In the early Hindu period the land revenue was paid in kind, which was one sixth of the gross produce. In addition to this the government took the extra cesses from the peasants leaving with them only that much which might suffice their needs. During the Muslim rule (Sultanate period) the demand on land was increased to one half of the produce. During the reign of Akbar, a new land revenue assessment was


2. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 402. *Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh*, pp. 104--105. The author writes, "in the days of the old Hindu rajas, the state is said to have taken no more than one sixth of the gross produce, the theory being that on a division of the population into inhabitants of the country and inhabitants of the towns, one sixth of the food produced by the former was enough for the wants of the latter, as well as of the court and officials."

3. Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, Vol. I, Book III (Verses 347--348), p. 154. It is clear from Lalitaditya's instructions to his ministers that "Every care should be taken that there should not be left with the villagers more food supply than required for one year's consumption, nor more oxen than wanted for (the tillage of) their fields.

"Because if they should keep more wealth, they would become in a single year very formidable Demaras and strong enough to neglect the commands of the King."


5. *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, pp. 366--67 (Jarret), "According to the assessment of Kazi (Ali) the revenue was fixed at 30 lakhs, 63,050 kharwars, 11 traks, each kharwar being 3 man, 8 seers. Akbar shahi"... "The revenue fixed by Asaf Khan, was 30 lakhs, 79,443 kharwars of which 10 lakhs, 11,330 kharwars were in money."

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**ECONOMIC CONDITIONS—RURAL LIFE—STATE POLICY AND BEGAR**
introduced, the peasants were to be left with only nine months food and during the remaining three months they were asked to live on 'plentiful' fruits. The state realized three quarters of the gross produce which was later again slashed down to one half. This caused resentment among the agriculturists and there broke out disturbances in which a Mughal official named Qazi Ali was killed. Under these conditions Mohd Yar Khan refused to remain incharge of Kashmir. So Akbar, issued an order and brought all the cultivable land under the head Khalsa. Henceafter Kashmiri land-owners were entered in records as the tenants. The Pathans raised their share reducing the share of the peasants, whose rights were set aside and they were robbed of their production. During the Sikh rule, the state took a


7. Ibid., pp. 370-371; "As Mohd Yar Khan refused to remain incharge of Kashmir under the system of increased revenue, the country was made Khalsa". Bazaz, P. N. Kashmir in Crucible, p. 21.

8. The government share amounted to "fifty or sixty lakhs of small rupees about 330,000 sterlings..." Nawab Jabar collected in the last year of the Pathan rule "62 lakhs of small rupies equal to more than 400,000 sterlings". Vigne, Travels, Vol. II, pp. 118-119. Abdullah Khan, (1753), the first Afghan governor realised more than one crore rupees from the Kashmiris. Hasan, Tarikh, Vol. I, p. 652.
half share\(^9\) of kharif crop and in addition four traks\(^{10}\) per kharwar of sixteen traks, Rs. 1/9/- percent was added for the vegetables and such other things which were kept by the peasant without any assessment. The peasant had to pay other cesses too\(^{11}\). Out of the \textit{rabi} and \textit{kimti} crops, the cultivator had to pay, besides half-share, three traks per kharwar of 16 traks\(^{12}\), an extra cess which was taken both in cash and kind. Such an assessment brought about the economic degradation of the peasants who received no more than about fourteen kharwars out of the 100 for his own use\(^{13}\) as also for his time and labour\(^{14}\). William Moorcroft states that the tax-gatherer snatched 9/10ths of the peasants produce\(^{15}\). The peasants gained no profit from agriculture and had no interest in it\(^{16}\).

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10. Traki, invented by Afghans, was a kind of tax, continued by the Sikhs and Dogras. It was charged at different rates from time to time and also varied from locality to locality and sometimes it was raised to such an amount that the peasant was left only with \(1/3\)rd of the produce. Taylor, \textit{Diary}, \textit{op. cit.} p. 80.


12. Ibid.,


14. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 120.


When Gulab Singh took over Kashmir in 1846 A.D. it was believed that he would improve the economic conditions of the people by re-organising the taxation system and the revenue policy. He followed the Sikh procedure along with its corrupt practices. In the Valley the land tenure was that of "Ryotwari in Ruins", the peasants were holding the land as Hag-i-Assam or tenants at will. Gulab Singh himself was a great landlord as he had purchased Kashmir along with its people and in law he was the sole proprietor of all land in his new purchase. The peasants enjoyed the occupancy rights only so long as they paid the government dues and in the event of their failure to do, they could be ejected. The peasant was

19. Ibid.,
21. Saif-ud-Din, Roznamcha, Vol. III, dated Nov., 1, 1850, f. 142. The author relates an incident that Maharaja Gulab Singh, once, while moving about the land of Guru Baba, was met by a lady who said, "we are hereditary residents of Kashmir and we had built a pacc house. But a sepoys demolished the house saying that he would build a house for himself on the spot". The Maharaja replied, "the landowner is some-one else, the Nazim (Haim Ala) or the Hakim (Kotwals), any person who build a house, he is the owner of only material (stone, bricks, wood etc.) and not of the land".
22. James, Collet, A Trip to Kashmir, pp. 21-22.
Neve, E. F., Beyond the Pir Panjal, p. 57.
allowed to call nothing as his own, neither land and crops nor his own labour, he had not all those rights belonging to the peasantry in any other country, and he was driven like sheep before the sepoys. He did not enjoy the rights of sale or mortgage. The discrimination was made between the peasants of Kashmir and those of Jammu, the latter were treated mostly as owners of land and were honoured while those of Kashmir did not enjoy proprietary rights, which were granted to them by Maharaja Hari Singh during his reign (1925-47 A.D.). Thus the peasant in Kashmir was no better than an "agricultural machine" in possession neither of proprietary rights nor often occupancy rights. The village aristocracy

24. Ibid., See also Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh, p. 106.
26. Wingate, op. cit. p. 28; The author writes about Jammu that "The villages usually belong to proprietors whether jointly, or in district shares, and to these proprietors the cultivators pay a small share of the produce. The cultivators are hereditary." See also, Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh, p. 186.
comprised the Hindu landowners, while the Muslim peasants were "the toiling sons of the soil" who "had to pay such high taxes that economic crisis bordering on starvation became more or less a regular affair". Most of the peasants were landless "labourers working as serfs of the absentee landlords". The cultivation was decreasing, "the people were wretchedly poor, and in any other country their state would have been almost one of starvation and famine..." The people were taught that they were 'serfs' without any rights but with many disabilities. "Cashmere" was "one vast slave—worked plantation". Law and order had gone from bad to worse and no heed was paid

29. J. Karbel, Danger in Kashmir, pp. 13--14 and 210; See also Madan, Family and Kinship, p. 42., Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh, pp. 465--466, records the observations of Elmslie in respect of the total population of the Valley which as estimated then was 402,700 in which Hindus numbered 75,000. Amongst the total population Muslim Suni Jagirdars numbered 2, Shias 3 and Hindus 40; Please see also Bates, A Gazetteer of Kashmir, p. 30.

30. Bazaz, P. N. Kashmir in Crucible, p. 9; See also Afzal Beg On the Way to Golden Harvest, p. 5.


33. Younghusband, Kashmir, p. 176.

34. Luccullus, Kashmir Raj, pp. 18--22 (1868), Cit, Saraf, Kashmiris Fight For Freedom, pp. 255--256; The author has quoted a contemporary Newspaper, Indian Public Opinion, then published from North India, which reports... through-out the year, the villagers men, women and children are turned out each morning at the sound of a drum to work in gangs under alien task-masters, at a husbandry of which they are not to reap the benefits. When ripe, the crops of each village are stored in open air or granaries strictly guarded and when, after many weeks and even months delay, the whole produce of the country has been duly calculated and valued...
to the adulteration, black-marketing and inflation. In every part of the Valley plunder and loot was prevalent; the people were plundered by the contractors of revenue and the latter in their turn by the government in the form of "fines for misgovernment, misconduct and oppression." The peasants attributed their misery to the corrupt officials. Every official had a right to their property and labour. The position of the peasants was worse than that of the "Fiers Etat"—(rank) before the French Revolution. Such a tyrannical policy resulted in the negligence of the cultivation of land, the revenue could not be paid and the villagers moved from village to village to escape oppression.

**F.N. 34 Contd.** the grain is doled out in quantities just sufficient to keep life and soul together", to use the words of Colonel Markham.

35. Qamar-ud-Din, Roznamcha, Vol. XII, Dated 27 Feb., 1860, f. 23.

36. Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, p. 2; See also Lawrence, The India We Served, p. 128. The author writes that "in 1889 the Kashmir state was bankrupt. The rich land was left uncultivated, and the army was employed in forcing the villagers to plough and sow, and worse still, the soldiers came at harvest time, and when the share of the state had been seized and these men of war had helped themselves, there was very little grain to tide the unfortunate peasants over the cruel winter, when the snow lies deep and temperature falls below zero."

37. Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, p. 2; Lawrence has cited a passage from Hazlitt's Life of Napoleon Bonaparte, which gives a fair idea of peasantry before the settlement commenced, the passage is that "the peasants were over-worked, half-starved, treated with hard words and hard blows, subjected to unceasing exactions and every species of petty tyranny."

38. Ibid.
Under Maharaja Gulab Singh the demand of the government remained the same as one-half of the produce, plus extra-cesses.40 Although some relaxation was made with regard to the waste and newly cultivated lands, government share was reduced to a third or sometimes to fourth. In the kharif crops government share was again one-half in case of long cultivated lands and third to fourth share in case of newly cultivated lands.41 The government share was collected mostly in kind at the end of the both the harvests (kharif and mabi).42 This ancient custom of collecting revenue in kind was "most

39. Taylor, R.C. Diary, June 28th to July 3rd, 1847, p.10. The author writes that "Kumkoot in well lands-- The crops are measured and appraised. The Government share is one-half, the Kum or estimate never exceeds the mance per beegah anything above that is the right of cultivator, but it is a heavy crop that exceeds the 5 maunds."

40. Ibid.,

41. Ibid., p. 24; The author writes that "The Government share is one-half of the produce in kind of long cultivated lands or where water is available, a third share in dry lands and a fourth for the space of four years in ground newly broken up."

42. R. Temple, Op. cit., June 19th, 1859; pp. 32--33. The author writes that he was told by the people "that the land-tax was assessed in money payments until the ravages of cholera in 1858, when the government could not adhere to them and was forced to accept the old payment, in kind, or on appraisement of crop, as a temporary measure." Saif-ud-Din Roznamcha, Vol. VII, dated Jan. 12, 1854, f. 17, The report says that the government fixed its revenue demand sometimes in cash and sometimes in kind while on other occasions in both cash and kind. See also Salig Ram, op. cit. pp. 225--226.

irksome unmanageable and expensive", and the term "shali" was sent to the state granaries. 44

Maharaja Gulab Singh appointed Punjabi staff in the revenue department 45, and it resulted in the resentment of the peasants without any effect on the Maharaja who met with a stern hand, the resistance of cultivators in order to save the state from the loss of revenue 46. Maharaja Gulab Singh also is said to have ordered Wazir Punnu to collect the land revenue on daily basis and the money thus collected amounted to ten to twelve thousand rupees 47. In 1851, Gulab Singh advised his son Mian Ranbir Singh to give better treatment to the peasants and to leave them with a reasonable portion of land produce 48. Even then it was settled in the tehsil Handwara that a cultivator would get 9½ traks out of two kharwars and the government share

44. Salig Ram, op. cit., p. 226; It required a "host of weighers to weigh it, porters, pack-ponies and boatmen to remove it from place to place" and "a train of storekeeper to take it in charge. Saif-ud-Din, Roznamcha, Vol. III, dated Jan., 27, 1854, f. 145; Gulab Singh turned certain mosques like Pathar Masjid into government granaries of shali, Saif-ud-Din, Roznamcha, Vol. VII, Dated May 1, 1854, f. 107.


47. Ibid., Dated 27 Dec., 1848, f. 17, Vol. IV, dated 31st Oct., 1851, ff. 9-29; See Appendix No: Revenue Statements from some parganas.

was fixed at one kharwar and five traks and the remaining one trak as the expenses of the secretarial staff\(^49\) (officials concerned with the revenue work). This showed that government received more than half the produce. On the whole seven-eights of the land produce reached the coffers of Gulab Singh.\(^50\)

As a result of such a high demand the cultivation was neglected and the peasants left their villages and abandoned the cultivation of lands.\(^51\) In order to get more and more land revenue Maharaja Gulab Singh made it compulsory for the cultivators and even shawl-weavers to plough the neighbouring barren, stony and

\(^49\) Ibid., dated Nov., 27, 1851, f. 125; The variation of \(\frac{1}{2}\) trak is due to some error in the Diary \(\text{[Newspaper, 1888]}\).

\(^50\) Ireland, John B. \textit{From Wall Street to Kashmir} (New York, 1858), pp. 396–398; Cit. Saraf, \textit{Kashmiris Fight For Freedom}, p. 239. The author relates that "The country is badly cultivated and almost depopulated by the tyranny that had existed for some years past. I have passed but one village today and that about two hours ago..."

"This evening p.... who has been here nearly a year on sick leave, has been reading extracts from his journal, incidents and matters. He has seen and heard from his friends who have seen or known about them. Among other matters, the avarice, oppression and cruelty of Goolaub Singh, who is admitted to be the wealthiest man in India, and which he has scattered all over the country for safety. Part is in a secret place in the fort at Jamoo, which was constructed a few years age, and to preserve the secret, the men who built it were destroyed."

\(^51\) Saif-ud-Din, \textit{Roznamche}, Vol. II, dated Jan. 14, 1849, f.23, Due to the official high-handedness the peasantry had everywhere nearly given up ploughing lands. So to avoid famine and loss of revenue, the Maharaja deputed sepoys to induce by force ploughing of fields by cultivators. The Thanadars were also ordered to persuade cultivators to plough lands.
hill-side areas and those who disobeyed were treated badly.\textsuperscript{52}

As a result, the agriculturists left their villages due to the scarcity of food.\textsuperscript{53} In 1852 A.D. the Valley of Kashmir was divided into seven divisions for the purposes of revenue administration and for inducing the peasants to cultivate the land,

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., dated February 1, 1849, f. 26; It has been recorded in the \textit{Roznamcha} that Maharaja Gulab Singh visited the area lying between Shalimar garden and Nishat garden which was full of hedges and stones. The area was entrusted to the neighbouring cultivators for tillage. However, these people jointly presented themselves before the Maharaja for justice. But in return sepoys were sent to enter a couple of villages and snatch away all their belongings in cash and kind and to sell their children to make up the government revenue.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., dated October 9, 1850. Vol. III f. 123; In October 1850, it was reported that some five hundred cultivators belonging to Shupian had left for Punjab compelled by scarcity of food.

Thompson, Dr. Thomas, \textit{Western Himalaya and Tibet}, p. 275. The author writes in 1852-53, that "Above Gond the Valley of the Sind is very poorly inhabited and deserted villages and abandoned cultivation showed that the population is diminishing...... a long continuance of mis-rule under a succession of Governors whose only interest it has been to extract as much revenue as possible from the unfortunate inhabitants having produced the only conceivable result, in abandoned cultivation and an impoverished people."
from morning to evening; a specified number of sepoys were also kept in each division according to its area for keeping the cultivators busy.\(^{54}\)

In 1854 A. D., these contractors of revenue were asked by the Maharaja to enhance the revenue demand and treakis,\(^{55}\) similarly the kardars of different parganahs were also advised

54. The divisions were as under:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parganahs held by</th>
<th>No. of Sepoy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Raja Kak Dhar</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Wazir Punnoo</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Wazir Zorawaroo</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mian Amir Singh</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Munshi Tralok Chand</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Colonel Beji Singh</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Janki Dass</td>
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</tbody>
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In 1854 A.D. Dewan Jawala Sahai submitted the following details of revenue fixed for Kamraj:

For Kharif:

1. Naqdi (cash) --- 1,00,000 Rs./-
2. Kind (jinsi) --- 1,50,000 kharwars of shalli.
3. Edible oil --- 12,000 Pajis
4. Wheat --- 4,000 kharwars

For Rabi:

25,000 in cash, and apart from this the Rajas and Jagirdars of Madipora had to pay 30,000 kharwars to the government and 35,000 kharwars for military personal of Shopra front. Saif-ud-Din, Roznamcha, Vol. VII, dated January 12, 1854, f. 17.

55. The following contractors were asked to pay the extra revenue as under:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contractor</th>
<th>Extra Revenue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lachman Pandit Dhar</td>
<td>10,000 kharwars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Raja Kak Dhar</td>
<td>15,000 kharwars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mian Amir Singh</td>
<td>12,000 kharwars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Munshi Tralok Chand</td>
<td>10,000 kharwars</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to collect the extra traks. These officers thus made extortionate demands on the peasants and presented the proceeds therefrom to the Maharaja which gave the latter a great pleasure.

No doubt, Maharaja Ranbir Singh (1857–1885 A.D.) tried to introduce some reforms in the revenue administration, but to no use, because the officials never co-operated in carrying out successfully the reforms but persisted in the maintenance of ancient abuses.

In 1859 A.D., the land was farmed out to the persons known as kardars, who arranged the cultivation of the estates. The Maharaja distributed the land to the cultivators on the basis

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56. Ibid., Vol. IX, dated 15 June, 1856, f. 75; dated July 2, 1856, f. 90. As such on 2 July 1856 A.D., Diwan Kanhaya presented to the Maharaja 9,000 rupees realized as extra demand, on 3 July, 1856 A.D., Col. Beji Singh presented 18,000 rupees as excess collections. Pandit Sahab Ram presented 12,000 rupees as excess collections.


58. Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh, p. 105. The author writes that "From time to time there, have been pretences of diminishing the share of the state, and even of setting the revenue on the basis of payments in cash; but the interests of the army of officials are so bound up with the maintenance of ancient abuses, that improvements are unmade almost as soon as made, the promises of future concessions are received by the peasants with a smile of incredulity."

of nafre (individuals) system. It was the duty of the kardars to collect the revenue from the cultivators with the help of Shagdar and Sazawals. It was under this system that revenue was collected from the peasants with the help of a military force "Nizamat Paltan". This system of revenue was completely unsatisfactory. In 1865 A. D. the extra traks per kharwar were reduced for all Pandits and Prizadas to one trak. The state reduced its share to a little over one half in 1860 A.D. but this concession brought more harm than any good to the peasants. In 1869 A. D. the contract was directly entered into with the Mukadams or with the zamindars and only two extra traks

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60. Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, p. 402. Nafre was a unit which consisted of a man, his wife and one adult son. Under the Nafre title was given four acres of irrigated land. The Min-Nafre consisted of a man and his wife and Pao Nafre consisted of a bachelor and the land was distributed according to the system as four acres of irrigated land, two acres and one and a half acre respectively.


62. Ibid., Vol. XII, dated July 17, 1860; ff. 49--50.


64. Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, p. 403.

65. In Kashmir Zamindar is the name for a peasant or cultivator.
came to be levied instead of four. Another system came into force namely chaklabandi, under which agricultural lands were divided into chaklas (three to four villages forming one chakla) and was allotted on revenue contracts for three years. These chakladars robbed the peasant as well as the state. In 1873–74 A.D. the village contracts were divided into "assamiwar khewats" for three years. The revenue demand was paid either in cash or produce. The harvest of 1875 A.D. was a bad one and the state took two shares leaving only one with the cultivators and added two more traks per kharwar to the assessment besides an aggregate tax amounting to Rs. 9/2/- percent. When in 1877 A.D. the scarcity began, the contracts broke down and in 1880 A.D. a new assamiwar khewat was made which was based on the cash or kind collections of the previous years, known as cash settlement, though it was only in name a cash settlement and it depended on the higher authorities to decide yearly how much to take in kind.


68. "Assami" means cultivator and "Khewat", the account, so it refers to the cultivator's account. Lawrence, The Valley p. 403; the author calls the system as the "raiyatwari settlement" because the state entered into contract with the peasants (raiyats).

and how much in cash. The system worked in a manner that an order was issued annually from Srinagar for the collection of a certain quantity of "shall" and the demand was fixed at 20 to 30 percent in excess of what there was the likelihood of getting. Each tehsildar was then informed of the amount named from head-quarters with an addition in kharwar. As soon as the villagers learnt that they had to pay its khewat in large proportion of "shall," the bribery began, which resulted in crushing the poor villagers and enriching the well-to-do. The incharge official would enforce the settlement on the peasants by cheating them and would be proud of results of the assessment which he laid in paper before the higher authorities. The assessment was based on the famine years of 1877-79 and the

70. Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, p. 403.

71. Wingate, op. cit. p. 23.

72. Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, p. 404. Wingate, Op. cit., p. 22. The author writes about the settlement which differed from paper to practice that, "It is, therefore, a good village to show that what on paper may appear a crushing assessment is in reality not an unfair one. To take half the gross produce, to add 4 traks per kharwar for foodgrains, and so take 3/5th's of the bulk of the gross produce, to add 57 percent. Under the names of taxes of all kinds, and to exact besides payment for fruit, honey, oil, ought when the claims of village servants and rapacious officials have been satisfied from the attenuated balance, to leave the cultivators with literary nothing. Yet this village is very comfortably off, and pays the demand in full pretty easily."
actual collection of the previous years were below the average because of the famine. It was oppressive in those villages which were not left by the people during the famine and was easy on those villages which were left by the people, re-inhabited by those who came back. After the good harvests of 1881 and 1882 A.D. the settlement was thought to have been for easy and was raised by Rs. 1/9/- percent from 1881 to 1884 A.D. the khewat was gradually everywhere wound up.

In 1882 A.D. a new experiment of revenue 'Izad Boli' (auctioning villages) was brought into force. Under this system the villages were auctioned to the highest bidder among the Pandit contractors after the fields were examined by 'Nazardia or eye survey.' These bidders would bid for the villages without

74. Ibid., p. 25.
75. Wingate, op. cit. pp. 19—20; The author writes that "the chief items of the increase being Rs. 6--13--0 for a poney-tax, which might be paid in ponies instead of money and in place of the Rs. 1-9-0 percent, formerly levied for fodder, the cultivators were required to give five kurus of rice-straw per 100 threshed. This settlement included all cesses except the tembol and nazarana."
76. Wingate, op. cit. p. 25; Jallali, J.L. Economics of Foodgrains in Kashmir, pp. 43-44; The author while commenting on the settlement writes that this "settlement was a double-edged sword invented to retard the progress of the times."
taking into consideration the capacity of the villages\textsuperscript{78} to pay the amount of the bidder. Even during the bad harvests the bidders would wring all they could out of the villagers and paid not a single rupee to the state. Even the sums offered at the time of auction could never be taken out of wretched villagers\textsuperscript{79}. As such both the cultivator and the official concerned became the bakidars (defaulters) of revenue to the state. The Bakidar or defaulter list comprised "nearly everyone in the state from the Prime—Minister downwards"\textsuperscript{80}.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{78} Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, p. 405. The author writes that "The auctioneers seem to have been men of some humour, for they laid great stress on the fact that certain villages possessed charming and shady plane trees, and that the cultivators were an extremely amenable people who would gladly pay the revenue to the highest bidder at the auction."
\item \textsuperscript{79} Heney's Report, op. cit. Cit. Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh, p. 109. The author writes that "the best thing for the cultivator to do is to steal and hide as much of the grain as he can "after the eye survey of the officials. Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, p. 405. This system resulted in the fleeing of the revenue officials at the time of the payment. "In one tehsil a group of eight villages had been managed by an influential headman who paid Rs. 5,500 per annum. At the auction sales an ignorant boatman bid Rs. 13,000 for these villages, but after one month's experience he absconded and these eight villages were saddled with a revenue of Rs. 13,000. Of course, this has never been paid, but what is worse, the original Rs. 5,500 had never been realized since the auction sale."
\item \textsuperscript{80} Heney's Report, op. cit. Cit. Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh, p. 109.
\end{itemize}
The bakidars existed before 1851 A.D. when Maharaja Gulab Singh ordered the remission of a certain portion of revenue arrears on the impoverished cultivators, even then the bakidars of revenue were severely punished with the grinding of corn, picking out of the beard hair by heir, arresting the relatives and even their women folk. The bakidars were


82. Saif-ud-Din, Roznamcha, Vol. V, dated Nov., 14, 1852, f. 113. The kardar of Shakur Shupian, Ganda Mai, was a bakidar of Rs. 14,000. He was seated in the Narsing-garh bazar, Srinagar, with the Ishtihar (Notification) flying over his head. He had to grind corn into flour on a heavy stone.

83. Ibid., Vol. V, dated Sept., 1, 1853, f. 95; We get many references with regard to the methods of torture on the Bakidars of revenue. Under this system one Ved Ram, agent of Bhai Hukum Singh, held for arrears, was ordered that his beard should be picked out hair by hair and then he was put into prison.

84. It was ordered in 1853 A. D. that Hindu Bakidars should be punished by arresting their women and children till they liquidated debts to the state. Saif-ud-Din, Roznamcha, Vol. VI, dated 21 January, 1853, f. 9.
chained\textsuperscript{85} exiled\textsuperscript{86} and even killed in the prison\textsuperscript{87}. Sometimes, owing to the severities imposed on these people, they were compelled to commit suicide\textsuperscript{88}.

The balances against the \textit{bakidars} were either paper-arrears or were mostly irrecoverable\textsuperscript{89}. The officials ruined the villages under the "\textit{Giriftari}" (to collect arrears); the tehsildar yearly decided how much should be collected on account of arrears\textsuperscript{90}. The "\textit{Izad Boli}" was abused by the system "\textit{Tukm musoda}" (seed grain in advance), it was the custom to allot to

\begin{itemize}
  \item An order was issued in March 1855 A.D. that the \textit{bakidars} who had not cleared up their balances from (S.1903) 1846 A.D. to (S. 1908), 1851 A.D. should be laced up and heavily chained in Shergarhdi fort. \textit{Saif-ud-Din, Roznamcha}, Vol. VIII, f. 33 dated March 7, 1855.
  \item The \textit{Bakidars} of revenue as Pandit Nidham Bhat, Pandit Tota Bhat and Pandit Bhawani koul and chasibri Arjan to Punjab and Reasi alongwith their families — young and old; \textit{Ibid.}, Vol. VII, dated Jan., 7, 1854, f. 10.
  \item Ibid., dated July 29, 1854, f. 175; The News reporter has recorded that Nidam Pandit Bhat of Rampore a \textit{bakider}, was killed in jail and cremated in the clothes he was wearing without showing the deadbody to his relatives. Then his wife and children were put into prison but released on public demand.
  \item \textit{Logan, Report}, op. cit., pp. 27—28, The author writes that due to the \textit{Azad Boli}. "The amount of land revenue in arrears at the end of Samvat 1947 (1891) is stated to be nearly 48 lakhs of rupees, equal to 3 years land revenue of Kashmir;"
  \item \textit{Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir}, p. 409.
\end{itemize}
each village a certain amount of grain for seed, but it was merely an "instrument of peculation." The grain never reached the cultivator but was distributed among the village headman, Patwarl and other officials. The value of the grain was listed as an arrear against the village. The system was further abused by regulating the system of enlisting the villages in 'Sakim-ul-hal' (in firm conditions), i.e. in any tehsil some villages were considered to be poor and unable to pay the revenue but in actual practice these had enough resources. Another aspect aggrevated by the system of Izad Boli was mujawaza (procurement), the system of annually setting the demand by the government in kind and in cash which became a "source of enormous profit to the officials, of great loss to the state and of misery and demoralization to the people".

Thus there was an absence of any settled land-revenue system; one system followed the other, each being more faulty than the previous one. The mode of collection was haphazard.

91. Ibid., p. 407.
92. Ibid., p. 408; The author has observed that "... this system, ruinous as it has been from a financial point of view, has been equally disastrous as a means of corrupting the people. An honest village which paid its revenue would soon lose heart when it saw its neighbours waxing fat under the designation of Sakim-ul-hal, while a straight forward and difficult endeavour to discharge its revenue liabilities met with very little encouragement on the part of the officials."
93. Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, p. 407. Younghusband, Kashmir, p. 177; The author writes that "the new assessment of the land revenue was three times as heavy as that of the amount demanded in the British districts of Punjab.
In Kashmir the crops were usually divided upon the ground in such a manner that both the ruler and the ruled were at the risk of loss. As a common practice the circles of villages were let out to the contractors who were assisted by a chain of officials. When the crops were ready there used to be a dispute as to whether the crops were such that the contractor could fulfil his engagements. So an official appraiser was appointed whose valuation depended on the extent of the bribes paid to him by the peasants. Then crops were cut and threshed, were stacked within an enclosure surrounded by a low hedge of thorny bushes, where they remained for months, in heaps, the peasant took his share and the grains reserved for the state were carried on ponies or in boats to the public granaries, where these were sold at low prices by the officers.

95. Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladak, p. 110; These officials were the Tarazudar (weighman), the Shakdar (watchman), the Sazawal (who controls shakdar), the Patwari (Accountant), the Mukaddam (the headman), the kardar (who arranges distribution of produce etc.), the tehsildar (incharge of pargana). The details about these officials have been discussed in chapter II, of the thesis, pp. 11-12.

96. Ibid., p. 11; See also Irland John, B., From Wall Street to Cashmere, pp. 396 to 398. Cit. Saraf, M. Y. Kashmiris Fight For Freedom, p. 240; The author writes about the system of collection of the crops that "After the grain is harvested, it must be stacked and remain, until the government assessors report and the king chooses to fix the rate of the tax. Sometimes it is two or three months. In the meanwhile the poor wretches, if they have none of the old crop left, are obliged to subsist on turnips (almost the only vegetable) and herbs."
When the crops were ready the government put its own watch-dogs (Shaqdars) to keep the peasant away from his crops, and subjected him to severe penalties if he dared to use little crop for his use, or even if an animal ate a little of the stacked grains, the owner of that animal was punished severely. If the villagers could not satisfy the government demands they were deprived of their cattle and sheep by the tyrant officials as was seen in 1880. These officials used to plunder the peasants and embezzle the revenue due to the state.

97. Afzal Beg, "On the Way to Golden Harvest," pp. 28–29. The author writes that "there are cases when even the peasant after having visited his crop had his mouth searched lest he had a few grains hidden in the mouth. If it could be proved that he had even swallowed a few grains then no means of punishment were spared to humiliate him.

98. Ireland, John B., op. cit., The author has narrated the punishments meted out to these people that "A month or two since, an officer, in passing through the country, saw in one of the villages, three persons being punished because the donkey of one had broken loose and eaten from a stack of grain, and the other for taking a little from one of their own stacks before the stock had been assessed.

The first was punished by having his hands tied tightly together over a stick, and then hung on the branch, the blood was flowing from his nails. The other two were tied back to back, and each obliged to hold the other on his back for a certain number of hours, and if he allowed the man on his back to touch the ground, he was severely flogged.


100. Knight, E. F., Where Three Empires Meet, p. 62.
The cultivator had neither any right to his land nor to his crops while as the "Pandits and the city population had a right to be well-fed". The revenue system was such that whether the peasant "works much or little he is left with barely enough to get along on till next harvest". Thus the peasant was a machine to produce for the huge population of the city, which resulted in peasants fleeing from their villages leaving the share of the village to be paid by their neighbours who had more land in their hands than they could cultivate—who were the worst sufferers for they had to pay the revenue. The

101. Wingate, op. cit. p. 26, The Settlement Officer has noticed that "The ignorant Mohammadan cultivator has not only no one he can call friend, but every-one whether Hindu, or Mohammadan, of any influence is against him, for cheap bread by the sweat of the cultivator's brow is a benefit widely appreciated. The Mohammadan cultivator is compelled to grow shali, and in many years to part with it below the proper market rate, that the city may be content. If the harvest is too little for both, the city must be supplied and is supplied by force that may be necessary and the cultivator and his children must go without. This is the explanation of the angry discontent that filled the Valley during the famine."

102. Ibid., Robert Lord of Kandhar, Forty—One Years in India, pp. 40—41; The author writes that "the Mohammadan inhabitants were being ground down by Hindu rulers, who seized all their earnings, leaving them barely sufficient to keep body and soul together. What interest could such people have in cultivating their land, or doing any work beyond what was necessary to mere existence? However, hord they might labour, their efforts would benefit, neither themselves nor their children, and so their only thought was to get through life with as little exertion as possible."

103. Knight, E. F. Where Three Empires Meet, p. 74.
land had gone out of cultivation in about 252 (two hundred fifty two) villages, thus as a result the occupancy hereditary rights were very few as the villagers who fail in one tehsil they betake themselves to another. While considering the existing revenue system, "one wonders that any village should have remained honest in the midst of so much corruption, and wonders too, not that the land revenue rapidly decreased, but that any revenue should have found its way to the state treasury."

Exactions:

The Valley had been subjected to exactions since the time of foreign aggressions. The Mughal exactions were limited but the brutal Afghan Governors exacted as much money from the Kashmiris as they could. The Sikh rule was no better, Ranjit Singh's most concern was with money, no matter, how it was collected as the Governors extorted as much as possible and if they failed to deliver the required sum, they were dismissed and forced to

104. Wingate, op. cit. p. 31.

105. Ibid., p. 27; The author says that "In a highly fertile Valley to find the peasantry roving from village to village is a clear sign that the administration is faulty. This constant search for a rest never found, leads to two things, first, that much valuable land is annually thrown out of cultivation, and secondly that the people endeavour to shelter themselves behind any influential name."

106. Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, p. 409.
people of every profession, even the tailors and barbers were severely taxed. The system of exactions and taxation of the pre-dogra period was not only maintained but also broadened in many ways during the period under study. Maharaja Gulab Singh had a vast field to make the exactions from because he seemed to consider his purchase of Kashmir as a financial investment, so he was determined to wring rich profits from it. He had an immense greed for money. It is no wonder, when the central authority looked only for money, the Governors were the robbers who lived on the labour of the people. The officers were allowed without any restraint to collect the normal tax plus extortionate pay the money in arrears out of their own pockets. The


108. Ganeshi Lal, op. cit., p. 35; The writer points out that the Government received 24,30,000 Hari Singhi rupees from Kashmir. Hugel, Baron C., op. cit. p. 146; The author writes about the oppression exercised on the Nach girls, "These poor creatures are doomed to a hard fate, they are not allowed either to sing or dance without permission and if they get this, an officer of the government always accompanies them, who grasps whatever they receive." Though tailors and barbers were exempted from taxation, but Wazir Pannu asked them to pay the taxes. Saif-ud-Din, Roznamcha, Vol. IV, dated Jan. 25, 1851, f. 11.

amounts by fleecing the people. Maharaja Gulab Singh used a hundred arts in the extortion of money and also opened the new doors of tyranny.

Maharaja Gulab Singh indeed inaugurated a rapacious economic programme and everything was taxed heavily, every product and every person also. In the first instance he confiscated the muafi lands (tax-free) of Hindu and Muslim priests which enabled the government to collect additional two hundred thousand kharwars of grain per year. The government made each product a monopoly and then farmed out that monopoly to a contractor. Rice was practically in the hands of

111. Mirjanpuri, Mohammad Khalil, Tarikh-i-Kashmir, p. 331 (FMS).
113. Mirjanpuri, Tarikh-i-Kashmir, p. 331.
114. Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, p. 417. The author has quoted Cif. Dr. Johnson's definition of Excise, "A hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged not by the common judges of property, but wretches hired by those to whom excise is paid."
government, silk, saffron, tea, salt, koth, paper, tobacco, brick king, the lacquered works such as pen-cases, toilet boxes, and (aromatic root of saussurea) Chob-i-kot, violets, various kinds of forest products, hemp, water-nuts all these, formed the government monopoly. The result of such monopolies was that "every villager" was "his own shopkeeper."

The peasant had to pay two kinds of revenues, the legitimate one known as koul and the illegal known as Rasum. Rasum was the perquisites enjoyed by the officials who kept a list of the items falling under the head. Everything was taxed.

115. Taylor, R.C., Diary, June 28th to July 3rd, 1847, p. 75.

116. Cunningham, Captain, A., Cit. Saraf, Kashmiris Fight For Freedom, p. 249—250; Cunningham sent a memo to the Resident about the conditions of Kashmir and writes that "The saffron was cultivated by the Maharaja himself, and I found the saffron fields of Pampur carefully watched by chupraris from the Government Thanahs. It is even said, but I confess that I cannot credit it, that the soldiers have once been employed to pick the saffron crops."


118. Cunningham, Captain, A., op. cit. p. 249—250; The author writes that "During my stay in Kashmir, I observed on several occasions that the Maharaja, Gulab Singh, had, either directly or indirectly, a complete monopoly of all the chief products of the country... Even walnuts did not escape him, as I found a house filled with them at Gangangir on the Sindh river which was closed up under the Maharaja's seal. The lacquered work such as pen-cases, toilet boxes etc., was also partly monopolized as I purchased one dozen of the former and a few of the latter from the Maharaja's agents."

119. Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, p. 390.

120. Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, pp. 415—417, Appendix NO: Table of Koul and Rasum.
except "air and water", which was in abundance in the Valley and could not be brought under taxation. The Maharaja doubled the price of shali (unhusked rice) from one to two rupees per kharwar, which resulted in hoarding and black-marketing and the common scarcity of food. The cultivators had to pay for every hundred kharwars of shali a permit tax for importing it to Srinagar. In addition to the land revenue the peasants had to pay treki which was advanced by degree till it

122. Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, p. 417. See also, Indian Public Opinion Cit. Lucullus, Kashmir Raj, pp. 18 to 12, quoted, Seraf, Kashmiris Fight For Freedom, p. 257. The paper, in its issue of the 23rd Nov., 1866, has written that "who that has visited the beautiful vale of Cashmere has not heard of the extortionate exactions, the grinding tyranny and oppression, of the enormous revenues under the name of customs and other dues literally "screwed out" of the inhabitants of the Valley by the Maharaja's myrmidons?"

122. Khaniyari, Wajiz-ut-Tawarikh, f. 59;

123. Saif-ud-Din, Roznamcha, Vol. I, dated Dec., 2, 1848, f.98. Vol. II, dated Feb., 16, 1849, ff. 2--3; Vol. VIII dated March 12, Vol. IV, dated Nov., 1 and 7, 1851, ff. 114,117, April 5, June 28, 1856, ff. 35,39,73; In 1851 Maharaja Gulab Singh visited the Valley and was welcomed with the cries for food, when Gulab Singh enquired into the matter he was told that the crying was due to the scarcity of food-grains. But to this the Maharaja replied that the food that was cooked in the royal kitchen came from Jammu while as all the food-stuffs grown in the Valley were consumed by the people in the city so they were crying uselessly.

reached three-eights of the tenant's share. The annual tax on singharas (water-chestnuts) was raised from fourteen thousand to a hundred thousand rupees and thus these assessments along with the land taxes raised the government annual revenue from about thirty-five lakhs to over forty-six lakhs of rupees. Thus the peasants had to live by the grace of God because their conditions were completely deteriorating. Each house in the village had to pay four to twenty annas as a cess.

The right to legalise the marriages was farmed out and even the dead could never be buried except by the licenced and privileged grave-diggers. The duties were also levied on the

125. Girdlestone, Memorandum on Kashmir, p. 34; Cit. Saraf, Kashmiris Fight for Freedom, p. 281.


127. It also included the devaluation of the rupee by 25% Khaniyari, Wajiz-ut-Tawarikh, f. 59.


129. Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh, p. 113; Robert Thorp, Kashmir Misgovernment, op. cit., p. 55. This tax was called Russudart and levied according to the number of inmates of a house hold.

130. Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, p. 417; Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh, p. 113; Saif-ud-Din, Roznamcha, Vol. IV, dated May 1, 1851, f. 20.
dried cow-dung\textsuperscript{131} used as fuel. The peasants were also charged duties as temple tax for the maintenance of a charitable kitchen in the name of Gadadharji temple\textsuperscript{132}, at the same time we get a reference to the imposition of some cess on the Hindu temples\textsuperscript{133}. The social evils like gambling and prostitutions were not only encouraged but also fastened as it yielded a large amount to the government\textsuperscript{134}. The social ceremonies were also taxed\textsuperscript{135}.

\textsuperscript{131} Saif-ud-Din, Roznemcha, Vol. II, dated Feb., 16, 1849, f.5.

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., dated Dec., 1, 1848, f. 6; The temple tax for the construction of the temple Gadadharji, opposite Sharghadi palace, was already there but it was enhanced for running the free kitchen to feed the poor. It was collected from the Valley as well as Ladakh, hill regions and Gilgit and brought about twelve thousand rupees annually to the government.

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid.,

\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., f. 5 and 7, Vol. X, dated Feb., 17, 1857, f. 33, dated Feb., 15, 1857, f. 32; We get reference to Kalal Khana (Department of wines) which was a social evil and encouraged by the government like prostitutions, gambling, preparation and sale of wines. Though at a later stage the prohibition of wines was ordered and the tax on it was also cancelled. Vol. X, dated March 9, 1857, f. 47; People sold their daughters to the prostitutions prostitution at Amira Kadal and had to pay the more than half the amount to the Government Adalati and kotwal to legalise the transaction. Vol. IV, dated March 9, 1851, f. 26.

\textsuperscript{135} Saif-ud-Din, Roznemcha, Vol. II, dated Dec., 1, 1848, f.6. Under this head every Kashmiri, Hindu and Muslim, had to contribute at the rate of one rupee according to their social position, on marriage and other festivals, and was called "Bhat Fund", for the improvement of the social conditions of the Bhat community belonging to Jammu.
Rasum-i-Khidmatgaran was a levy collected for the maintenance of the palace attendents, at the rate of four annas on one hundred rupees and four traks for a hundred traks (kind). Doll Jinsi was the tax imposed on the peasants as maintenance of sepoys regiments and collected as four additional traks on every hundred kharwars. Rasum-i-Deorhi, was collected from Thanadars, peasants, and other officials of the parganahs at the rate of two to three hundred rupees.

The government collected the oil forcibly from the people for the purpose of burning lamps in the palace, government offices and in the main streets. It was in 1848 A.D. that kitchen gardens were brought under taxation when Sultan (Sula) Pahalwan

138. Ibid., Vol. II, dated Dec., 1, 1848, f. 3.
139. Ibid., f. 6; It has been recorded that every oil dealer had to keep a kettle of specified measure which was to be filled with oil collected from every customer at the rate of 1 seer in the sale of a paji (six seers) (Each paji cost Rs. 1-8-0 in new Srinagari rupees on 1-4-0 annas in old Harisinghi rupee).

When Gulab Singh took charge of Kashmir in Nov., 1846, two types of silver coins were in circulation. That is Nanakshahi rupees which were to be minted at Lahore and Harisinghi rupees were minted at Srinagar from the times of Hari Singh Nalwa, the Sikh Governor of Kashmir. However, Gulab Singh introduced new silver coins which were called "Srinagari" rupees. They were inferior in quality to Harisinghi rupee. See also for details Chapter V of the thesis, pp. 368-369.
(the Muqadam of vegetable growers) offered to pay the government annually one thousand two hundred rupees (Rs. 1,200) more than the previous years demand if he was allowed to collect a levy from the vegetable gardens and he collected it at the rate of 4 annas from each kitchen garden known as Rasm-i-Sabzi. The barbarians, who were exempted from taxes traditionally, were now asked to pay the baj and khiraj—(rasums). Many private gardens growing apples, pears and walnuts were confiscated because these fruits had a great demand in Punjab. The fruits were taxed at the rate of %ths of the annual produce by the government. The animals of the village were equally taxed, every keeper of milk cow had to supply one seer of ghee yearly as tax or in cash, it was collected from ten to twenty rupees and then was sent to Jammu.


141. Ibid., Vol. II, dated Feb., 7, 1849, f. 27.

142. Ibid., Vol. IV, dated Sept., 1851, f. 88.


144. The contractors of Shunga, Kotwal, were harsh on the peasant who entered the private stables and took any animal they laid their hands on as a government tax. Saif-ud-Din, Roznamcha, Vol. I, dated Oct. 23, 1849, f. 3, Vol. XIII, dated Jan., 2, 1861, f. 2; It has been recorded that the peasants had to feed and keep certain state owned stack of sheep for winter and to return the lot plus one yar of puttoo per sheep in the next spring, and had to contribute one sheep on each batch of one hundred kept by them in addition to sheep tax.

145. Ibid., Vol. II, dated Feb., 1849, f. 43; Every person who was the owner of ten horses had to give one to the government as a tax and these were then put in Mistri-Khang.
Maharaja Ranbir Singh was no exception to this system.

Girdlestone has pointed out in 1871 A.D. that circumcision was taxed which brought in six hundred rupees (Rs. 600) as revenue, sale of chinar leaves brought rupees twenty-five and the tax on sheep and goat earned Rs. 1,07,311. Even the village scavenger had to give a specified number of skins to the government annually, whether or not any animal died in the village. The peasants sold their oxen and left the villages due to such harsh atrocities and over-exactions. Thus nothing escaped the 'argus' eyes of the government and its officials.

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146. Girdlestone, Memo, Cif. Saraf, Kashmiri Fight For Freedom, p. 281; See Appendix Nos:--
A. List of Cesses on peasants in 1850 A.D.
B. List of Cesses and taxes in 1862.
C. Revenue receipts of 1871-72.

147. Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, p. 418.

Vol. XI, dated 5 March, 1858, ff. 36--38.

149. Indian Public Opinion. 23rd Nov., 1866, op. cit., It has been recorded that "Not only is the entire land produce most heavily taxed, but the people also. If we are to believe the accounts we receive, betrothals, marriages, births, deaths, Mohammedan religious ceremonies, agriculture, manufactures, trades, professions, services, commerce, labour social customs, even the "Social evils", are all made to yield a revenue, and nothing escape the Argus eye and vulture properties of the Cashmere Government and its officials" Vigne, Travels, op. cit. Vol. I, p. 184.
Mrs. Henvey who was in Kashmir before 1851 writes in her book "Adventures of a lady" p. 121. "Everything appears to be heavily taxed in Kashmir and every person too—the artisan and the manufacturer too, the people are in a state of squalid poverty and the country swarms with beggars. There are an immense number of children and the land is prolific inspite of its poverty—perhaps as in Ireland, in consequence of it". Torrens, Travels, op. cit., p. 301.
Begar: (Forced Labour)

The most characteristic feature of Kashmir administration was the 'Kar-i-begar' or forced labour. It existed in the Valley due to its nature and absence of any proper roads. In ancient Kashmir, the system had existed under Samkara-varman and it was known as rudhabarodhi who used it for "fiscal extortion". Even during Kalhana's own times the carriage of loads under this system was "the harbinger of misery for the villages". A military expedition led by Jayasimha's (1128-1149 A.D.) Commander Dheya resulted in a victory at the "expense of human life and human sufferings". Kalhana refers to thirteen kinds of begar. The system continued under the Sultans, Mughals, Afghans, Sikhs and Dogras.

150. Kalhana, Rajatarangini, Vol. I, book V, (Verses 172-174), p. 209 and f.n. The author mentions that the King Samkara-varman fined those villagers who "did not turn up to carry their allotted loads, by the value of the latter at enhanced rates and the same fine was levied the following year a second time from the village as a whole."

151. Ibid., (verse 174).

152. The villagers were oppressed and forced to carry loads, Kalhana, op. cit. Book, VII, Vol. II (verse 2513), p. 197 and f.n.

153. Ibid., Book V, verse 174, p. 209. But in the absence of any historical data it is impossible to specify it. It had prevailed in the form of various requisitions on village produce. Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, p. 414. The author has mentioned that the other side of begar consisted of various "requisitions for village produce" which the officials received in the form of wood, grass, milk, poultry, grains and in free labour while building their houses or cultivating waste land. This type of begar has been called "Ahlkari Begar". Lawrence has also referred to three kinds of begar existing in 1892 A.D. in his letter to R.B. P. Suraj Koul, Revenue Member of the State Council dated 18-9-1892; See F/12/1892 (Pol. & Gen) Rules For Begar and Transport Arrangements.

154. Moorcroft, Travels, Vol. II, p. 294, writes about his passage through Dubjan that "some of the people accompanying
The curse of "begar" fell on the villagers owing to the absence of any labouring population in the Valley. The state had every right to call upon the villagers to perform the duty of "begar." The labouring class existed in the cities but the cities, and the non-Muslims were exempted from "begar," the cultivators working in jagirs, Dharmarth villages and the tenants working in the land grants of official (chakdars) were free from the fear of being taken to perform this duty. Any influential name (official) could protect the villagers from...

154 Cont. us were seized by our Sikhs as unpaid porters, and were not only driven along the road by a cord tying them together by the arms, but their legs were bound with ropes at night to prevent their escape.


156. Ibid., Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, p. 415. The author writes that "... the man liable to begar was an "out-law" without rights of any description, and begar was looked upon by the officials as an incident of servitude which entitled them to take all things, either labour or commodities free of payment, from the villagers. Such a system took all heart out of the people, and many villages, formerly famous for special kinds of rice or for fruits, rather than expose themselves to the constant exactions of the officials, took to cultivating more common kinds of rice and cut down their fruit trees.

157. Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, p. 412, writes about these exemptions as under "out of a total population of 814,241; 52,216 men are free because they are Hindus, 4,092 because they are Sikhs and 114,170 because they are Muslims residing in the city and the towns... At the very lowest computation, I should think, that, out of a total population of 814,241,350,000 persons are exempted from "begar" by rule, and that another 50,000 are exempt by favour. It follows that the incidence of "begar" falls with intense severity on the remaining 414,241.

158. Wingate, op. cit. p. 37, writes "I rode through a particularly nice village with a little bazaar and the women and children looking to the trained observer in many little ways better off than the average. I said this village is doing very well but was answered at once it belongs to so and so, mentioning a well-known official. No collie can be served in villages so protected."
it, and some even purchased exemption from 'begar' by bribing the tehsil authorities. So it were the villagers, especially the Muslim peasants who were the victims of the system, and it was regulated on firm basis during the Dogra rule when a number of military expeditions were undertaken towards Gilgit, Astor and other frontier territories, there was the necessity of providing the troops on the move and the military establishments in the conquered territories with adequate

159. Logan, Report, op. cit., p. 29.
 Knight, Where Three Empires Meet, pp. 68-70.
"Such being the horrors of the transport begar and the Gilgit road, though the worst, is not the only in the state on which the system is conducted with cruelty—men are naturally willing to pay a good deal to be exempt from it, and this, of course, gives our typical official an opportunity he is not likely to miss. Most of the begar has to be carried on in the summer months, when the passes are open, at the very season that the villagers are needed in their fields, the crops suffering from their absence. It is then that the grasping official swoops down on a district, and while raising the complement of men required by the state, levies black-mail from all the others. It has been calculated that for one man who is taken on this forced labour, ten purchase their immunity from the official, as much as one hundred rupees being paid in some instances. The village is thus impoverished and rendered incapable of paying share of revenue to the state."

All Hindoos were exempt from forced labour, the burden falling on Mohammedan villagers only. Some of these also escape it, for it occasionally happens that a whole village is sold by its cultivators for a nominal sum to some influential Hindoo, on condition that he obtains for them exemption from begaar, while they remain on the land as his tenants. So many others, more or less, fraudulent methods for attaining the same end are practised that the incidence of the begaar falls very oppressively on certain poor and unprotected village which cannot afford to purchase immunity.

supplies. Thus it was Gulab Singh who established a continuous line of supply for the troops in the above-mentioned territories through 'begaris', without any consideration to pay them for their shelter, food and dress. The 'begaris' carried the heavy loads in the months of autumn, in normal times, and at any time of the year, if the conditions in the frontier territories were disturbed. The method of conducting

161. Robert Thorp, Kashmir Misgovernment, op. cit. p. 73. Taylor, 28th June to 3rd July, 1847. Regarding Begar Taylor writes... "Raj Kak Dhar and Dewan Jawala Sahai came and said that the Maharaja's idea was to establish a certain number of men, say three in a large village and one in a small one; who would be considered as liable to begares, that they should receive one kharwar of grain per mensum and their rassu/sd when employed, that a man should be appointed to superintendent the begares of the whole country and the people be summoned by roll for the public service, that is the case of a man not having been called upon for begares in the course of the year, he was only to receive half the government allowance namely 6 kharwars instead of 12 if he had been once employed was to receive the whole.

Bamzai, A History of Kashmir, pp. 658—659; The author writes that the system of begar was reformed during the period under study. But it was rather fastened. Maharaja Gulab Singh collected one rupee as a coolie tax from each coolie and thus collected Rs. 1400/- by sending gifts to Lahore and Jammu. Saif-ud-Din, Roznamcha, Vol. III, dated March 1850, f. 34, He even despatched cotton to Jammu through these begaries. Ibid., f. 36.

162. Robert Thorp, op. cit. pp. 73-74. "... since the full amount that an ordinary man can carry is given to the zamindar, and since little or nothing can be purchased on the road, it is obvious that he must either eat part of his load or starve;"

the system was much more faulty. Each village per house had to furnish the quota of men and they were paid from 4 to 7 chilki rupees for the double journey by their kardars, which was rarely paid. These begar coolies carried also the money of the government to other parts as was the case of Hazara when on March 19, 1849 A.D., Gulab Singh sent sixty thousand rupees (Nanak Shahi) to meet any emergency in Hazara were also employed while repairing roads in the state. About 23,000 agriculturists were collected in 1851 before the month of April as begaris to carry rations and straighten road from Muzafarabad to Baramulla for British visitors— (Col. H. Lawrence accompanied by Sir Henry Elliot, Foreign Secretary and others). Gulab Singh

164. The system was worked out that "some one in Srinagar wants ten coolies or porters to carry his baggage for a stage or for one or more stages. The official to whom the requisition is made passes on the order of the district officer, and in order to make sure that there will be no deficiency in the number of coolies writes that twenty men are wanted" and this process of increasing the number continued till tehsildar ordered eighty men to be collected and the bribes started, the coolies purchased their exemption and required ten to twenty were sent to perform begar\(^1\). Lawrence, The Valley, pp. 412—413.

165. The kardar of a particular village sent them in charge of a Harkara to Bandipoor. There they received their loads with a memorandum, from a Hindu official, of the amount they carried and had to deliver it to the Governor of Astor and from him they brought a receipt to be presented to the official at Bandipora. The journey from Bandipora to Astor took the villagers twelve days and they had to return after staying for few days at Astor. So it took a villager no fewer than fifty days to complete his double journey. Robert Thorp, op. cit. p. 73 and f.n.


167. Ibid., Vol. IV, f. 21 and 40 dated 19 Feb., 1851.
encouraged begar and collected in hundreds and thousands
the agriculturists to perform this job 168

In 1851 A.D., about 30,000 persons were enlisted to
perform the job to Chilas 169 plus four hundred persons who were
caught from Jama Masjid while performing Friday prayers 170, even
the children were collected but some of them were subsequently
released 171. Many of the persons escaped in large numbers towards
Peshawar, Rajouri and Hill regions 172. The fields of those
agriculturists, remained unattended, who were sent with supplies
to Chilas. "Shali" produce was reduced by half which showed the
symptoms of the approaching famine. Immediately, there
was a great scarcity of food 173. The Kashmiri peasants were the
worst sufferers whenever any disturbance took place at Gilgit 174.

168. In 1850 A.D., four hundred begaris were collected and
sent to Gilgit (Vol. III, f. 73, August 1, 1850). In 1851
A.D. thousands of the agriculturists were caught to
perform the job. Saif-ud-Din, Vol. IV, f. 61, June 20, 1851.

169. See Appendix NO: X IV  Route to Chilas.


171. Ibid., f. 51, dated May 19, 1851.

172. Ibid., f. 77, dated August 4, 1851.

173. Ibid., Vol. IV f. 78, 84 dated August 7, Sept., 1, 1850.

174. "The country is a barren one, with lofty precipitous
mountain, narrow rocky gorges, swift glacier—borne
torrents, and only narrow strips of cultivation around
stone built villages. It is, nevertheless, of no small
political importance...". A Neve, The Tourists Guide
to Kashmir, Skardu, etc., p. 131. See also Appendix
NO: X V  Route to Gilgit.
which necessitated the presence of increased number of troops there. In 1853 A.D. Mian Ranbir Singh confessed in the open court that he collected two thousand coolies from peasants to carry rice to Gilgit (eight traks per man) and by 25th May, 1856, the *begar* coolies had carried 1,172 kharwars of rice and grain to Hazara and Bunji for transmission to Gilgit for the ensuing campaign. During the summer of 1866 an unusual number of troops was to be sent to Gilgit, so the peasants, boatmen and tradesmen were caught to carry their supplies and baggage, sent in a hurry without the slightest provision being made for their "lodgings, clothing or subsistence on the road" except one seer of rice for a day as their food and payment. A large number of them died on the occasion at the Gilgit Road, and the next batch was sent in the late autumn of 1866 with supplies on their backs but many of them died on the road due to cold and hunger. The authorities, however, continued sending the men-folk to a country through stony roads, which were covered with snow during winter season. The poor folk died enroute for want of good arrangements by the government.


177. Ibid., p. 75; Saif-ud-Din, Roznamcha, Vol. X, f. 352, dated 22nd Dec., 1859.
GROUP OF KASHIIRI PORTERS RESTING ON

MARCH.

Be moved from,

Lawrence, N.E., The Valley of Kashmir

Face, p. 383
Thus the name 'Gilgit' struck terror in the heart of a Kashmiri. It meant to him "forced labour, frost-bite on the lofty passes, and Valleys of death". When it was rumoured that *begaris* were to be sent to Gilgit the villagers left for hills to protect themselves from the ghastly Gilgit. The villagers were torn from their homes to die in the snow of Gilgit and to transport the fruits of their own labour to Gilgit. Inhuman punishments were dealt out to those who "demurred to leaving their homes for two or three months with the prospect of death from cold or starvation". It was a miracle if someone survived those routes and if any porter slipped down the precipice or fell ill, he was left to die by inches or as a prey to vultures.


179. "... the mere mention of Gilgit was sufficient to drive whole villages to the hills, there to hide for days on end, until they were convinced that the danger of being pressed into service had passed". Dermot Norris, "Kashmir—The Switzerland of India*, p. 94.

180. *Lawrence, The Valley*, p. 413. *A. Neve, Thirty Years in Kashmir*, p. 140. The author writes that "the *begar* coolies when ready to be despatched for Gilgit were seen with a blanket, spare grass-shoes, frame of sticks and rope in which to carry the load upon his back. A farewell service was held at a mosque for these poor creatures starting to the perilous journey. "Loud was the robbing of many, and fervid the demeanour of all as, led by mullah, they intened their prayers and chanted some of their special Ramzan penitential psalms. Even the braver men than the Kashmiris might well have been agitated at such a time, when taking farewell of their loved ones, who would till their fields? What would happen during their long absence to their wives and children? In what perils would they themselves be exposed in the crowded bivouacs and snowy passes of that deadly Gilgit district?"
and beasts, and the caravan moved on. Men died in large numbers along the road to Gilgit or Astor. While many others encouraged each other with the word of hope but it were only a few who survived, thinking of their loved ones. All these hardships were levied on the Muslim farmers who were the harmless subjects of the Maharaja.

181. Arthur Neve, Thirty Years in Kashmir, p. 60, writes about his passage through Rajdiangan Pass where "I heard pitiful tales of the plight of the poor coolies dragged from their homes in hundreds every year to carry supplies to the far-off garrison of Gilgit. And I could realize some of the difficulties, for the unmade track was not easy for well-equipped lightly laden men, how much less for the porters, who had to carry sixty pound load in addition to their own personal rations for twenty days, clothing and grass shoes.

182. Arthur Neve, Thirty Years in Kashmir, p. 140, writes that while crossing Astor in the early eighties his old servant pointed out to him the places where he had seen groups of camps "on the Kamri Pass one of the camps was called "Murda dafan" meaning the "burial ground", for some years previously an avalanche swept upon the party of soldiers camped there and buried them.


184. Knight, Where The Three Empires Meet, pp. 68--69.
The oppression through beargar on peasants was much more than the extortion of the tax collections which left a little subsistence allowance to them or left them to live on fruits and vegetables but this institution meant a separation for the villagers from their families and more than that caused them life-long torture and death. The absence of peasants from their fields during the sowing or ripening time, caused the agriculture to decline and scarcity became prevalent, which was a loss both to the cultivator and the government. However, in 1890–91 an opportunity was taken to minimize the impressment of beargar coolies, but its hardships on peasants were present even in 1913 when they were taken as beargar coolies to Phalgam.

184 Cont. as pitiable as respectable as any to be seen on the roads of Siberia. But these are not convicts and criminals; they are Mussulman farmers, harmless subjects of the Maharajah.

185. Ibid., pp. 67–68.

Knight, Where Three Empires Meet, p. 69.

187. Annual Administration Report of the J&K State for 1890–91 (S. 1947), p. 42; It has been related in the Report that beargar was minimized. But when a member of the State Council (Khan Bhadur, Ghulam Mohy-ud-Din) entertained the idea of abolishing the beargar system, Lawrence (Settlement Officer), in 1892 wrote in his letter to S-uraj Koul (Revenue Member of the State Council) that the time has not yet come in Kashmir when Beagar can be abolished.

188. F. 84/p. 86/1913.
The press wrote against it in 1920. The State Council passed a resolution (NO: XV, August 22, 1922) for its stoppage in 1923 A.D. but even in 1925–26 it was present in the frontier province.

190. F./68/Misc-73/1923.