PREFACE

The present study deals with economic policies of the British in the province of Punjab from 1849-1901. The British had always maintained good diplomatic relations with Maharaja Ranjit Singh. After the demise of the great Maharaja there was unstable political conditions in the Punjab. For ten years following Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s death, lack of proper leadership, inter-family feuds, politics of Dogra brothers and rebellion of Multan to name a few, contributed towards making the field clear for the British to annex Punjab. Following two Anglo-Sikh wars of 1845-46 and 1848-49, the Punjab was finally annexed by the British by the proclamation of 29th March 1849. The British took a number of measures and introduced several economic policies in the Punjab following the annexation to convince the people of the advantages of the British rule.

The economic history of the Punjab of the period from 1849 to 1901 is very important. Many books have been written on economic history of the Punjab. S.S. Thorburn’s Musalmans and Money-lenders in the Punjab is an authentic work for Thorburn was a Civil Servant and working as revenue officer of Western Dera Ismail Khan District. The work highlights the plight of agriculturists. The study is mainly concentrated on the agricultural indebtedness in the Punjab and dispossession of the Muslim peasantry by the non-agriculturist moneylenders. The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt by Malcom Lyall Darling concentrates on indebtedness in the Punjab caused by spending money on unproductive purposes. The Wealth and Welfare of the Punjab by H. Calvert provides valuable information on the various aspects of the economy of the Punjab. The Punjab Alienation of Land Bill 1900, a monograph by N.G. Barrier is the study of circumstances that led to the passing of Punjab Alienation of Land Bill into action in 1900. In the same line Agrarian Society of the Punjab (1849-1901), by Himadri Banerjee is a brilliant work on the agrarian structure of the Punjab followed by Mridula Mukherjee’s Colonizing Agriculture: The Myth of Punjab Exceptionalism a study of impact of commercialization of agriculture in the Punjab.

The present study attempts to covers the economic policies of the British in Punjab from 1849-1901. Reasons for the year 1849 to begin the study are obvious i.e. annexation of the province of the Punjab by the British, followed by policies introduced in the Punjab by East India Company and later on under the Crown. The reasons for the
year 1901 to end this study are implementation of the Land Alienation Act (1901) and formation of North West Frontier Province. What were the factors behind changes in agriculture sector and development of canal colonies? Why the concept of martial races was introduced and what was recruitment policy of the British in the Punjab? What was the British approach towards trade and manufacturing activities of the Punjab? What was the role of public works in economic prosperity of the Punjab? Why the problem of rural indebtedness emerged and what led to the passing of Land Alienation Act? are some of the hypothesis that are attempted to study in the following pages.

The present study is in the shape of eight chapters. **Chapter I** is historical background of the Punjab from 1839 to 1849. Before annexation of the Punjab in March 1849, the province had undergone most unfortunate phase in its history. The ten years (1839-1849) following the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh had affected the prosperity of the province. The unstable political conditions, the royal family feuds, the decline of the Khalsa Army and the conspiracies at the court all had damaged the cause of the Punjab. How this period of uncertainty had affected the economic conditions of the Punjab at the time of annexation have been the matter of concern in the first chapter.

**Chapter II** deals with policies introduced in the Punjab by the Board of Administration. Economic policies changed rapidly after annexation. The Board tried to convince the people that the British Government is for their welfare. The efforts were made to maintain peace and order in the province. The impact of the policies of the Board of Administration for the Punjab has been examined in this chapter.

**Chapter III** throws light on the agricultural policies in the Punjab from 1849-1901. The British made it compulsory that the land revenue was to be paid in cash. Before that for the assessment and collection of land revenue three methods namely *batai, Zabt* and *kankut* were employed. The agriculture was developed on scientific lines. The canal colonies were developed to provide better irrigation facilities to peasants. Before that the agriculture was dependent on the monsoon and rainfall. The development of agriculture and canal colonies in the Punjab has been discussed in the chapter.

**Chapter IV** focuses on the British army recruitment policy in the Punjab. The concept of martial races was introduced in the Punjab and it became a major ground of army recruitment for the British. It was the handsome pay which attracted the people of Punjab towards this profession. The salaries were remitted to their homes in the Punjab
by the soldiers which were further used to pay land revenue and to uplift the living standard. The British recruitment policies and its impact on the Punjab economy have been studied in this chapter.

Chapter V attempts to study trade and manufacturing activities in the Punjab during 1849-1901. The internal and external trade of the Punjab, the items of import and export, the manufacturing activities in the Punjab, the district wise items of manufacturing and its contribution to the Punjab economy, British attitude and their policies towards trade and manufacturing in the Punjab have been taken of in this chapter.

Chapter VI highlights the development of public works in the Punjab i.e. roads, railways, river navigation, post and telegraph. The development of roads and railways connected the small villages with cities of the Punjab which accelerated the growth of trade and commerce. The British economic interests have been studied with an eye to development of public works as well as promotion of trade.

Chapter VII deals with the rural indebtedness in the Punjab (1849-1901). The land revenue was to be paid in cash after annexation. The clever usurer encouraged borrowing in order to secure control of the production besides heavy mortality amongst cattle drove the cultivators to borrow from moneylenders. Land Alienation Act (Act XIII 1900) that became landmark in the history of the Punjab is the final point of this thesis. The sale of agricultural land to non-agricultural castes was the result of this factor. The plight of the agriculturists and the recommendations of the government have been studied in this chapter.

Chapter VIII highlights the economic policies in general followed by the British Government after the Revolt of 1857. The policy to achieve economic efficiency and efforts of the British for making the province self-sufficient have been studied in this chapter. However, due to paucity of source material one had to depend also on analysis given by some other economic historians.

Chapter IX in the form of conclusion sums up the findings in the previous eight chapters. It is followed by appendices, abbreviations used, a glossary (English translation of vernacular terms) and a detailed bibliography.

The study is based on Archival sources available at National Archives of India, New Delhi, Official Records, District Gazetteers, Punjab Administration Reports, Village
Surveys, Assessment Reports and Contemporary Records. Besides these, primary sources, a number of secondary sources including books, research articles, Ph.D. Theses and M. Phil. Dissertations have also been found useful for this study.

The present attempt is to study the British economic policies which were, however, guided by their own interests in the Punjab (1849-1901) and its impact on the people of the Punjab. The thesis focus on the British attitude towards the Punjab and their policies to convince the people of Punjab that the British rule was for their welfare. In the following pages it is deemed fit not to add issues like schools, dispensaries, hospitals taken as these were more for public benefit than for economic gains.

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