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1891-92</td>
<td>486,581</td>
<td>352,817</td>
<td>302,541</td>
<td>172,072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892-93</td>
<td>548,678</td>
<td>364,354</td>
<td>371,038</td>
<td>171,446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893-94</td>
<td>660,165</td>
<td>465,410</td>
<td>382,150</td>
<td>185,823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895-96</td>
<td>606,860</td>
<td>453,661</td>
<td>351,553</td>
<td>203,469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896-97</td>
<td>692,723</td>
<td>471,809</td>
<td>371,258</td>
<td>199,160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


These products were:

I. Husks of Jowar (millet)
II. Tuss of husks or rice (eaten with tops of wild leeks)
III. Sank or Sawank or Samak, a wild millet.
IV. Del-seed of a weed which grows largely in Urd or Chari fields. It is gloomed after the crops have been reaped and sometimes contains a few Urd grains.
V. Hemp seed.
VI. Chaff obtained from gram - threshing floors.
VIII. Felled wild plums (bers) with stones included.
IX. Rotten gram.
The chief characteristic of the famine was the want of fodder which resulted into a considerable loss of cattle. In Sharakpur tahsil of the Lahore district, 12,544 cattle died during the first-half of 1896 of which more than half were plough and well cattle. The total number of cattle that perished during the famine were reported to be 3,65,450 of which 3,356 in Rohtak, 15,029 in Karnal, 33,000 in Ferozepure, 16,917 in Lahore and 77,134 in Hissar district died of starvation or slaughter. Another consequence of the fodder famine was the forcible sale of cattle by the poorer agriculturists to those who could afford to buy and keep them alive till the drought was over. Extensive sales of this description were reported from many districts.

The large scale deaths among cattle benefitted to those chuhras and chamars who were engaged in hide trade by exporting hides and skins as the trade in hides during these years was greatly increased.

No figures were maintained so far as the human mortality is concerned. In Hissar district the death rate rose from 30.3, the mean of the five years period 1891-95 to 45.0 in 1897, an increase of 14.7 per mile. In Rohtak the death rate increased by

---

143. Ibid., Para 15, p.9.
144. Ibid., Para 45, pp.23-24.
145. Ibid.

146. Ibid., Para 46. The exports of hides and skins were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Raw hides</th>
<th>Dressed hides</th>
<th>Total(maunds)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1894-95</td>
<td>46,851</td>
<td>14,385</td>
<td>61,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895-96</td>
<td>114,466</td>
<td>20,567</td>
<td>135,033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896-97</td>
<td>109,769</td>
<td>27,272</td>
<td>137,044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897-98, 1st Quarter</td>
<td>37,146</td>
<td>8,797</td>
<td>45,943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897-98, 2nd Quarter</td>
<td>11,462</td>
<td>1,098</td>
<td>12,560</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 and in Gurgaon district by 5.4 per thousand of population \(^{147}\). However, deaths from fever, cholera and dysentry during these years showed a marked increase, which are the indirect consequences of famine \(^{148}\). The plague which broke out in the Punjab claimed 2,116 deaths during the year 1897-98 \(^{149}\).

However, the only positive aspect of the famine was that the Ghaggar Canal in Hissar district, the construction of which might have been postponed for another couple of years was started to afford relief to the distressed \(^{150}\).

No details are available about the effects of famine in the Native States of Patiala, Jind, Mandi and Malerkotia. But it is apparent that high prices and want of fodder must have affected the people of all classes.

The policy of relief followed by the Punjab Government during this famine was based on the Punjab Codes as they existed in 1896. The general policy adopted was thus, clearly defined and known to the officers in details. But during the course of the famine some changes in matters of detail in the working system were introduced. Relief to Pardanashin women gratuitously, instead of work \(^{151}\), introduction of piece-work system and a new rains

---

147. FCR, 1898, Para 327, p.190.

148. Deaths from various diseases as the indirect results of famine:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cholera</th>
<th>Fewers</th>
<th>Dysentry &amp; Diarrhoea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>392,118</td>
<td>15,648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>5,146</td>
<td>393,535</td>
<td>13,886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>622</td>
<td>422,826</td>
<td>15,851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>418,206</td>
<td>15,747</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


151. FCR, 1898, Para 104.
policy \textsuperscript{152}, etc. formed some of the important deviations from the then existing Famine Codes \textsuperscript{153}. Besides, provision to relieve tribal people, and supply of fodder for cattle, were also introduced in the Famine Codes \textsuperscript{154}.

The policy about non-intervention with private trade in grains, except in exceptional circumstances, was re-affirmed. The foodgrains, however, supplied from surplus districts to deficient ones without any intervention. This was done to check the rise in prices \textsuperscript{155}.

In 1896, an abstract of the Punjab Famine Code was prepared for the use of Native States, and supplied to the various Darbars, and the changes subsequently made in the Punjab Code were incorporated in the Abstract \textsuperscript{156}. The Punjab Government also advised the States to adopt relief measures based on the Codes. The Local Political Officers were asked to keep themselves informed about the progress of relief in the affected States. They were further asked to advise the States on matters of Famine Relief, but "care was at the same time taken not to impair in any way the responsibility of each State for providing for the relief of its subjects" \textsuperscript{157}. Several States had prohibited export of grain to British territories and in such cases requests were made to abolish

\textsuperscript{152} These will be explained in the next chapter.
\textsuperscript{153} FCR, 1898, Paras 103 and 108.
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., Paras 140-41.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., Para 55.
\textsuperscript{157} Holderness, op. cit., p.46.
the restrictions which were invariably accepted by them. Another
question was that of migrants. The policy adopted was that the
people of the States, who applied for relief in British territory,
would not be refused but "the rulers should take measures for the
relief of their own needy subjects and should cooperate with the
British Government by adopting the same general system as regards
leaving trade free as well as other matters" 158.

The relief measures may be classified into the following
heads: (1) Relief Works, (2) Gratuitous relief, (3) Relief to
cattle, (4) Utilization of forests, (5) Advances to cultivators,
(6) Remissions and Suspensions of land Revenue and (7) Relief by
Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund Committee.

The first of all, relief works were started in March, 1896
in the Sharakpur tahsil (Lahore district) and in August in Phalia
tahsil of the Gujrat district. These earlier works were known as
the test works which were started to check the scarcity. Test
works were also started in the districts of Lushiana, Gujranwala,
Sialkot, Rawalpindi, Jhelum and Multan, other than the nine famine
districts. No statistical forms were prescribed by the Code in
the case of Test Works, and hence, the numbers employed on these
works cannot be given 159.

The regular relief works were started in the nine famine
districts on different dates 160. These were divided into five

160. In Hissar ..... week ending 14th Nov., 1896,
Rohtak ..... * 9th Jan., 1897
Gurgaon ..... * 23rd Jan., 1897
Delhi ..... * 12th Dec., 1896
Karnal ..... * 14th Nov., 1896
Ambala ..... * 23rd Jan., 1897
Ferozepore ..... * 19th Dec., 1896
Lahore ..... * 23rd Jan., 1897
Gujrat ..... * 15th Aug., 1896;
categories: (1) Irrigation works, (2) Roads, (3) Tanks, (4) Kankar quarrying, and (5) Miscellaneous, which included (a) Hissar Bir Ditch, (b) Delhi-Agra Chord Railway, (c) Digging of Kusia Channel, and (d) earth filling at charing cross, Lahore civil station. The total number of persons relieved on such works during the whole period from April 11, 1896 to October 2, 1897 for 63 weeks, were 15,887,634 of which were 6,591,830 men, 6,176,492 women, and 3,007,760 children. Besides, 3,551,499 non-working children and dependents were also relieved on relief works which comprised of 64,316 men, 88,032 women and 1,854,048 children. The total expenditure on relief works came out to be Rs.19,54,086.

Large relief works, throughout the Punjab, formed the backbone of the system of relief from the very commencement. But in Hissar district, which was the most severely affected, small village works were found invaluable towards the close of operations. All large relief works were of permanent utility to the public and were carried out by Municipalities and District Boards.

The fourfold classification of workers as provided in the codes was found to be too complicated, and so a simpler system was adopted. The dependents of the workers were mostly children;

161. Ibid., Statement No.VI, pp.60-61.
162. Ibid., The detail of expenditure: on Irrigation: Rs.11,08,306; on roads: Rs.2,21,239; on Tanks: Rs.5,43,060; On Kankar Excavation: Rs.14,270; and Miscellaneous: Rs.67,211.
163. FCR, 1898, Para 169, p.104.
165. Ibid., Famine Proceedings, No.58, dated October, 1897; Report on Famine in the Punjab in 1896-97, p.36.
dependent adults being hardly 5 percent and were relieved gratuitously 166.

With the coming of rains, a stricter policy of employment on the works, called 'the rains policy', was adopted to make the workers return to their villages for Kharif sowings 167.

The wages at relief works were given according to the Codes. The Code provided two alternative methods for calculating wages. The first method involves a calculation of the cost of each item of the return. The second or 'grain equivalent' is based on the assumption that the subsidiary items of the return cost the equivalent of 75 percent of the grain item. The first method was generally adopted except in Hissar, Delhi and Ambala, as it was found that with grain at the price at which it stood during the famine the 'grain equivalent' gives a wages in excess of the actual cost of the prescribed ration. The practice as regards Sunday wages and Sunday labour varied in different districts. Generally the day was observed as holiday, but in Karnal labourers were allowed to work and earn a full wage. The minimum wages were given in Hissar for Sunday and this was the general rule in other districts. But in Lahore, Ferozepure and Ambala (except on one work) no Sunday wages were paid. The wages were given twice or thrice a week but in Hissar, Ferozepure and Lahore were paid daily 168. The value of work done to the total work on relief works was 34.4 percent and 38.3 percent on village works 169.

---

166. FCR, 1898, Para 224; Report on Famine in the Punjab in 1896-97, p.53.
169. FCR, 1898, Para 401; Statement C, p.238.
Gratuitous relief was started in many districts in the beginning of 1896, but its organization was finalized only in the early part of 1897. It was considerably curtailed after October, 1898, but continued in some measures throughout the famine 170. The gratuitous relief may be classified into (1) Relief to dependents, (a) by cash allowance, and (b) in kitchens, (2) relief to people at their homes, (3) relief in poor-houses, (4) other forms of relief. Relief to dependents of workers was provided in all the nine famine districts except Lahore (second phase) in cash or in the form of food. At first cash doles were given to the dependents at work, but after March, 1897, the children were fed in kitchens as they were found to be neglected by their parents 171. The total number of units relieved on relief works in the form of cash doles and in kitchens were 3,551,499 and 482,797 respectively 172, or 17.9 percent of the total number relieved in all ways of which 15.4 percent by cash doles and 2.5 percent in kitchens. Of the 4,034,296 dependents, the sex and condition was 64,316 men, 88,032 women and 1,854,048 children and 2,027,900 not specified. The units "not specified" may be distributed between men, women and children in the same proportion as the "units specified". The resulting distribution will be roughly: Men-128,296, women-177,000 and children-3,729,000. Thus, the dependents' question was mainly

170. FCP, 1898, Para 324.  
172. Ibid., Paras 81-85, pp. 54-56; Statement No. IV, pp. 60-61.
the question of affected children. Relief kitchens were opened in March, 1897 for children on the Ghaggar and Jhelum Canals and on Nardak Rajbaha in Karnal. Allowances were based on the Code rate which was from one quarter to three quarters of the allowance for an adult or an average of about one half. Hence, when the workers were paid less, it affected the dependents as well. That is why the parents neglected their children and the Government opened kitchens for them.

The organization of village relief was extensively tried in this famine. Villages were grouped into circles and lists of those eligible for home relief were prepared by the help of Circle Inspectors, most of whom were from the Zaildars class (rich class). They were closely supervised by Tahsildars, Naib Tahsildars and Deputy Commissioners in preparation of initial lists.

These agencies were also helped by non-officials as required by the Code. The gratuitous relief in villages was granted to the poor at the cost of public in which 2,170,677 units were relieved. Of these 76,097 units were given the work of grinding or spinning. In Hissar and Rohtak districts the experiment of grain-doles was tried, but was abandoned only to the difficulties encountered. In Karnal, however, grain-doles were issued. In Ambala the relief was apparently granted in cash. In Karnal a few Pardanashin women

173. Ibid., Para 86, p.56.


175. Ibid., Statement No. XI, pp.60-61.

176. Ibid., Para 88, p.57.
were placed on the registers of relief. In Hissar, the poor were relieved at the cost of Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund Committee 177.

Poor-houses were opened in the districts of Hissar, Delhi, Rohtak, Karnal and Ferozepure. The number of persons relieved were 2,85,201 of which 87,535 at Hissar, 1,96,903 at Delhi and 763 at Ferozepure were relieved 178. In Delhi the poor-houses were like soup kitchens at which food was distributed to the poor daily, but residence at the premises was not enforced. There were three such institutions at Delhi, Mahrauli and Mujjaffargarh respectively but majority of the people were relieved in the Delhi city poor-house at the cost of the Municipal Committee.

In Hissar the first poor-house was opened on 22nd January and by 20th March, 1897 one had been established at each tahsil headquarters. It was found that the scale of rations prescribed by the Code was insufficient, and a dietary was introduced. These extra indulgences were given at the cost of contumacious labourers. Just one-half of the inmates of poor-houses in Hissar were wanderers from Native States of whom the vast majority were Bikaneries. As these people became fit for removal from time to time they were drafted off in batches to the border and provided with money sufficient to take them home. Men formed 30 percent, women 25\% percent and children 44\% percent of the poor-house population in Hissar 179.

177. Ibid., Para 89, p.57.
178. Ibid., Statement No.VI, pp.60-61.
179. Ibid., Para 91, p.57.
Poor-houses were opened both at Rohtak and Karnal but were closed soon as they were not required for long. Similarly, in Ferozepure there was no need for the poor-houses kept open at each tahsil headquarters from April to August, 1897. Since relief here was provided in cash and not in kind, so the inmates soon left the poor-houses.

Relief to weavers and orphans was given under the head 'Miscellaneous'. Several charitable institutions and individuals in the Punjab had undertaken the care of a number of famine orphans from the Central Provinces, and the Government had been consulted in regard to several such offers of assistance made by Hindu associations in Lahore and elsewhere. As regards weavers, relief was given to them in Hissar, Ambala and Ferozepure districts, in which 76,097 persons were relieved through grinding of corn, spinning of cotton and cleaning of cotton works. Besides, medical treatment was given in the districts of Hissar, Gujrat and Karnal in which 16,619, 22,025 and 1,413 patients were treated respectively.

For the relief of cattle the Government opened revenue forests for cattle, permitted people to clip trees and carry away edible produce. The Government forests were opened in Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Gujrat, Kangra, Simla, Lahore, Montgomery and Multan for grazing the cattle.

181. The details about non-official relief measures has been discussed in Chapter VI.
182. Ibid., Para 94, pp.59-60.
183. Ibid., Para 107, p.69; Appendix III, pp.XLiii-XLiv.
184. FCR, 1898, Para 482.
Advances of money were given on the basis of Land Improvement Loans Act, XIX of 1883, and the Agriculturists' Loans Act XII of 1884. The Government of India ordered remission of stamp duty, chargeable on private or public advances executed from first January, 1897 to first January, 1898, for securing the repayment of loans in distress areas on certain specific conditions. Advances in the famine areas were paid only for the relief of the distress. No loan was given without interest, while the Government of India did not favour payment of advances to Zamindars to buy grain for their tenants. The amount given for land improvement was Rs.2,22,149 of which three-fourth were advanced in the Jhang district in connection with the Chenab Canal Colonization arrangements and the remainder only a small portion may be regarded as connected with the famine.

Advances were also made for the construction of kacha wells in the districts of Ambala, Rohtak and Delhi. Advances under Act XII of 1884 were amounted to Rs.11,54,490 of which 6,69,660 were advanced in the nine famine districts, while the Hissar district took the maximum amount of Rs.4,78,147.

The Government remitted Rs.74,470 and suspended Rs.21,93,627 of the land revenue demand during the famine years. The amount remitted was confined only to two districts of Lahore (Rs.54,434) and Sialkot (Rs.15,968). Out of the total suspensions Rs.14,59,165 were suspended in the nine famine districts, of which

186. Famine Progs., No.73, January, 1897, and No.24, February, 1897.
187. Ibid., No.37, March, 1897.
189. Ibid., Para 105, p.67.
Rs.3,87,074 were suspended only in the Hissar district, followed by Shahpur (Rs.1,36,211), Jhelum (Rs.1,28,586) and Rawalpindi (Rs.1,03,536)\(^\text{190}\).

Charitable relief was organized in several parts of the affected areas from the beginning of the famine. For this purpose, Indian Charitable Relief Fund Committee was organized in January, 1897, with Chief Justice of Bengal, Mr. Justice Reid, as its President and Calcutta as its headquarter. The Committee had several branches in the affected areas in the form of provincial and district committees \(^\text{191}\).

The Government permitted officials to associate themselves with appeal for private charity, but they were not allowed to be authors of such appeals, which were expected to be initiated by the public \(^\text{192}\). The Government of India allowed the Central Committee a sum of Rs.1,500 a month towards office expenses, and agreed to remit money free through their treasuries on behalf of the fund, also allowing free printing at the Government Press \(^\text{193}\).

The Government emphasized that the objects of the fund should be clearly defined at the time of appeal and it reserved 'such powers

\(^{190}\) Ibid., Para 102, pp.65-66.

\(^{191}\) Viceroy's Telegram to the S.O.S., dated January 6 and Jan.14, 1897; Parliamentary Papers, C-8302, p.3; Report of the Indian Charitable Relief Fund Committee, Vol. I, pp.4-5; Vol. II, pp.191-93, p.257 and p.365. The objects of the Committee were as declared by the Government: "To supplement the subsistence ration which alone was provided from public funds, by the addition of small comforts, whether by way of food or of clothing, for the aged and infirm patients in hospitals, children and the like; to provide for the maintenance of orphans; to relieve the poor respectable persons (who endured almost any position rather than apply for Government relief) and to restore to their original position, when acute distress was subsidiary those who had lost their all in the famine and give them a fresh start in life".

\(^{192}\) Circular No. F/66-2 from Benzil Ibbetson, Secretary to the G.O.I., Rev. & Ag., Famine, Calcutta, 22nd Dec. 1896.

of control as may be necessary to ensure the fulfilment of this condition. Subject to this general control, the appeal for collection and distribution of fund was to rest with the Committee, which through, non-official in character, had the District Magistrate as their Chairman. This gave a semi-official character to the fund.

Appeals for contributions were made and subscriptions in cash or food were received from India and all over the world amounting to one crore and seventy lakh rupees. The amount collected was contributed to the 'General Fund', while the provincial funds consisted of donations especially mentioned by the donors to be spent in a particular province. The subscriptions collected by the Central Committee were distributed among the various provinces considering their need and the funds available in the hands of the Central Committee.

The Punjab Provincial Committee of the Indian Charitable Relief Fund, 1897, came into existence on the 6th February, 1897. A public meeting was held in the Montgomery Hall, Lahore, and a Committee of one hundred and sixty members was appointed and elected an executive committee of 26 members. The object of the Committee before itself were: (1) the collection of subscriptions in the province, (2) the receipt of money allotted for the

194. Circular No.P/66-2, op. cit.,
province by the Central Committee, and (3) distribution of these funds. To carry out these objects, a meeting of the Executive Committee was held on 11th February. Sir William Rattigan was appointed Chairman, Mr. D.P. Masson as Secretary and Mr. C.H. Atkins as Joint Secretary. A sub-committee was appointed to ascertain what local committees were already in existence and what they proposed with a view to co-operate with the provincial committee.

On 27th February, in the third meeting of the Executive Committee, it was decided that 15 districts would need relief: Hissar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Karnal, Delhi, Ambala, Ferozepure, Multan, Gujrat, Lahore, Gujranwala, Jhelum, Shahpur, Rawalpindi and Amritsar. The Punjab Provincial Committee received Rs.12,67,521 of which Rs.3,17,884 were collected within the province. Of which the Committee spent Rs.10,84,386 on (1) gifts to agriculturists for the purchase of seed as well as cattle amounting to Rs.8,85,856; (2) relief to respectable poor, amounting to Rs.2,37,578; and (3) additional comforts to persons on relief works in poor-houses of Rs.10,022 and relief to orphans amounting to Rs.930 only. The Committee also distributed blankets, clothes, triticine food, Mellin's food, Swiss milk and Meaby's biscuits to the people in the affected areas.

200. Ibid., Paras 41-42, p.443.
201. Ibid., Paras 84-85, pp.449-50.
The famine took the total cost of Rs.28,34,004 to the Government. These figures exclude the small amounts expended on test works and the expenditure of the Public Works Department on the preparation of employment plans and estimates in connection with relief programmes. Besides, the Punjab Charitable Relief Fund Committee spent Rs.10,84,386. The indirect loss in the shape of suspensions and remissions of revenue amounted to Rs.22 lakhs.

The relief measures were lacking in many ways. The policy of relief works had many drawbacks. Mr. T. Higham, Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, who was sent to examine the relief works in various provinces, found the works defective. He recommended a simpler classification, introduction of some form of piece-work and also suggested that a programme of large works should always be kept ready.

The rate of wages paid at relief works was low. Commenting upon it, the Akhbar-i-Am wrote, "that the Government showed great generosity towards the famine-stricken people. It opened relief works for them, paid them at the rate of 2, 3 or 4 annas a day and

204. Ibid., Para 101, pp.64-65.
205. Ibid., Para 102, pp.65-66.
exacted double the amount of work taken from ordinary labourers. The liberality of Government is commendable as the famine-stricken people choose to die of starvation rather than seek shelter under the benevolence of Government..." 207. Similarly, the Rahbar-i-
Hind wrote that "the rate of wages allowed to the famine-stricken people on relief works at Sharakpur area are inadequate..." 208

There was some embezzlement in the money sanctioned for relief works. A large proportion of the amount sanctioned for relief works in the Sharakpur tahsil had been embezzled and the works which were alleged to have cost Rs.40,000 were scarcely worth half that amount. The charge of peculation had been proved against certain individuals and there was a general complaint that money had been embezzled by Government officials 209.

In Delhi, apparently women with children were not admitted to relief works, unless there was a working male of the family. To elude this regulation women were found attaching themselves to men among the workers passing themselves off as their wives. Ultimately, it was stated that only widows and women with "authenticated" husbands were admitted 210. Commenting upon it, the Akhbar-i-Am wrote, "that relief works have no doubt been started in some villages, but it does not follow from this that

207. The Akhbar-i-Am(Lahore), dated 12th June, 1896; SNNPP, during the year 1896.

208. The Rahbar-i-Hind(Lahore), dated 2nd July, 1896; SNNPP, during the year 1896.

209. The Paisa Akhbar(Lahore), dated 17th Oct, 1896; SNNPP, during the year 1896.

the deserving poor being helped in all villages. The Anglo-
Indian officials who were entrusted with the work generally do not
admit the existence of famine in any tract until the people were
reduced to great straits.\textsuperscript{211}

The poor-houses were unpopular and people feared that
they would be converted to christianity, or deported to places
beyond the seas.\textsuperscript{212} They were thus a refuse of the 'homeless
infirm', occupied mostly by emaciated people, beggars, the desti-
tute or the sick.\textsuperscript{213} The inmates of the poor-houses were not well
cared for, and even in severe cold no arrangement was made to
provide them warm clothes.\textsuperscript{214} The inmates of the poor-houses
complained that the thin breads supplied to them did not relieve
them of their hunger. They also complained that the breads were
made of inferior flour and half of it was chaff.\textsuperscript{215}

The organization of gratuitous relief was inordinately
delayed, which, in the opinion of the Famine Commission, "must have
resulted in some distress and suffering which might have been
averted had gratuitous relief been begun at the same time that
relief works were opened."\textsuperscript{216} The Gham-Khwar-i-Hind wrote that
"while some persons have received tickets purporting to have been
issued some time in the middle of July last, others are still
waiting for them. Again, many ticket-holders have been given no

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{211} The Akhbar-i-Am(Lahore), dated 1st April, 1867; SNNPP during the year 1897.
  \item \textsuperscript{212} Various rumours afloat about the poor-houses that the Government was distributing it for extracting oil from the people by machines or to send them to Kalapani, or Amir of Afghanistan was coming and this was to win the support of the people; Indian Charitable Relief Fund, 1897, Report, Vol. I, pp. 31-32.
  \item \textsuperscript{213} Evidence of S. Nihal Singh before the Famine Commission, FCR, 1898.
  \item \textsuperscript{214} H.S. Srivastva, op. cit., p. 212.
  \item \textsuperscript{215} Indian Charitable Relief Fund, 1897, Report, Vol. I, p. 32.
  \item \textsuperscript{216} FCR, 1898, Para 324.
\end{itemize}
wheat, although they have been several times to the Committee's shop. Complaints have also been made to the effect that wheat supplied to the ticket-holders is of an inferior quality. Moreover, many deserving persons have not been furnished with tickets and nothing seems to have been done to afford relief to the respectable classes, widows and others unable to work for their living.

The rules for taqavvi were complicated, since the cultivators had to bribe the Patwaris, Kanungos, Sadar Kanungos and others. As it was reported that the list which was prepared by the officials for advancing taqavvi did not include the names of those who could not pay bribe to them. It was also reported that in the month of July, 1897 bullocks were given to poor peasants at the Shalamar Garden, Lahore. Each bullock was said to be worth Rs. 25 at least, but in reality the animals were worth a great deal less. The cultivators considered the bullocks useless and some of them made complaints to that effect on the spot. The bullocks were, moreover, made to stand in rows, one good animal being tethered next to a bad one.

No relief was given to the Native Christians on the plea that the missionaries will look out for them. It was complained that the officials and the Natives through whom the money was distributed, were making fortunes out of it.

217. The Gham-Khwar-i-Hind (Lahore), dated 26th Dec., 1897; SNNPP, during the year 1897.
218. The Rahbar-i-Hind (Lahore), dated 3rd February, 1896; SNNPP, during the year 1896.
219. Ibid., dated 26th July, 1897; SNNPP, during the year 1897.
220. Letter from Lord Kinnaird, to The Earl of Onslow, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for India, dated April 6, 1897, Elgin Papers, M.F. Reel No. 6.
The policy of collecting private subscriptions was defective. As the Government asked the Tahsildars to collect charity which gave opportunity to the Tahsildars and the Zamindars and others to compel the people to subscribe more than their means allowed, and to help strangers in preference to their poor relatives and neighbours 221.

The relief measures in Patiala State were consisted of opening of relief works, advancing of taqavi loans, distribution of grain and blankets, etc. During 1897, taqavi to the amount of Rs.10,000 was distributed in Anahadgarh and Mohindergarh. Relief works comprised a kacha road from Barnala to Bhihki, which employed 2,312 persons and cost Rs.36,400; repairs of forts at Bhatinda and Ghuram (Rs.4,914); and addition to the Mausoleum of Maharaja Ala Singh (Rs.37,800). However, the number of persons relieved on such works are not available. Grain to the value of Rs.14,864 was distributed and blankets to the value of Rs.7,000 were given. The American Mission also distributed grain with assistance from the State. The total expenditure on famine relief amounted to Rs.1,97,830 222.

In Jind State, the Darbar devoted attention to the relief of the famine victims. Relief works were started in the tahsils Jind and Dadri on which the State spent Rs.27,500. Taqavi to the poor peasants was given in kind valued at 7,000 maunds, while Rs.3,074 were spent on gratuitous relief 223.

In Mandi State taqavi advances were given freely and relief works started. The Larji Bharwah road was constructed at this time as a relief work 224. In Malerkotla State, the Darbar instituted numerous relief works, such as making roads in Malerkotla and Jamalpura, repairing the Ludhiana road and constructing new village tanks. Money was also distributed to the poor. About Rs.20,000 were spent on relief works and 4,000 men were employed on them. Revenue was suspended to the amount of Rs.33,000 while Rs.3,000 was given as Taqavi for the purchase of bullocks 225.

In sum, the Punjab Famine of 1896-97 severely felt at Hissar, Delhi, Gurgaon, Karnal, Rohtak, Ambala, Ferozepure, Lahore and Gujrat. But the scarcity of foodgrains and consequently of high prices coupled with lack of fodder, which resulted into cattle mortality, was felt almost in every district. Besides, the Native States of Patiala, Jind, Mandi and Malerkotla were also severely affected.

The present famine was again the origin of a number of factors. The continuous exports of foodgrains, especially of wheat, since the scarcity of 1891 coupled with bad harvests in the succeeding years resulted into depleting the foodstocks in the province. As a result when failure of rainfall occurred in 1896 the prices of wheat and other foodgrains shot up causing severe hardships to the poor people. The role of grain-dealers as usual made the prices to rise further even in surplus areas.

224. SG, Mandi and Suket, op. cit., p.57.
225. SG, Malerkotla, op. cit., p.22.
At the same time, there was failure of fodder supply which aggravated the miseries of the poor people as it took a heavy toll of cattle mortality. Locusts appeared in many districts of the Punjab and destroyed the young growing crops making the condition critical. The hordes of starving migrants from Rajputana only strained the resources of the State. While the people were suffering from famine, an outbreak of plague in the Jullundur and Hoshiarpur districts fell upon the people which took heavy toll of human lives and continued to spread when it reached its climax during the first decade of the 20th century.

The scarcity of fodder resulted into heavy mortality of cattle and it was said that due to fodder famine 92 percent of the plough cattle of the province perished. The cattle breeders while suffered a severe loss, the chumars and chuhras profitted from cattle deaths. As they were in possession of a large number of hides and skins, whom they exported and brought high prices for them. Similarly, the famine affected the poor agriculturists who lost their agriculture and cattle, as a result their indebtedness increased. Since to restart their agricultural operations they needed money which was generally available from the Shahukars in lieu of sale or mortgage of some of their lands. But on the contrary the big Zamindars, the baniyas and the grain-dealers profitted the situation as high prices fetched them great profits. Crime in the form of thefts, robberies and dacoities increased. While grain riots of severe nature occurred at many places. The feeling of hatredness increased against the baniyas whom people considered responsible of causing artificial scarcity of food by stocking or hoarding the available food and then selling it at
high prices. People migrated, deserted their villages, families, sold their wives and children and many parents handed over their children to Christians missionaries for conversion on the condition of providing food to them. Many instances occurred when poor people in sheer starvation committed suicide. Hence, the famine affected very badly the poor strata of society while a particular section including the moneylenders, the big Zamindars and grain-dealers got profitted by the situation.

The anti-plague measures taken by the Government included house-searches, and removal of plague victims to hospitals or segregation of victims were bitterly criticised by the people as they felt that it affected their social prestige and the sanctity of their houses and harems.

The policy adopted for relief during this famine was based on the Punjab Famine Codes, and it provided an opportunity to examine their merits and demerits. The chief defects found were in the matters of detail. For example, the classification of workers as provided in the Code was found to be too complicated. The Codes had no provision for the relief of hill tribes and no provision to relieve the people when rains started and relief works could not be run. Again the relief was inadequate, wages paid were low and entry restricted, while poor-houses were unpopular and gratuitous relief was delayed. No arrangement was made for the supply of fodder and large cattle mortality was a great blot on the famine administration. Loss of human lives also show that the relief measures were still not effectively imposed. However, the

226. The Taj-ul-Akhbar (Rawalpindi), 6th March, 1897; The Paisa Akhbar (Lahore), 31st March, 1897; SNNPP during the year 1897.
Charitable relief played a very good role and relieved a considerable number of people. But non-official help was not welcomed in the administration of famine in general, and in decisions about remission and suspensions of revenue in particulars. The result was that the Government was not able to know the real situation and depended completely on official information which was not always correct. On the whole, though, the famine codes had worked fairly well, yet the widespread suffering and a high mortality could not be prevented successfully during this famine.

THE FAMINE OF 1899-1900

The last great Famine of 1899-1900 was the 'severest that India has ever known' followed so closely on the heels of that of 1896-97 famine that both the Government and the people were stunned. The magnitude of the famine was so great that out of total thirty-one districts of the Punjab twenty-eight were affected by it. Of them the severely affected were Hissar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Karnal, Delhi, Ambala, Lahore, Shahpur, Gujrat, Jhelum, Ferozepure, Multan, Amritsar, Dera Ghazi Khan and Mianwali tahsil of Bannu district. The Native States affected were Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Bahawalpur, Faridkot, Kapurthala, Malerkotla, Kalsia and the petty chiefships of Pataudi, Dujana and Loharu. The area

229. FCR, 1901, Para 16, p.4.
affected in the British territory was 36,000 square miles or 33 percent of the total area; out of which 12,000 square miles was the famine tract, while, 24,000 square miles as scarcity affected. The population affected was 3,000,000 or 14.5 percent of the total of which 2,500,000 was of the famine area, and 5,00,000 of the scarcity tract. Of the Native States the total area affected was 2,200 square miles or 26 percent of the total area; and population 5,039,000 or 72 percent of the total was affected 231.

The Kharif harvest of 1897 had been an exceptionally good one, with a crop area exceeding that of the previous year by 40 percent. The province was declared free of famine and the following rabi was also a promising one 232. The monsoon of 1898 arrived late and stopped early, yielding little rain in August or September except in the hills and the districts adjoining them. There was, consequently, an extensive failure of crops in twenty out of thirty-one districts. From September onwards throughout the cold weather of 1898-99 there was no rainfall except in December and March. But the fall was by no means general 233. The year 1898-99 was as a whole much below the average; the bajra, gram and rapeseed crops were exceptionally poor and wheat crop was deficient. The Kharif harvest of 1899 also failed as there was no or very deficient rainfall in the months of July, August and September. The area of failed crops in 1899 was 50.8 percent of the total

233. For rainfall variations, See Table IV.11.
Table IV.11
PUNJAB : Distribution of Rainfall in the Thirteen Famine Districts, 1897-1900 (urit-inches)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Rainfall During</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1897-98</td>
<td>1898</td>
<td>1899</td>
<td>1898</td>
<td>1899</td>
<td>1898</td>
<td>1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hissar</td>
<td>N 4.38</td>
<td>14.10</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>14.10</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>14.10</td>
<td>4.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>6.63</td>
<td>8.96</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>7.58</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>17.22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>+2.25</td>
<td>-5.22</td>
<td>-2.68</td>
<td>-6.60</td>
<td>-3.68</td>
<td>+1.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rohtak</td>
<td>N 5.76</td>
<td>17.93</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>17.93</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>17.93</td>
<td>5.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>17.71</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>9.84</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>20.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>-0.67</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
<td>-3.08</td>
<td>-6.60</td>
<td>-5.43</td>
<td>+3.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurgaon</td>
<td>N 7.23</td>
<td>23.65</td>
<td>7.23</td>
<td>23.65</td>
<td>7.23</td>
<td>23.65</td>
<td>7.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>18.35</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>12.28</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>29.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>-3.38</td>
<td>-11.30</td>
<td>-5.94</td>
<td>-11.40</td>
<td>-5.13</td>
<td>+5.53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>N 8.04</td>
<td>25.11</td>
<td>8.04</td>
<td>25.11</td>
<td>8.04</td>
<td>25.11</td>
<td>8.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>6.82</td>
<td>13.85</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>11.96</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>31.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>-1.22</td>
<td>-11.26</td>
<td>-1.26</td>
<td>-4.05</td>
<td>-0.57</td>
<td>+5.89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnal</td>
<td>N 8.71</td>
<td>25.70</td>
<td>8.71</td>
<td>25.70</td>
<td>8.71</td>
<td>25.70</td>
<td>8.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>12.14</td>
<td>15.34</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>8.71</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>41.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>+3.43</td>
<td>-4.36</td>
<td>-1.40</td>
<td>-6.99</td>
<td>-6.75</td>
<td>+16.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>14.04</td>
<td>21.21</td>
<td>6.60</td>
<td>16.07</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>37.22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>+4.64</td>
<td>-6.11</td>
<td>-2.80</td>
<td>-11.26</td>
<td>-5.88</td>
<td>+2.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferozepure</td>
<td>N 5.32</td>
<td>15.38</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>15.38</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>15.38</td>
<td>5.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>25.92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-2.38</td>
<td>-3.15</td>
<td>-11.38</td>
<td>-4.38</td>
<td>+10.54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multan</td>
<td>N 1.06</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>+0.32</td>
<td>-2.60</td>
<td>-1.16</td>
<td>-3.02</td>
<td>-1.14</td>
<td>-1.87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahore</td>
<td>N 5.52</td>
<td>13.69</td>
<td>5.52</td>
<td>14.73</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>44.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>6.42</td>
<td>12.76</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>9.02</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>19.41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>+0.90</td>
<td>-1.93</td>
<td>-4.08</td>
<td>-9.81</td>
<td>-3.53</td>
<td>+4.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>18.08</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>18.70</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>26.88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>-2.31</td>
<td>-3.25</td>
<td>-6.23</td>
<td>-12.94</td>
<td>-5.89</td>
<td>+5.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>7.13</td>
<td>17.67</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>20.40</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>27.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>+1.02</td>
<td>-2.16</td>
<td>-4.83</td>
<td>-11.80</td>
<td>-6.21</td>
<td>+2.35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shahpur</td>
<td>N 5.39</td>
<td>11.04</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>11.04</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>11.04</td>
<td>5.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>8.51</td>
<td>11.50</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>8.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>+3.12</td>
<td>-0.46</td>
<td>-2.89</td>
<td>-6.99</td>
<td>-4.14</td>
<td>-3.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jhelum</td>
<td>N 7.73</td>
<td>16.35</td>
<td>7.73</td>
<td>15.91</td>
<td>7.33</td>
<td>16.35</td>
<td>7.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>9.09</td>
<td>21.73</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>6.41</td>
<td>31.61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>+2.16</td>
<td>-5.38</td>
<td>-1.04</td>
<td>-3.41</td>
<td>-1.32</td>
<td>+15.26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

area sown against 27.9 percent in 1898 and 13.5 percent in 1897. The rabi harvest of 1900 failed because of complete failure of the monsoon of 1899 over the greater part of the Punjab. The total crop failure was 18.5 percent of the total crops sown as compared with 16.5, 12.1 and 16.1 respectively in 1897, 1898 and 1899. The advent of famine was heralded by the arrival in the Punjab by crowds of wandering immigrants from the Rajputana States on their way to seek alms or employment in the larger cities in and in the prosperous canal-irrigated tracts of the province.

Prices began to rise in August, 1899, when it was seen that the failure of rains was imminent. The possessors of the wheat stock locked up the stocks till the prices rose very high. There were speculators. The rise continued during September as the certainty of failure became complete. Wheat rose as high as 9 seers per rupee. Although, the prices did not rise as high as were in the famine of 1896-97, but since the resources of the people had been drained by the previous famine, and they had left with nothing to buy grain with whatever the prices might be.


235. For Price variations, see Table IV.12.

236. The Tribune, dated 18th November, 1899.

Table IV. 13
PUNJAB: Imports and Exports of Foodgrains During 1896-97 to 1898-99.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1896-97</th>
<th>1897-98</th>
<th>1898-99</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(in Maunds)</td>
<td>(in Maunds)</td>
<td>(in Maunds)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Import</td>
<td>198,588</td>
<td>372,188</td>
<td>107,616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export</td>
<td>3,144,815</td>
<td>4,559,943</td>
<td>12,375,569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jowar &amp; Bajra:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Import</td>
<td>1,487,357</td>
<td>310,087</td>
<td>703,877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export</td>
<td>208,603</td>
<td>1,095,980</td>
<td>209,592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gram &amp; Pulses:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Import</td>
<td>1,82,842</td>
<td>381,556</td>
<td>308,836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export</td>
<td>3,500,840</td>
<td>1,257,578</td>
<td>1,598,257</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: The Tribune, dated 18th November, 1899, P.3).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region/District</th>
<th>Net Imports (in Hundreds of Kausunds)</th>
<th>Net Exports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Himalayan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangra</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simla</td>
<td>1,022</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sub-Montane</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambala</td>
<td>10,542</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoshiarpur</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujrat</td>
<td>7,200</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sialkot</td>
<td>3,339</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Salt Range</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rawalpindi</td>
<td>20,064</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jhelum</td>
<td>8,830</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pannu</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1,449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feshawer</td>
<td>3,030</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kohat</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasara</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Eastern Plains</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurkaspur</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>17,824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amritsar</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>14,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferozepure</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>29,230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jullundur</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>20,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ludhiana</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>27,339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahore</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>13,252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>4,967</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurgason</td>
<td>4,368</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnal</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1,295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rohtak</td>
<td>23,130</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hisar</td>
<td>34,421</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Western Plains</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multan</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>4,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jhang</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>47,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1,419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujranwala</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>23,712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheikpur</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.I.Khan</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>9,028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.G.Khan</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajjaffargarh</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>7,112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

that month. Large areas were, therefore, prepared and sown for the Kharif harvest. In the month of July the rainfall was below the average and irregularly distributed, the districts of Hissar, Ferozepure, Montgomery, Bannu and Shahpur in particular receiving very little. Standing crops began to suffer and in these districts further sowings had to be abandoned. In August, the hill and sub-montane districts received moderate rain, but over the greater part of the province; the southern, Central, Western and north-western districts, drought prevailed throughout the months. After a brief interval of rest famine was in the land again. It: advent was heralded by the arrival in the Punjab of crowds of wandering immigrants from the Rajputana States and by the month of September some 20,000 wanderers had entered the province 241. The districts in which the most extensive failure of crops occurred were Hissar, Gurgaon, Karnal and Ambala, all in the Delhi division. But in most of the districts of the Rawalpindi division also the yield of the Kharif harvest was 50 or more percent, below the normal. The portions of the Patiala, Jind and Nabha States which adjoin Hissar, Gurgaon and Rohtak were similarly circumstanced to these districts. In the remainder of the Punjab plains the crop failure was not so extensive and complete. Because in the tracts adjoining the foot of the Himalayas the rainfall had not been so markedly deficient as to the south and west, but nearly everywhere there was a dearth of grass and fodder and consequently, the cattle suffered 242.

242. Ibid., Para 4, pp.2-3.
The organization of measures for relief was commenced in September, 1899. In Rohtak district ordinary District Board works were started to afford relief to village menials and were converted into test works on September 10th and task of fighting the famine began. In Hissar district one or two works were started by the District Board at famine wages, but failed to attract labourers and were soon closed. In Karnal and Gurgaon the test works were started on 13th September for the relief of the wanderers. Except these four districts there was no such distress at the time when the general failure of the Kharif harvest on un-irrigated land became a certainty 243.

The early and complete failure of the monsoon of 1899 over the greater part of the province materially affected the rabi harvest of 1900 as well as the Kharif of 1899 244. On September 11, 1900 test works in Hissar were converted into regular relief works 245.

In Rohtak district during September and October, 1899 the number of labourers on test works increased gradually and in November, as the number continued to increase, the existence of famine was established, and the conditions of works were changed to those of relief works. The people who came to these works were menials (46%), Jats (46%) and Muhammadans (8%), which included Rajputs, Bilochs and Pathans 246.

243. Ibid., Para 6, pp.34.
244. Ibid., Para 7, pp.4-5.
245. Ibid., Para 8, P.5.
In Gurgaon district on 3rd March, 1900 all the test works were converted into regular relief works. The maximum number under relief at one time amounts to 5 percent of the population of the district. The prevailing tribes Ahirs, Gujjars, Rajputs, Ranghars, Meos, Sheikhs and Pathans were among the recipients of gratuitous relief. A large number of persons relieved however, were immigrants from Rajputana and from the nearby British districts.247

In Karnal district during the month of December, 1900, when the distress was found acute the test works were supplemented with gratuitous relief in the villages. The population affected was 7 percent. On 17th March, 1900 and was comprised of Jats, Brahmins and Mohammedan Rajputs.248

In Delhi test works were opened by the Delhi Municipality. The Delhi-Agra Railway earth-work started as a relief work for the benefit of the neighbouring districts, was opened to local labourers also. A poor house was kept open from February 19th to the end of August, 1900 at Badarpur.249

In Ambala district test works were opened in February, 1900 and were attended by a small number of people. But after May, the attendance further decreased and it was found unnecessary to keep up test works after the end of June.250

In Ferozepure district it was found that the ordinary silt clearance of the Sirhind Canal and the district inundation

247. Ibid., Para 10, pp.6-7,
248. Ibid., Para 11, p.7,
249. Ibid., Para 12, p.7,
250. Ibid., Para 13.
canal, afforded sufficient employment to the needy classes. A small canal was started as a test work on November 29, 1899, converted into a relief work on April 16, 1900 and was kept open till June 20th, 1900. These works were primarily opened for immigrants from Bikaner.

In Multan and Amritsar, it was found necessary to open works for the relief of immigrants from Bikaner who thronged to these cities. In Multan, these works were kept open from November 27th, 1899 to May 19th, 1900, while in Amritsar ordinary works were started on November 26th, 1899 and in the next month were converted into relief works, as the attendance increased. However, the works were closed on 12th March, 1900.

In Lahore division many of the poorer people got work at the Chenab Canal Colony in the shape of harvest of crops which was abundant. The inhabitants of the adjacent districts of the Rawalpindi division also benefitted in this way.

In Shahpur district, ordinary labour was available for the needy on the clearance of inundation canals and on the Jhelum canal, the excavation of which was in progress within the district. Small test works which were opened in the beginning of the cold weather of 1899-1900 attracted few labourers and were soon closed. The Jhelum Canal was, however, utilized as a famine relief work from November 14, 1899 onwards by means of deportation from Hisar.

253. Ibid., Para 18.
of 11,000 people to work on it. The work was also made available for the local labour from February 25, 1900, but as a test work. However, this work was closed on 2nd June, 1900 254.

In Jhelum district small test works were opened in November, 1899, and a larger work, the Jalalpur canal, was begun as a test work on 3rd February, 1900. On 11th August, 1900 these works were closed because of low attendance 255.

In Mianwali tahsil of the Bannu district, preparations were at one time made to start test works, but the necessity passed. In Dera Ghazi Khan, there was severe scarcity among the pastoral Biluches who lost a large number of their sheep and goats because of scarcity of fodder. Relief to them was given in the form of loans 256.

During the hot weather of 1900, in Hissar district the increase in numbers occurred. But towards the end of July the long wished for rain came and the greater part of the Hissar district received sufficient supply. As a result the people left the works in large numbers to get their Kharif crops sown. With this large works were closed on 31st August, 1899 and all other works were stopped by the end of September, 1900 257. Similarly, with the fall of rain in July, the relief works were closed in the districts of Rohtak, Karnal and Gurgaon by the end of October, 1900 258.

254. Ibid., Para 19, pp. 8-9.
255. Ibid., Para 21, p. 9.
256. Ibid., Para 22.
257. Ibid., Para 23, pp. 9-10.
258. Ibid., Paras 24-26, p. 10.
In Patiala State, the famine of Sambat, 1956 (A.D. 1899) was severely felt throughout the State, but most especially in Sardulgarh, Narwana, Akalgarh, Sunam, Bhawanigarh and Mohindergarh. The year was rainless, following a succession of bad harvests while the grain famine was aggravated by a water famine in Sardulgarh and a fodder famine everywhere. Twenty-eight villages were affected in Anhadgarh, 281 in Mohindergarh and 104 in Karamgarh. The total area affected was 1026 square miles with population 2,20,000 260.

In Jind State, the fall of rain was poor in Sambat, 1953 (A.D. 1898) and the yield of harvest of crops was an average. Fodder was scarce and the effects of the recent famine of Sambat, 1853 had not disappeared when the terrible famine of Sambat 1866 devastated the State. The Kharif failed altogether and prices rose very high. The cattle were driven to the hills and trans-Jamuna tracts in search of fodder. The population affected was 189,707 souls. The grain-stores in the state had sunk very low owing to the previous famine 261.

In Nabha State, prices rose very high and the famine prevailed 262. The condition of the Kharif harvest on un-irrigated land in Malerkotla state was very bad, and there was great

---


261. SG, Phulkian, op. cit., p. 300.

262. Letter No. 1228 dated Simla, the 25th Sept., 1899, from L.W. Dane, Esq., Chief Secretary to Govt. of Punjab, to the Secretary to G.O.I., Foreign Deptt., Prog. Rev. & Ag., Famine A, January, 1900, Nos. 69-87.
distress was felt among the immigrants from Rajputana who flocked into the State 264. In Kalsia State the failure of autumn harvest and high prices led to famine while severe distress prevailed in the petty States of Pataudi, Dujana and Loharu 265. The states of Kapurthala and Faridkot were also affected 266.

Famine was followed by plague which confined to the central part of the Nawanshahr tahsil of Jullundur, the central and northern parts of the Garhshankar tahsil of Hoshiarpur. In all 86 villages were infected during the year 1897-98. The largest places infected were Banga and Garhshankar 267. In 1898-99, the epidemic was much smaller. It was confined to 26 villages in the south-east of the Nawanshahr tahsil and 5 in the Hoshiarpur district, scattered along the length of the Garhshankar tahsil. The chief feature of the year's epidemic was the evacuation and disinfection of 'Rahon', a town which was found to be infected in the middle of November, 1898 and was not re-occupied till early in April, 1899 268. In 1899-1900, 78 villages were infected in the districts of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur, throughout the entire area of the

263. Ibid.


266. Letter No. 1228 S, dated Simla, the 25th Sept. 1899 from L. W. Dane, Esq., Chief Secretary to the Govt. of Punjab, to the Secy. to the G.O.I., Foreign Deptt.; Letter No. 185, dated Lahore, the 3rd Nov., 1899; Ibid., Prog. Rev. & Ag., Famine A., Jan., 1900, Nos. 69-87.


Nawanshahr and Garhshankar tahsils, and one village was attacked in the Patiala State. The anticipated extension of plague took place in 1900-01. The epidemic in that year attained very extensive dimensions. It spread to Banga, Gurdaspur, Sialkot, Karachi, Jullundur, Hoshiarpur, Ferozepure, Ludhiana, Patiala and Phagwara (in Kapurthala State).

The rapid succession of two severe famines at such short an interval severely shook the morale and confidence of the people. All the progress made in agricultural development, since 1880 was nullified during the famines. In many areas cultivators gave up cultivation of commercial or industrial crops and started cultivating inferior grains. In some parts area under cultivation showed reduction. Thus, the famine of 1899-1900 severely affected agriculture and further weakened the power of resistance of the poor agriculturists who were already indebted to Shahukars.

The scarcity of fodder and water coupled with high prices affected all classes of the society in many ways. The chief characteristic of the famine was that about 50 percent of the persons relieved on relief works were cultivators. In Karnal at Padla works the 'agriculturists' constituted 40 percent of the total number of workers, Kamins 60 percent; while at Chatar 58 percent were 'agriculturists' and 42 percent were Kamins; at Dasirpur, 40 percent were 'agriculturists' and 60 percent Kamins.

---

269. Ibid., Para 4.
270. Ibid., Para 5, pp. 1-2.
271. H.S. Srivastva, op. cit., p. 269.
It shows the deteriorating condition of the peasants throughout the years as during the earlier famines the Ramins were in majority to be hit-hard. But now due to increasing indebtedness the poor peasants were forced to do manual labour on relief works.

Distress in this famine was much more acute than in 1896-97 famine as was described in several parts to have been worst in the memory of man 273. In Ambala district, it was discovered that the people had dug up all the ants' nests for the sake of the few grains of corn which might be stored there 274. A few days back a woman of Naru (Jhelum) was seen swallowing cow dung in order to satisfy her hunger 275.

In Hissar district, it was reported that many cases of abandoning and selling of children by their parents occurred 276. The pressure of famine also operated to loose the ties of family and caste. There were many examples of wives and children being sold without any care to whom they went; whether to a low or high caste. It was principally as regards customs regarding food that lapses were noticed; there were even cases of Bishnois, who would not in ordinary times accept food even from a Brahmin, being glad to accept food from any one who would give them to eat. And there appeared no doubt that once the famine was over people would return

275. The Siraj-ul-Akhbar (Jhelum), dated 18th Dec., 1899; SNNPP during the year 1899.
to their old ways and customs again and that the brotherhood would not outcast any person who transgressed the rules of caste owing to pressure of want.  

The high prices also affected the **Safed Posh** (white robed) class as they were found to sell much of their clothes as were not absolutely wanted to cover nakedness to buy **atta** (flour) which was selling at 9 seers per rupee.  

People migrated in large numbers, but no figures are available. It was reported from Hissar district that villages were deserted and houses shut-up; no property was left in them and no cattle. The *Wakil*, a native newspaper wrote that "whole village in the Hissar district had become depopulated and the people are living in jungles in thatch huts, which can hardly afford protection against the inclemencies of the weather. Well connected women, who had never been even to the door of their houses, are to be daily seen at relief works with baskets full of earth on their heads. Their eyes fill with angry tears at the abuse and rebukes of the mates, etc., employed at the works, but want comels them to repress their feelings, Again these infant children may cry for nourishment, but they dare not suckle the babies, so afraid are they of the mate's ever-lifted stick and threatening brow. The husbands of these unfortunate women witness their troubles, but being powerless to help them go on with their own work with down cast eyes."

278. The Tribune, October 24, 1899.  
280. The *Wakil* (Amritsar), 19th March, 1900; SNNPP during the year 1900.
The high prices led to increase the crime rate. The number of cases against property were reported 174,221 in 1898 which rose to 181,965 in 1899 and 180,746 in 1900. The number of robberies increased from 598 to 765 during the year 1900. There was a great increase by 35 percent in the cases of forest offences. The increase occurred chiefly in cases of illicit grazing and unauthorised removal of forest produce including loping of trees for fodder and was due to famine.

The famine had left a deep impact on the health of the people. During famine cholera spread out, and when famine ceased after a plentiful monsoon, malaria, acting on the people whose vitality had been reduced by privation, claimed a long tail of victims. Cholera took 6,516 deaths in the Punjab during the months of January to June, 1900. In 1900, the birth rate rapidly declined till the end of famine. In July, 1900 it was only 22.3 per mille as compared with 40.5 per mille of the annual average.

The increase in mortality was in proportion to the severity with which the famine visited the districts. Thus, in Hisar, the number of deaths were nearly three times the average; in Rohtak it was twice the average and in Gurgaon 50 percent above the average. However, no exact figures are available for human mortality from famine, but total deaths reported in the Punjab in 1899 were

---

281. PCJR, 1899, Para 14, p.10.
282. Moral and Material Progress condition of India during the year 1899-1900, p.41.
283. PAR, 1899-1900, Para 14, p.10.
607,725 which rose to 980,211 in 1900. Besides famine, plague in Punjab also took 15,200 lives by the end of the year 1901. However, the measures taken by the Punjab Government to check the disease created panic and riots broke out. For example, a native subordinate official attended to take a plague-stricken woman to hospital out of her house which resulted in the burning alive of the Naib Tahsildar, who ordered her removal and killing of the hospital compounder by the mob. A serious riot occurred at Garhshankar in April, 1898 against the plague measures. People opposed the plague measures so rigidly that the Government had to some places called upon themilitary to control the situation. This led to the feeling of people against the British Government to whom people felt responsible for violating their social life and breaking the sanctity of their houses and harems.

Trade during the height of the epidemic (Plague) suffered in some of the larger towns and most severely affected districts. In Ambala it was anticipated that there would be a decrease of 16 percent in income tax demand. Scarcity of labour was felt. Schools in the worst tracts had to be closed, and litigation practically ceased in several districts for a time, while crime was generally encouraged by the unexpected state of evacuated houses. There had

286. PAR, 1900-01, Paras 202-04, pp.44-45.
287. PAR, 1899-1900 and 1900-1901, Appendices, PP.CXCvi-CXCix and CXCviii-CCi.
288. The Annual Register, 1901, p.354.
289. Letter from Curzon to Hamilton, dated 8th May, 1901, Hamilton Papers, M.F.Reel No.10.
291. Ibid., Para 22, pp. 6-7.
292. Ibid., Para 22, p.7.
consequently been an increase in thefts and burglaries. In some places, as in Sial, the theft of the property and books of the moneylenders, who had fled from the Plague, had been undertaken in a systematic and organized manner 293.

The scarcity of water and consequently of fodder or grass resulted into a considerable loss of cattle. The cattle were allowed to die or were sold, even by the Hindus, to butchers for a few rupees or a few annas. The flesh eating races, the chamars and other manial classes benefitted by the abundance of cheap meat and by the sales of hides and bones. But the benefit was out of all proportion to the tremendous loss the province suffered in valuable plough or milch cattle 294. Great number of cattle died in the districts of Hissar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Karnal, Ambala, Delhi, Shahpur, Gujrat and Jhelum during the years 1899-1900 which amounted to 11,20,426 cattle 295.

The conversion of Hindu orphans to Christianity took place as a result of famine. It was reported that "the famine had bent thousands of orphans into fold of Christianity and compelled numberless girls to earn their bread by selling their virtue..." 296

The alienation of lands again increased 297 because the famine had completely exhausted the resources of the cultivators.

294. PAR, 1900-01, Para 185,p.37.
296. The Kapurthala Akhbar(Kapurthala), dated 7th Aug.,1900.
297. Year Mortgage 1897-98 191,156 1898-99 170,038 1899-1900 157,067 PAR's of the relevant years.
As a result they went to the creditor to obtain loan by mortgaging or sale of their lands to re-start their occupations. The sales while increased during these years but the mortgages decreased, because the Shahukars had stopped giving money to the Zamindars, because of the fear of the passing of the Punjab Land Alienation Bill. However, bitterness among the cultivators against the Shahukars increased as cases of their murders were reported. *The Siraj-ul-Akhbar* reported that "the present famine had proved disastrous to the Shahukars in special, and reports of their murder and their houses having been looted are coming in from all quarters. It was also rumoured that they (Shahukars) were migrating to cities and buying swords and guns for the better security of their lives and property" 298.

The policy of relief was primarily based on the famine codes, but the recommendations made by the Famine Commission of 1898, which though yet not implemented, influenced the famine policy. The general principles of relief hitherto evolved were reaffirmed. On 27th December, 1899, the Government of India declared that "the state does not undertake to secure the people from suffering in the event of failure of crops, but only to protect them from starvation. Secondly, the conditions of relief should impair as little as possible the traditional and family obligations of the social system of the country" 299. About the relief of persons capable of labour, the Government of India declared that "the two principles on which insistence is necessary are that the

---

298. *The Siraj-ul-Akhbar* (Jhelum), 8th January, 1900; SNPP during the year 1900.

299. *Famine Progs.*, No. 10, January, 1900; Circular No. 2 (Famine), dated Calcutta, 27th December, 1899.
terms on which work is affected shall be such as will adequately
test the need of the applicants, and that the wage shall not
accede the amount needful for the subsistence of the workers" 300.
The Government also laid down that the large public works, as
recommended by the Famine Commission of 1880, should form the
mainstay of relief operations, but its recommendations to use
scattered small works should also be tried according to circums-
tances. The wage scale recommended by the Commission of 1898, the
Government felt, would prove dangerously high, specially whenever
the task system is applied and the prescription of a minimum daily
wage is rigorously observed" 301. The Local Government were, there-
fore, authorised experimentally to adopt the scale accepted with
the last famine for the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, if they
considered the Commission's scale too liberal 302.

The Government of India further trusted that the "system
of payments by results as recommended by the Famine Commission of
1898 and incorporated in all the Codes, would be fully used at the
outset of the relief operations", and "will not be abandoned in
favour of the regular system till they have been found to be
insufficient". When it became necessary to resort to the system
of fixed task and minimum wage, fines for short work should be
strictly enforced, and the case of persistent failure to perform
the allotted task, due to causes other than physical ability, must
be dealt with vigorously 303.

300. Ibid.
301. Ibid.
302. Ibid.
303. Ibid.
As regards to the princely states, it was declared by the Government of India that "the actual direction of famine relief operations in Native States, should remain as far as possible in the hands of the Darbars subject only to the general supervision of the Political Officers concerned, who should bring promptly to the notice of the Darbars any instance in which the relief afforded appeared to be insufficient or in which there was undesirable departure from the general principles for the administration of such relief" 304. The States were requested to follow the policy adopted in British India and to abolish restrictions on the transit of foodgrains in their territory. The Government of India offered to send Engineers and other officers to the States to advise them on relief works, and also agreed to advance loans to these States on interest, which could be repaid by them in installments 305. As a condition of such loans, the borrowing State had to be guided in all matters of famine relief and in other matters connected with the expenditure of the money by the advice of the Political agent and in the event the loan was not paid within time, the State was liable to be taken over under the Government of India's management till the loan was repaid 306.

The policy adopted about migrants from the Princely States was the same as was followed in the famine of 1896-97, according to

304. Letter from H.S.Barnes, Offq.Secy.to G.O.I.,in the Foreign Dept.,to the Agent to the G.G.in Rajputana, No.2909-IA, dated Simla, the 9th October, 1899.
306. Ibid., pp.149,173 and 563; Telegram from Foreign Secy.to the G.O.'s Agent in Central India, Indore, No.544-IA, dated 2nd February, 1900.
which emigrants from Native States should not be sent back to their States, till the State authorities are in a position to take over and provide for them. The only thing to be done in such cases is, therefore, to endeavour to collect the refugees of each State on separate works, and to arrange with the Political Officers concerned for their removal to relief works in their own States.  

The relief measures may be discussed under the following:

1. Relief works;
2. Gratuitous relief;
3. Suspensions and remissions of revenue;
4. Taqavi;
5. Miscellaneous relief; and
6. Charitable relief.

The works utilized for famine relief were:

- Railway projects,
- Canals,
- Irrigation works,
- Large tanks and miscellaneous works.

Large works formed the backbone of the relief works. The test works were started at an early date of famine in many districts and latter on were converted into regular relief works. The districts where these works were opened included Hissar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Delhi, Karnal, Ambala, Ferozepure, Multan, Lahore, Amritsar, Gujrat, Jhelum, and Shahpur. These works were kept open from 16th September, 1899 to 20th October, 1900 on which 43,215,900 persons were given relief, of which 9,652,524 were non-working dependents on the workers, which were relieved gratuitously. Among the non-working dependents 7,994,251 were children and 1,075,382 adults.

Programmes of relief works were maintained in each of the affected districts in accordance with the provisions of the Punjab.

Famine Code. The Government of India at the request of the Punjab Government caused earth-work to be started on the following lines at an early period of famine: (1) The Ludhiana-Dhuri-Jakhal Railway, (2) The Bikaner-Bhatinda Railway, (3) The Rewari-Phulera Loop line, and (4) The Agra-Mathura Chord line. The first of these lines afforded employment and relief to the distressed among the inhabitants of Jind and some people from Hissar. The second line provided works only to the inhabitants of Native States and diminished their migration to British districts. The third line afforded employment to the people of Gurgaon district, and Narnaul and Kanaudh tracts of the Patiala State. The last line afforded employment to labourers from Rohtak district.

On November 20, 1899, 11,027 persons from Hissar were sent to work on the Jhelum Canal at Shahpur where works were already in progress. But unfortunately cholera spread out which claimed 3,265 lives. Thus, the employment of drafting famine labour outside the district was proved a partial success because of the un-natural conditions.

Several irrigation works were carried out for local famine labour during the scarcity in the districts of Hissar, Karnal, Ambala, Jhelum and Lahore from October 10, 1899 to May 19, 1900. Besides the embankments in Gurgaon also afforded work for labourers.

311. Ibid., Para 32, p. 16.
Excavation of large tanks were started at Hissar, Gurgaon, Karnal and Rohtak. The number of tanks excavated were 34, both large and small. In addition, clearance was done on the sacred Kurukshetra tank at Thanesar also afforded employment.

Other works utilized for famine relief were unmetalled roads in Hissar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Karnal, Ambala, Jhelum, Gujrat, Shahpur, Amritsar, Multan and Ferozepure; protective ditches for enclosing Government land in Hissar; the filling of a deep hole near Rewari in Gurgaon, land reclamation in Amritsar and the filling of the city ditch in Multan.

The wages at relief works varied with the change in season. It was high in cold but low in hot weather. The basis of the wage-scale was the price of the grain used by the people. Payments were made twice a week in Hissar and daily in Gurgaon, Rohtak and Karnal. The wage scale recommended by the Famine Commission of 1898 was considered to be high by the Punjab Government, and consequently the wages were lowered.

Provision of shops, water-supply and huts in Famine Camps were made. Shops were provided at each camp for the sale of grain to relief workers, and food-stuffs were supplied of fair quality, having the same prices as at tahsil headquarters. Camps were generally established where water could get easily. Wells and tanks

313. Ibid., Para 34, p.17.
314. Ibid., Para 64, pp.23-24.
315. Ibid.
were built for this purpose. Medical arrangement was also provided at Hissar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Karnal, Delhi, Shahpur, Lahore and Jhelum. Blankets and clothes were given only to old and sickly persons residing on works in Hissar and on Jhelum canal. Very limited amount of money was given for clothes and blankets in the districts of Karnal, Delhi, Gurgaon, Rohtak and Hissar. The special allowance was made to the nursing mothers in addition to the allowance paid on account of the infant as a dependent. Besides, relief was given in the form of spinning and weaving to respectable women at Rohtak. The total expenditure on relief works in relieving 39,563,376 persons amounted to Rs.37,00,159.

The main form of gratuitous relief was consisted of relief to dependents on works, poor-houses, village relief by doles, free kitchens and miscellaneous relief.

Relief to dependents on works was provided in the districts of Hissar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Delhi, Karnal, Ferozepure, Multan and Shahpur on which 9,652,524 persons were relieved during the period from 16th September, 1899 to 20th October, 1900. In Hissar, emaciated children were provided with milk, but free kitchens formed the chief method of relief in various districts.

The gratuitous relief in villages to persons who owing to age or infirmity, were unable to do labour themselves and did not

316. Ibid., Para 37, pp.20-21.
317. Ibid., Para 40, p.22.
318. Ibid., Para 42, p.23.
321. Ibid., Vol.VI, pp.34-37.
324. Ibid.
come upon relief works as dependents was of importance only in the six districts of Hissar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Karnal, Multan and Lahore, in which 7,281,785 persons were helped. The cash allowances were given to persons gratuitously relieved.

Poor-houses were opened in the Punjab specially for immigrants, where light work was taken from them. Hissar was most affected by these people and five poor-houses at Hissar, Sirsa, Hansi, Bhiwani and Fatehabad were opened in that district. Next to Hissar, Gurgaon was the most over-run by immigrants and two poor-houses one at Gurgaon and other at Rewari were opened. In Rohtak district one at Rohtak and other at Jhajjar, chiefly for immigrants, were started. These were also opened at Delhi, Lahore, Amritsar and Shahpur, chiefly meant for immigrants from Rajputana or Native States of the Punjab. The total number of units relieved in these houses were 1,003,772. Kitchens were opened in Delhi and Karnal districts in which 15,302 persons were relieved.

Miscellaneous relief was given to Fardanashin women, Wanderers, low-paid Government servants and weavers, in which 490,791 persons were relieved. The total expenditure on gratuitous relief in relieving 61,707,807 persons from September 16, 1899 to October 20, 1900 was amounted to be Rs.6,56,177.

325. Ibid., Statement No. IX, pp.94-95.
326. Allowances were mis-spent and so cooked food was distributed; ibid., Vol. I, p.26.
327. Ibid., Vol. I, Para 52, p.27; Statement No. IX, pp.94-95.
328. Ibid.
329. Ibid., Statement No. IX.
330. Ibid.
In the rainy season, a special policy was required 'as the possibility of a self-acting labour test fades away, while the necessity for gratuitous relief for the weak and the helpless reaches it maximum'. The 1898 Commission had objected to the policy of inducing people to leave relief works before the famine ended except with extreme caution and with a large extension of gratuitous relief. This policy was applied in this famine. A programme to start village works when rains set in, was kept ready. Monsoon, however, was late and so large works were continued for a longer period than they were planned. As soon as rains started people were made to return to their villages and cash allowances were paid to them for their journey 331.

The taqavi advances for the purchase of seed and cattle which amounted to Rs.19,13,061 were given in the districts of Hissar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Karnal, Delhi, Ambala, Ferozepure, Lahore, Jhelum, Gujrat, and Shahpur, of which the maximum being given to Rohtak district (Rs.1,95,263). Besides, during rabi of 1900 advances were made to the amount of Rs.1,12,637 in the Hissar district for well sinking and seed purchasing, where 230 new wells were dug and 597 old ones were repaired. In Jhelum, Gujrat and Shahpur advances amounting to Rs.40,500, Rs.23,261 and Rs.21,155 respectively, were made for the purchase of seed. But crops sown with this help failed. Total taqavi advanced by the Government was of Rs.28,04,753 332.

No remissions of revenue demand were granted in the Punjab. However, the total suspensions of revenue made in the Punjab for

the Kharif of 1899 and rabi of 1900 amounted to Rs.47,297 of which Hissar, Rohtak and Gurgaon got the maximum share. 333

Besides, the Government of India authorised the Punjab Government to utilize forests produce for the preservation of agricultural stock in the years of drought, but the Government was asked to see "that the amount of loss should not exceed the indirect gain likely to result from this particular form of relief, and that before such relief on a large scale is undertaken a careful estimate of its cost and of the addition which it is likely to make to other famine relief expenditure should be made" 334.

Since in Punjab, forests were too far away to get compressed hey except at a prohibitive price and no grass operations were started. The Lt. Governor had at one time planned to purchase bhussa, but the scheme was given up due to its high cost. Lopping of trees and permission to allow cattle to graze on Government lands were the only methods of relief adopted in the province 335. Besides, a grant of loans of Rs.40,000 was given to the Baluchis of Dera Ismail Khan district 336.

To facilitate disposal of Jewellery a concession was specially allowed by the Supreme Government for the famine districts that coins defaced by having been used as ornaments but not

333. Ibid., Para 27, p. 11.
334. Famine Progs., No.18, February, 1900; Circular No.13-67-2, from T.W. Holderness, Secretary to the G.O.I., to all Governments of Provinces, Simla, 4th October, 1899.
materially reduced in weight, should be received by Treasury Offices at 15 annas for a rupee and 7½ annas for a half rupee

For the relief of the charitable public the provincial committee of the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund was revived and at a public meeting held at Lawrence Hall, Lahore, on 25th December, 1899, an executive committee was elected which appointed Mr. D.P. Masson, C.I.E. as Chairman and Messrs E.B. Francis, C.S. retired and M.L. Waring, C.S. as Joint Secretaries. Its business was to arrange for the collection and distribution of subscriptions. In January, 1900, a general letter was sent by the Executive Committee to all Deputy Commissioners asking them to consider the desirability of forming Local Committees. The District Committees were formed and the Punjab Famine Relief Fund Committee collected Rs. 2,68,793. The Central Committee of the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund allotted to the Punjab Rs. 11,25,000 and Rs. 1,30,000 for the Native States of the Punjab. The money collected was spent on the following objects: (1) Provision of food and clothing for the weak by way of supplement to the minimum Relief afforded by Government, (2) maintenance of orphans, (3) relief to the respectable poor, (4) restoration of the destitutes, and (5) relief to wanderers from Rajputana. The Committee spent Rs. 12,57,822 on these objects in different districts of the Punjab

The total expenditure of the Punjab Government on the

338. Report of the Central Executive Committee, Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund, 1900, pp. 73-78. It spent Rs. 20,797 under object I, Rs. 20,878 on object II, Rs. 91,529 on object III, Rs. 11,08,407 on object IV, Rs. 4,651 on object V.
famine relief came out to be Rs.7,161,084. Besides, the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Committee, Punjab Branch expended Rs.12,57,822. Loss of revenue to the Government in the form of suspensions amounted to Rs.47,50,297.

However, these measures were not entirely free from shortcomings. First of all relief works were discontinued in the Gurgaon district for three weeks, which must have caused great hardships to the suffering poor. Secondly, the entry to these works was very difficult and restricted. Thirdly, all the works were stopped immediately after the rainfall compelling people to leave the works. Besides, wages given at relief works were extremely low. Village works were not utilized to any great extent in this famine nor they were mapped out in advance. Lack of adequate establishment hampered relief administration in many parts and the famine commission of 1901 was struck by the "little use made of non-official agencies in every province".

The wages given at poor-houses were low as the Government tried to cut down because of its opinion that "enormous scale of wages would turn India into one enormous poor house and shall fatally demoralise the people". The arrangements for hutting were unsatisfactory, the huts being too small and flimsy to hold the occupants with comfort and individual seekers of relief could not obtain admission to them sometimes for two or three days.

339. The total expenditure on different forms was:
- One On relief works ... Rs.37,00,159
- On Gratuitous relief ... Rs.6,56,177
- On Taqavi loans ... Rs.28,04,753

340. FCR, 1901, Para 34.
Advances were not given at the early stage of the distress and could not prove to be of any effective help. The sums advanced under Act XIX of 1883 were small in proportion to the need, and more than half of the total sums were given in only one district namely Hissar. The rules for the repayment of advances were in many cases such that the poor classes could not take advantage of them. The Central Government decided not to grant loans in 1899 purchasing seed for the rabi crop, fearing that if sowed, would not germinate. This decision was very unfortunate. It resulted in severing suffering of the cultivators. Much of utility, therefore, lost due to delay in making advances.

Commenting upon it, *The Taj-ul-Akhbar* wrote, “that quite a number of deserving Zamindars had not been able to obtain taqavi advances to buy seed... That it was for better and easier to borrow from a Shahukar than obtain loans from Government by bribing its officials. That the imposition of the condition that taqavi advances should be made only to those agriculturists whom their lamberdars recommended was a mistake and entailed great inconvenience to the Zamindars, on those who, might have incurred the displeasure of the functionaries named”.

The people suffered in granting suspensions of revenue because of the apathy of the officers and delay in implementation of orders. Considering the seriousness of the famine, the remissions were inadequate. While the relief provided was negativated due to the defects in administration. It was reported

345. *The Taj-ul-Akhbar* (Rawalpindi), dated 21st July, 1900; *SNNPP during the year 1900*.
that "the realization of the land revenue had been suspended only from those Zamindars who had greased the palms of their Patwaris, and rest were being pressed to pay Government dues" 347.

The Government, though, tried to import fodder from the Central Provinces, but failed to get any substantial quantities because the railways were unable to supply wagons for the purpose 348.

Among the Native States, relief works were started by the Patiala Darbar according to the Abstract Famine Code. But it was found by the Punjab Government that the Patiala Darbar did not take satisfactory measures of famine relief in the Narnaul and Kanaudh tracts where famine was severely felt, and such a negligence on the part of Darbar was said to be "owing to the absence of vigorous direction, personal interest and sustained effort" 349.

On 2nd May, 1900, the Lt.Governor of Punjab addressed a strong representation to the Darbar. He remarked that, "the British Government was not less regardful of the lives of the subjects of the Patiala State than of its own, and that the time had evidently come, if it was not already too late, for a vigorous systems of relief to be started in the Narnaul and Kanaudh

347. The Chaudhvin Sadi (Rawalpindi), dated 1st February, 1900; SNNPP during the year 1900.

348. According to Nash, "the fault lies partly with the Govt. (of C.P.) who began by demanding an absurdly high prices for the fodder, partly with railway companies which either cannot or will not supply the rolling stock and in any case, find the transport of grain more profitable than that of the pressed fodder, Nash Vaughan, The Great Famine, op. cit., p. 165.

parganas with a view to averting serious mortality. He expressed his readiness to depute an experienced British Officer who would, under the orders of the Commissioner of Delhi, advise the Darbar officials as to the steps which were necessary at that crisis. The Patiala Darbar declined the offer of the Punjab Government. The State Government, however, appointed Mr. Rose, an Engineer, in the service of the State. Mr. Rose later informed the Punjab Government that the poor-houses had been ordered to open in Narnaul and Kanaudh, and that a road from Charkhi-Dadri railway station to Narnaul via Kanaudh had also been ordered. The Punjab Government sent Rs. one lakh to start this work. Mr. Rose and State Officers subordinate to him took vigorous relief measures. Two railway works Ludhiana-Dhuri-Jakhal and Rewari-Phulera Railways were started, on which 78,319 persons were employed from February to September, 1900. Gratuitous relief was provided and regular monthly reports were sent to the Punjab Government indicating facts and figures about the measures taken. The Lt. Governor got satisfactory evidence that a lakh of rupees had actually been remitted to Narnaul for expenditure on famine relief. As a result, the condition of the people of Narnaul and Kanaudh began to improve. Relief works were closed in September, but gratuitous relief to a certain number of persons was

351. Ibid., Para 9.
353. Foreign Deptt., Internal A, July, 1900, No. 78.
The total number of persons relieved gratuitously and in the kitchens were 61,287. The total expenditure on relief amounted to Rs.3,81,722. The land revenue was suspended to the amount of Rs.2,58,715, while Rs.2,02,008 were remitted in Mohindergarh. Thus, the keen interest taken by the Punjab Government in Patiala State led to a vigorous implementation of the relief schemes and saved the people.

The Nabha State, had an outlying piece of territory near Rewari which was traversed by the earth work of the Rewari-Phulera line. Relief afforded by the earth-work, supplemented by small works and gratuitous relief arranged for by the Raja of Nabha, was considered sufficient to protect the people from miseries of famine.

In Jind State, the Darbar took relief measures which consisted of relief works, poor-houses, distribution of grain, famine dispensaries, taqavi and relief to immigrants. The construction of Ludhiana-Dhuri-Jakhal railway gave much relief to the starving people in tahsil Sangrur. The Darbar sanctioned a sum of Rs.50,000 for famine relief of which Rs.15,000 were given to tahsil Jind, Rs.5,000 to Sangrur tahsil and Rs.30,000 to tahsil Dadri. In Jind, the main work started was the repair of roads leading to Ram Rai, Zafargadh and Julano. In Dadri, the town tank excavation continued till December.

355. Ibid., Vol.I, Para 73.
and metalling of roads of the town while in Samgrur, brick kiln
works, repair of road round the town, and a dhah excavation was
started. The relief works in tahsils Jind and Dadri were kept
open for about two months, during which the average daily number
of persons employed were 665 and 1,321 respectively. These numbers
were considered very small in comparison with the number of famine
stricken people, and it was thought proper to collect as many as
would work at Sangrur, furnishing them with provisions for the
journey, and set them to work on the construction of Dhuri-Jakhal
railway, 4,700 people were collected at Sangrur. The contracts for
ballast, etc. were taken up by the Nizam, and the famine affected
people employed on the railways and other works from the beginning
of September, 1899 to the end of January, 1901. A total number of
7,762 people were relieved on relief works which took Rs.40,292
as cost 359.

Poor-houses were opened at Sangrur and Dadri. The Sangrur
poor-house was started in 1899 and the Dadri in 1900. In Sangrur
the number of persons relieved were 2,476 from 29th September,1899
to December, 1900 and Rs.7,432 were spent; while in Dadri, 7,293
were relieved from February,1900 to September,1900 and Rs.13,672
were expended 360.

Boil gram(Baklian) were distributed in the evening among
the immigrants (who averaged 99 daily) passing through Sangrur

359. SG, Phulkian, op. cit., pp.299-300.
360. Ibid., p. 301.
town. Half a seer of wheat or gram per head was distributed daily among aged and infirm persons and women living in Parda from 16th December, 1899 to September, 1900, in which 1,684 persons were relieved with cost of Rs.2,245 361.

Two dispensaries were opened in the poor-houses from December, 1899 to November, 1900 362. Immigrants from Hissar, Delhi and Bikaner were also relieved. Tughav advances to the amount of Rs.1,58,172 were distributed in the three tahsils for the purpose of foodgrains, seedgrains, cattle and fodder. The total expenditure to the Darbar on famine relief was Rs.2,26,709 363.

Relief operations in the three small States of Pataudi, Dujana and Loharu were conducted under the close control and supervision of the Commissioner of Delhi. As the resources of these States were considerably reduced by the failure of crops, the Government of India on recommendation of the Punjab Government sanctioned a famine loan of Rs.1,50,000 for their chiefs at 4 per cent interest to be repaid within three years 364.

In Pataudi the famine relief measures were administered by the Nazim of the State, Khan Bahadur Ali Khan. The British Government lent a sum of Rs.20,000 to the State and with that help as well as with the sums saved by rigorous reduction of all possible expenses, the State was able to pay Rs.12,803 to the farmers for purchasing seeds and oxen; Rs.26,081 were suspended.

362. Ibid., P.302.
363. Ibid., pp.303-04.
364. Foreign Deptt., Internal A, March, 1900, No.43; Internal B, June, 1900, No.18; Internal B, June, 1900, No.10.
as the revenue demand. Relief works were carried on from the end of September, 1899 to the middle of July, 1900, while gratuitous relief was distributed up to the end of September, 1900. Relief works in Dujana State remained in progress from 23rd October, 1899 to 14th September, 1900, and gratuitous relief was continued till 28th September, 1900. But as the Nawab had no capable officer in his service, the work of famine relief was not done efficiently. Many people from the State migrated to Rohtak relief works. The Commissioner of Delhi urged the Nawab to distribute expenditious relief to the needy people, to make proper use of money advanced to him, to visit at once all the villages with his officials and take necessary measures, to be lenient in the revenue demand and to submit detailed report about every village.

The Nazim of Loharu started relief works and gratuitous relief was given from November, 1899 to September, 1900. Remissions and suspensions of land revenue amounted to Rs.20,000. The State spent Rs.43,000 on works, gratuitous and taqavi for seeds and bullocks.

The relief for immigrants was given in the Bahawalpur State. The total number of immigrants numbered 40,000 in 1899 of which able-bodied were employed on canals and others were admitted.


to poor-houses. The State bore the total cost of Rs.2.5 lakhs in providing relief to the immigrants.\footnote{368}

In Kapurthala State, the sufferers were relieved by the distribution of grain and Rs.1,323 were given as cash doles. Though, it was not found necessary to start relief works.\footnote{369}

In Faridkot State, relief works were started, several new buildings erected and a new road laid out. A total of the Rs.15,937 were distributed in wages to the labourers; and, in addition, a sum of Rs.6,122 was paid out to 18,551 starving hordes who flocked into Faridkot from the surrounding districts and States. The State granaries were thrown open and grain was sold at a cheap rate.\footnote{370}

The distress in the States of Malerkotla and Kalsia was not as severe as to start any relief works or to provide any sort of relief. However, in Malerkotla Ludhiana-Dhuri-Jakhal railway provided work.\footnote{371}

To sum up the discussion, the Punjab Famine of 1899-1900 affected 28 districts of the Punjab, of which Hissar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Karnal, Delhi, Ambala, Lahore, Shahpur, Gujrat, Jhelum, Ferozepure, Multan, Amritsar, Dera Ghazi Khan and parts of Bannu were badly affected. A large number of Native States including

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
  \item \footnote{368} I.G.O.I. Punjab, Vol.II, p.344; Progs., Rev. & Ag., Famine A, January, 1900, Nos. 69-87.
  \item \footnote{369} Ibid., Punjab, Vol. II, p.385.
  \item \footnote{370} SG, Faridkot, 1907, p. 45.
  \item \footnote{371} Rev. & Ag., Prog., Famine A, January, 1900; Nos.69-87; Letter No. 12285, dated Simla, 25th Sept., 1899, from L.W.Dane, Esq., Chief Secy., to the Govt. of Punjab, to the Secy., to G.O.I., Foreign Deptt.}

Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Faridkot, Kapurthala, Malerkotla, Kalai,
Bakawalpur, Pataudi, Dujana and Loharu were also severely affected. In was followed by a bubonic plague that caused great havoc among the impoverished people.

The famine was again the consequence of diverse factors. The effects of 1896-97 famine which exhausted the resources of the State were still fresh. The situation was aggravated by the continuous drain of foodgrains, especially of wheat, to Europe since the famine of 1896-97. As a result the prices of foodgrains rose very high and famine prevailed. The speculators extended the distress in surplus districts by hoarding stocks with them and caused artificial scarcity and consequently prices rose high. On such occasions immigrants from Rajputana rushed to the Punjab to further aggravate the problem. But the scarcity of fodder in this famine was greatly felt. Because the years of 1895 to 1899 were almost rainless except one in 1897-98. As a result the grass on rain-fed villages withered and fodder was scarce. As a result cattle mortality occurred on large scale.

The effects of famine as usual were the scarcity of high prices, rise in crime, migration, desertion of villages, abandoning and sale of children, breaking of social customs, cattle and human mortality, grain riots, conversion of children to Christianity and selling of women their virtues for the sake of bread. Similarly, the cultivators were compelled to mortgage their lands to start again their professions, and hence, increase in their poverty. This led to strained relations between the poor peasants
and the Shahukars. And a number of incidents occurred of the murders of the Shahukars in the villages of Punjab. Thus, famine widened the gulf between them. The plague measures followed by the Government to check its spread led to riots at many places and the people became irritable against the Government measures. As a result there developed a tendency to oppose the foreign ruling party's policies.

The relief measures taken were basically according to the Codes, but some modifications were made in the detail of administration of relief works. The Punjab Famine Relief Fund Committee played a very important role in saving the orphans and helping the poor destitutes. The Punjab Government also took keen interest in the famine administration of the Native States. It helped them financially as well as physically, as a result migration from Native States to British territory diminished and thousands of people were saved in the Native States of the timely help given by the States at the request of the Punjab Government.

However, there were some short-comings also. These were in regard to relief works, gratuitous relief, poor-houses, taqavi advances and suspensions of revenue demand. People complained that these measures were not adequate comparing the loss caused by famine. Moreover, the Government still did not take very keen interest in keeping accurate statistics in regard to famine administration. The callousness and apathy showed by the British officials further tarnished the measures taken by the Government. But despite these, the administration of relief during this famine marked some improvement, As for instance, more facilities were given to the people at work in the shape of clothes and blankets.
and special treatment was provided to the nursing mothers. Many of the private institutions did more active and extensive work. Government expenditure on relief was also much higher and undoubtedly, more lives were saved than would otherwise have been possible. Commenting upon the relief measures taken during this famine, The Tribune wrote, "There has never been a famine when the general mortality has been less, when distress has been more amply or swiftly relieved, or when the Government and its officers have given themselves with a more whole-hearted devotion to the saving of life and the service of the people."  

372. The Tribune, 23rd October, 1900, p.3.