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Landed Elite and Socio-Economic Developments in Shahpur District (1857-1914)

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Abstract

This research paper examines the impact of colonial rule on the Shahpur district (1857-1914). It also explores role of the landed elite of the Shahpur District in its socio-economic development. The colonial authorities served their interests by co-opting the rural elite, whose support was crucial for maintaining peace and order in the region. This reliance on informal alliance with the landed elite granted these elite considerable power and influence in Shahpur district. Shahpur district was largely agrarian, where land and cattle served as the primary source of livelihood. Environmental challenges and limited economic prospects contributed to the region's agricultural and economic backwardness. The government developed Jhelum Canal Colony in Shahpur District in order to reduce pressure of population in thickly populated eastern districts of the Punjab and to grow more food to meet requirement of the British Empire. Landed elite of Shahpur District contributed their share in development of Jhelum Canal Colony. The development of Jhelum canal colony converted Shahpur District into an advanced agricultural district. The government introduced a variety of new crops in the Punjab. Landed elite of the Shahpur District played a vital role in introducing new varieties of crops in the western areas of the Punjab.

Keywords: Socio-economic development, Shahpur District, Environmental challenges, Agricultural and economic, Punjab.



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Introduction

This paper particularly focuses on the transformation due to the modernization of agriculture, canals colonization and role of the landed elite of the Shahpur District in these changes. The paper also discusses the development of modern canal system and system of transportation. The development of canal colonies converted Shahpur District into an advanced agricultural district. The canal system started a new urbanization process in the districtⁱ and transformed its barren lands into fertile fields'.ⁱⁱ Landed elite of the Shahpur District played a vital role in introducing new varieties of crops in the district.ⁱⁱⁱ

Shahpur was a thickly populated district inhabited by various tribes and segments of society during the Colonial period. The British developed an elaborate administrative system to modernize the district and restructured the power dynamics in order to search for new allies among the rural elite. The prominent political families of the District Shahpur played a vital role in the local, provincial and national politics during Colonial period.^{iv} Among these families Tiwana, Noon, Piracha, Qureshi, Baloch, Nangayyana, and Awan were included. These families enjoyed a handsome share in the political power during different eras in history of the Punjab. The British Government bestowed upon them rewards in form of money, land and key-posts e.g. Zaildar and Village Head-Man.

Recognizing the challenge of administration, the colonial authorities sought the support of the landed elite. In exchange for loyalty, the colonial government granted these elite revenue-free lands. The socio-political power structure focused on these feudal lords, making it easier for the British to maintain control. In return, the landed elite expected the government to reward their loyalty.^v The British regarded the old landed elite as custodians of status quo.^{vi} The Sufi saints also played an influential role in society during this period. It was dishonorable for a man, not to have a Sufi saint (*murshid*) in one's social network.^{vii} Sufi saints frequently visited their followers (*murids*), who treated them with great reverence.^{viii} Popular religious and cultural fairs were held at the shrines of Sial Sharif, Bhera Sharif, and Dhudian Sharif, fostering social connections and stimulating economic activity. Festivals like Baisakhi and other fairs were also celebrated across the district, contributing to the district's cultural vibrancy.^{ix}

Theoretical Perspective

The research scholar has applied the concept of Elite Theory in this paper. Gaetano Mosca, an Italian political philosopher put forward the Elite Theory. He explained that a few influential persons hold power in a society. According to Gaetano Mosca, the elite class in every society is in minority yet has great influence, power and material sources to govern the affairs of the society openly and tacitly.^x

In District Shahpur landed aristocrats had extreme influence in rural areas. They had extraordinary power and prestige in social and political circles. They cooperated, the British authorities on different occasion. The Colonial government in return protected the interest of landed aristocrats and rewarded them land grants.^{xi} The Tiwana and the Noon families were leading landed aristocratic families in District Shahpur. The members of these political families were closely associated due to matrimonial alliances.^{xii} Other remarkable families of the District Shahpur during Colonial period were Nangiana, Ranjha and Qureshi. The members of these political families played a prominent role in socio-economic development of the district. Sahib Khan Tiwana, a big landlord of the Shahpur District played a conspicuous role in socio-economic development of the district by excavating private canals.^{xiii} The then Deputy Commissioner of the Shahpur District Mr. Quseley asked him to help the British in order to crush the freedom fighters.^{xiv} He assisted the

British forces with three hundred soldiers, all paid and maintained by him.^{xv} The Colonial Government rewarded him 15,000 acres of estate at Kalra in 1893. The members of the Noon tribe also played a vital role in suppressing the revolt of 1857. The landed aristocrats of the District Shahpur recruited soldiers in order to help the Colonial Government during World War I and World War II. These soldiers performed matchless services on different war fronts for the Allied Powers, particularly Great Britain.

The Colonial District Shahpur in 2nd half of the 19th Century

The government established Inns (*sarias*) and rest houses along the principal roads in Shahpur district during the second half of the 19th century. Most roads remained un-metaleed. Only the first six miles of the Shahpur-Gujrat road were metaleed. Key halting places with rest house facilities included Chak Ramdas, Miani, and Badshahpur. Another important route passed through Shahpur, connected Lahore to Derajat, while the Jhang-Shahpur road was also significant. By the end of the 19th century, a railway branch operated from Malakwal to Bhera, with proposals to extend it to Shahpur. However, the government often changed the scheme into the favor of other projects.^{xvi} Shahpur had a head post office and two sub-offices in Miani and Bhera, along with 21 branch offices throughout the district. Health facilities comprised six dispensaries located in Shahpur Sadar, Bhera, Sahiwal, Miani, Midh, and Kalra. The District Board maintained two dispensaries in Shahpur and Midh, while Umar Hayat Tiwana supported one in Kalra. The Health Department was under a Civil Surgeon. Educational facilities in Shahpur District included two high schools in Bhera by the end of the 19th century, one maintained by the Municipal Committee. Additionally, there were three middle schools in Miani, Sahiwal and Shahpur along with 18 primary schools for boys and six for girls in the district as of 1891.^{xvii}

Regular settlement operations began in Shahpur District in 1854, led by Mr. Richard Temple. However, Mr. Ouseley, completed the settlement in 1860. A revision of this settlement started in 1887 and completed in 1894 by Mr. J. Wilson. In the 19th century, Shahpur District had four municipalities. The district headquarters were located in Shahpur Town, which had a population of 6,337 according to the 1891 census. The town's founder was Shah Shams, a descendant of Sayed Sher Ali Shah, who accompanied Emperor Humayun when he returned from Persia to reclaim India. Annoyed by Emperor Akbar's proclamation of *Din-i-Ilahi*, Shah Shams left Delhi and settled in what is now Shahpur. His tomb is in Shahpur.^{xviii}

Owing to the town's proximity to the riverbed and vulnerability to floods, the government eventually relocated the district headquarters.^{xix} The district's notable buildings included the District Court-houses, Session-house, treasury, *tehsil* office and police office. Other important towns in the district were Bhera, Miani, and Sahiwal. The development of the Jhelum Canal Colony led to the emergence of new market towns, including Sargodha, Bhalwal, Sillanwali, and Phularwan.

Development of Patron-Client Relationship

The colonial administration deployed resources to gain the loyalty of the population and ensure their cooperation. Canal colonies were developed to reward the landed elite and secure their involvement in state affairs. The British authorities used the elite class as intermediaries between the colonial government and the rural masses. This strategy proved effective in maintaining control in the Punjab.^{xx} To strengthen their authority, the British appointed tribal leaders as *zaildars* in Punjab^{xxi}, selecting them primarily from influential clans. Occasionally, an ordinary man was elevated to the position of *zaildar*. Each *zail* comprised several villages, with multiple sub-castes and *biradaries* residing in each.^{xxii}

The landed elite played a pivotal role in suppressing the 1857 rebellion. As a reward for their loyalty, the British improved the socio-economic position of these elite by granting them land. The British relied heavily on these influential locals to maintain law and order and to oversee land revenue collection. The colonial authorities strategically secured the loyalty of the landed elite to bridge the gap between the government and the masses.^{xxiii}

During the second regular settlement, the British introduced the *Zaildari System*^{xxiv} to manage Punjab more effectively. The system sought to align *zail* boundaries with tribal divisions, but this proved challenging due to the mixed population.^{xxv} Magistrates and *zaildars* became crucial collaborators for the British in maintaining peace in the region. Village headmen collected revenue and assisted the government in upholding law and order.

Colonial Raj in 19th Century

The British Governor General formally announced the annexation of the Punjab during a meeting in Lahore on March 29, 1849.^{xxvi} The local population welcomed the religious freedom granted by the new rulers.^{xxvii} Punjab's annexation held both economic and political significance for the British.^{xxviii} The British developed close ties with local chieftains and the landed elite to consolidate their power. They endowed these leaders with magisterial powers in their respective regions.^{xxix} Rural areas of the Shahpur District relied heavily on agriculture,^{xxx} and prominent tribes such as the Tiwanas, Noons, Qureshis, Sials, and Ranjas owned much of the agricultural land.^{xxxi} These tribes intermarried and formed alliances in order to consolidate their influence further.^{xxxii} The British recognized the importance of the Punjabi landed elite and passed the Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1900 to protect their interests.^{xxxiii} This act prevented moneylenders from acquiring agricultural land and safeguarded the economic stability of landowners.^{xxxiv}

The members of Tiwana and Noon families were the leading landed elite in Shahpur District. Sahib Khan Tiwana owned the Kalra Estate, a village located on the bank of the Jhelum River. He constructed a canal in 1860 to irrigate his land. This successful venture led to the construction of numerous other private canals.^{xxxv} By the end of the 19th century, 16 private canals operated in the district. With the introduction of the regular canal system in the 20th century, these private canals were absorbed into the new infrastructure.

Private Canals of Shahpur District

In Shahpur District, the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Macnabb, constructed the first canal and named it after his name, the Macnabb *wah*. Other state canals included the Station Canal, Sahiwal Canal, and Rani *wah*. In 1870, the Imperial Government purchased the Station Canal and Sahiwal Canal for Rs. 20,610. In 1890, an engineer officer was appointed to oversee the maintenance and improvement of these canals. Captain E.C. Corbyn, the Deputy Commissioner, built the Rani *wah* Canal in 1870, which generated a net profit of over Rs. 380,000 over 23 years.^{xxxvi}

By the late 19th century, the Shahpur District had 16 private canals. The Noon and Tiwana families owned seven private canals in the district.^{xxxvii} These private canals played a crucial role in transforming the barren lands into fertile agricultural areas. Some notable canals and their irrigated areas included:

Table 1: Name of Canals with their Approximate irrigated area

Sr. No	River	Name of Canal	Approximate Area Irrigated (Acres)
1.	Chenab	Makhdumanwala	1000
2.	Chenab	Daimwala	200
3.	Chenab	Muhkamdinwala	300
4.	Jhelum	Piranwala	2400
5.	Jhelum	Amir Chandwala	100
6.	Jhelum	Noonanwala	5500
7.	Jhelum	Sultan Mahmudwala	6500
8.	Jhelum	Nabbewala	100
9.	Jhelum	Chaharumi	500
10.	Jhelum	Sahib Khanwala	12000
11.	Jhelum	Mekananwala	5000
12.	Jhelum	Chillwala	5500
13.	Jhelum	Sarfaraz Khanwala	4500
14.	Jhelum	Jhammatanwala	200
15.	Jhelum	Nathuwala	600
16.	Jhelum	Kandanwala	100

Source: Abdur Rasul, Sahibzada. *History of Sargodha* (Sargodha: University of Sargodha Publications Department, 2015), 186-187.

Sahib Khan Tiwana excavated three key canals to irrigate the estate land from the Jhelum River between 1870 and 1871. He received many benefits from these canals and controlled the irrigation system of the region. The British allowed him to sell the water of these canals to other farmers. In this way, he manipulated the situation and became water lord of the area. The success of these irrigation projects enhanced his position to continue economic dominance and social prestige in the district.^{xxxviii}

The Colonial administration constructed the Lower Jhelum Canal in 1900 in order to irrigate the barren areas of District Shahpur. Owing to their political influence, the members of Tiwana family maintained their private canals. Moreover, they did not allow small landowners of area to utilize the water from Jhelum Canal. These canals gave them monopoly on other people and farmers in this area. These private canals irrigated all the lands in Kalra Estate.

Members of Tiwana family also used wells for irrigating and cultivating the land. These wells, constructed with burnt bricks, supplied water for household use, livestock and agricultural activities. The members of Tiwana family also excavated wells in other estate areas in order to fulfill requirement of water. In this way, they used wells and private canals to irrigate the area of the Kalra Estate. The estate collected one fourth of the incomes as water rate.^{xxxix}

Khizr Hayat Tiwana, a successor of Sahib Khan Tiwana, expanded the irrigation infrastructure by initiating the Thal Development Authority (TDA) project. This large-scale project aimed to irrigate

the entire Khushab *tehsil* of Shahpur District and surrounding districts. The TDA project significantly increased agricultural productivity in the region.^{xi}

Colonial Raj in 20th Century

To promote agricultural development, the British initiated the construction of canal colonies, including the Lower Jhelum and Chenab Canal systems in the 1890s.^{xli} These projects irrigated large swathes of previously barren land, transforming the region into a significant agricultural hub.^{xlii} The Lower Jhelum and Chenab Canal System irrigated many thousand acres of the waste and infertile land of Shahpur District.^{xliii} The development of these irrigation systems demonstrated remarkable engineering prowess and reduced population pressures in densely populated districts. In the early 20th century, the British continued their efforts to modernize agriculture in Punjab through the development of canal colonies. Before British rule, vast stretches of land in West Punjab were barren and dependent on seasonal irrigation.^{xliv} The British restored and expanded canal systems, transforming these wastelands into productive agricultural regions. The irrigation canals of India were an excellent example of engineering expertise in earth and water management during the British rule.^{xlvi}

The introduction of perennial canal systems attracted settlers from other parts of Punjab, leading to significant demographic changes.^{xlvii} The canal irrigation system turned the region into a major agricultural hub, contributing to the economic prosperity of British India.^{xlviii} The British invested substantial resources in developing canal colonies, spending approximately five million pounds on canal construction in Punjab.^{xlix} The new colony towns and villages were located near railway lines, roads and markets, fostering economic growth.^l These settlements were more organized than traditional villages including wide streets, schools, hospitals, and pastoral lands.

Development of the Jhelum Canal Colony

The Lower Jhelum Canal, constructed in 1901, was a pivotal project that irrigated 743,000 acres in Shahpur District.¹ The government settled the Jhelum Colony^{li} with grantees during the years 1902-06. The construction of Lower Jhelum Canal began from the Rasul headworks. The canal transformed the *Chaj Doab* region between the Jhelum and Chenab Rivers. Col. Jawb, a well-experienced irrigation officer and Sir James Wilson, a prominent civil servant, showed great wisdom in completing the Triple Project.^{lii} Prior to this development, the region was known as the *bar*, characterized by barren land and wild vegetation. The canal system facilitated the settlement of **750 square miles** of wasteland and made it suitable for cultivation. The British Administration had a direct impact on rural life and helped people to live a more settled life with a sense of law and order.^{liii} The establishment of canal irrigation systems was the first permanent solution to cope with famine.^{liv}

The colonial government granted land to settlers, particularly those who had supported British rule during the Anglo-Sikh Wars and the 1857 rebellion. These grants allowed collaborators to accumulate wealth and status rapidly. Many settlers from various districts migrated to the Lower Jhelum Colony, contributing to the district's agriculture.^{lv}

The British colonial government placed significant emphasis on the breeding of cavalry horses to reduce reliance on imports from Australia. In 1901, the Government of India appointed the Horse and Mule-breeding Commission to investigate and improve the breeding of military animals. The commission toured various parts of India, including northwestern Punjab, where they were impressed by the quality of horses and the horse-riding skills of the agriculturists. Based on the commission's recommendations, the government introduced horse-breeding grants in Jhelum Colony.

The government granted these grants to settlers who had experience to maintain horses.^{lvi} The colonial authorities reserved the right to select heirs for these grants. This policy was in favor of the British military. However, it was often in contrary to local customs of inheritance and it created periodic discontent among colonists.^{lvii} The British government carefully selected recipients for horse-breeding grants from members of influential and loyal families. The heads of these prominent families held rural offices.^{lviii} These grants promoted horse breeding among the rural families. The grants also strengthened the ties of the political alliance between the British and the rural elite. The government allotted huge bulk of land to the rural elite in canal colonies.^{lix}

In Jhelum Colony, land grants above 50 acres were primarily awarded to the landed aristocracy,^{lx} including members of the Tiwana and Noon families. Peasant grantees, by contrast, typically received smaller plots and belonged to castes such as Jats, Arains, Kambohs, and Gujars. These grants strengthened the economic and political influence of the landed elite, ensuring their continued support for the colonial administration.

The development of the Lower Jhelum Canal Colony enabled the colonial government to consolidate its control over rural Punjab. By rewarding loyalists with land, the British maintained stability and order in the region. The economic benefits of these grants allowed the landed elite to preserve their social status, while the colonial state secured a reliable base of support.

The Formation of Sargodha City

The establishment of the Lower Jhelum Canal Colony led to the founding of Sargodha City. Initially, the district headquarters were located in Shahpur Town, but frequent flooding and the town's proximity to the river made it an unsuitable location.^{lxi} In 1903, the colonial government purchased land from Diwan Ali Nangiana of Dharema village to establish a new city.^{lxii} The new city was initially named Youngabad, after the colony officer Mr. Young, but was later renamed Sargodha. The city was planned with open spaces, parks, and wide streets designed for efficient administration and modern living. The first *lambardar* (village head) of Sargodha was Mr. Ganesh Das, appointed in 1906.^{lxiii} In 1914, the district headquarters officially moved to Sargodha, which quickly grew into a bustling urban center.^{lxiv} By 1911, the population had reached 8,849. The British also established a Remount Depot near Sargodha for the breeding and training of cavalry horses, further boosting the city's importance.

Impact of Canal Colonization on Shahpur District

The establishment of canal colonies transformed the economy, culture and social structure of Shahpur District. The canal irrigation converted vast stretches of barren land into fertile agricultural fields. It also improved agricultural productivity of the Shahpur District^{lxv} and made it one of the most prosperous districts of the Colonial Punjab.^{lxvi}

The Colonial government invested heavily in development of the canal colonies. The government allotted land grants to the people who migrated from the densely populated districts of central Punjab and reduced population pressure in these districts.^{lxvii} Infrastructure developments such as roads, railways, and telegraph lines further supported agricultural commercialization and improved communication within the province. Alongside the canals, new settlements developed, characterized by wide streets, schools, hospitals, markets, and grazing lands.

Revenue from agricultural land was crucial for the colonial government. Therefore, the government established 'Land Revenue Systems' in canal colonies to maximize its income.^{lxviii} As part of these reforms, the British also granted ownership rights to Punjabi peasants in the canal colonies and improved their living status.^{lxix}

Before the development of lower Jhelum Canal, the region's reliance on seasonal rainfall made it vulnerable to famine. The Lower Jhelum Canal ensured a reliable water supply and reduced the risks of crop failure and food shortages. Moreover, the market towns and trading hubs facilitated the distribution of surplus produce. Improved transportation networks, including railways and roads, allowed farmers to access distant markets. The economic growth benefited both the colonial administration as well as the rural communities. Owing to commercialization, a new class of traders and moneylenders emerged who played key roles in the new economic order.

The Lower Jhelum Canal irrigated large tracts of barren land and transformed them into fertile fields. Sargodha the center of the Lower Jhelum Canal Colony became a major wheat and cotton production center. Owing to development of canal, colonies Punjab had earned the title “granary of India”.^{lxx} The canal projects spurred the growth of market towns strategically located near transportation networks and ensured the efficient movement of goods. These newly planned colony towns, with their organized markets and improved public services, marked a strong contrast to the unplanned older villages.^{lxxi} This modernization contributed to an overall improvement in living standards for settlers in the region.

The increased agricultural output also shifted the Shahpur District from subsistence farming to cash crop cultivation and integrated Punjab’s economy with global markets. This prosperity further strengthened the power of the landed elite, who controlled the most productive estates.

The development of canal colonies dramatically transformed social fabric of Shahpur District. Land grants to loyal elites increased the political and economic power of families like the Tiwanas and Noons. These families maintained and expanded their influence through matrimonial alliances and acted as intermediaries between the British administration and the rural masses. The colonial reliance on the landed elite created a patron-client relationship between the British Government and landed aristocracy. In this system, the peasants depended on landed elite for land access, credit, and protection.^{lxxii} Owing to the development of patron-client relationship, the landed aristocratic families increased their wealth, and solidified their political influence.^{lxxiii} This system reinforced traditional social hierarchies.^{lxxiv} The Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1900 further increased the power of the landed elite by preventing the transfer of agricultural land to non-agriculturists, such as moneylenders. While this law preserved the agrarian structure, it also limited economic mobility for the lower castes.

The canal colonies also contributed to the **Punjabization of the Indian Army**. As agricultural prosperity increased, many Punjabi men joined the army, attracted by the promise of stable employment and social prestige. The British actively recruited soldiers from Shahpur District, further integrating the region into the colonial military structure.^{lxxv}

The colonial administration’s policies left a lasting legacy of **political underdevelopment** and **agrarian stagnation**. While the region benefited from improved infrastructure and increased agricultural production, the concentration of land and resources in the hands of the elite hindered broader social and economic development. The colonial emphasis on loyalty and control over modernization and equity shaped the region’s future, with consequences that extended well beyond the end of British rule. The establishment of canal colonies like Jhelum Colony significantly boosted Punjab's economy.^{lxxvi} Previously barren lands were transformed into fertile fields, leading to increased production of **wheat, cotton, and other cash crops**.^{lxxvii} This agricultural prosperity benefited both the colonial administration and the rural population, though the primary beneficiaries remained the landed elite.^{lxxviii}

Landed Elite and the Development of Canal Colonies

The newly developed colony spanned **450,000 acres** of state land entire fell within Shahpur District. The government reserved a small portion of the land for capitalist-type grants, known as *civil grants*. Additionally, military and police personnel who had served the British government received land grants as a reward for their service.

The landed elite of Shahpur District, particularly the Tiwana and Noon families, played a central role in the development and success of the canal colonies. These families received substantial land grants in the newly developed colonies, ensuring their continued dominance in the region.

In the Jhelum Canal Colony, prominent landowning families like the Tiwanas and Noons received extensive land grants and enhanced their wealth and political influence. The Tiwanas, for example, acquired large tracts of land in the form of villages like Kalra, Khwajabad, Jehanabad, and Ghausnagar. On the other hand, the Noons expanded their holdings in Kot Hakim Khan and Chak Misran. The colonial authorities viewed these influential families as essential partners in maintaining rural control and ensured their loyalty through land grants and administrative roles. The British Government developed the Lower Bari Doab Colony and the members of Tiwana and Noon families of Shahpur District gained much benefit from this Colony. In other canal colonies, they also received land grants.^{lxxix}

The Colonial government planned to construct new state-owned canals in Shahpur District. However, the government faced serious resistance from the landed elite, who feared losing control over their private irrigation systems. For instance, when the government proposed Shahpur Branch Canal project in the early 1900s, private canal owners opposed it. Negotiations remained inconclusive until World War I, when families like the Tiwanas and Noons supported the British war effort, supplied recruits and resources. In return, the Governor of Punjab assured these families in 1916 that their water rights would be preserve. In this way, the government safeguarded their economic interests and strengthened their ties with the colonial administration.

In beginning of 20th century, some members of the landed elite faced economic challenges due to estate mismanagement, debt and inheritance-based subdivisions of their estates. Hindu moneylenders often brought civil suits against indebted estates and prompted the government to intervene. In these circumstances, the Court of Wards, a colonial institution, managed the estates of indebted landlords under the Deputy Commissioner's supervision. The court negotiated debt settlements, reduced interest rates and sometimes facilitated land purchases to stabilize the estates. These measures preserved the landed elite's economic position and reinforced the colonial patronage system. Moreover, the intervention of the Court of Wards demonstrated the colonial administration's commitment to maintaining the patron-client relationship.

World War I deepened the relationship between the British and the rural elite. Rural elite played key roles in recruiting soldiers and mobilizing resources. In recognition of their services, the government granted them further land, titles, and privileges. Landed Elite like Umar Hayat Tiwana and Mubariz Khan Tiwana gained prominence for their wartime contributions and secured their families' political and economic dominance. This period highlighted the patron-client system's importance in maintaining stability and control in Punjab.

British Policy and Landed Aristocracy in the 20th Century

The British administration's preferential treatment of the landed elite aimed to prevent uprisings and maintain stability in Punjab. The government rewarded landed aristocratic families of the Shahpur District such as Tiwana and Noon families with land grants for their services. The British

administration made its policies in favor of the landed aristocratic families.^{lxxx} In return for land grants and economic support, these families provided military recruits during Anglo-Sikh War^{lxxxi} and the War of 1857.^{lxxxii} The members of these families collected taxes, and assisted in enforcing law and order in the region. The Court of Wards' interventions ensured the landed aristocracy remained a pillar of support for the colonial government, even in times of economic instability.^{lxxxiii}

The policy of favoring the landed elite was designed to prevent uprisings and maintain stability in a region known for its martial tradition. In the **Lower Bari Doab Colony** and other canal colonies, members of the Tiwana and Noon families received substantial land grants. These grants further consolidated their wealth and social standing, allowing them to maintain a dominant role in rural society. In return, these families supported the colonial administration by providing military recruits, collecting taxes, and assisting in the enforcement of law and order. The British also took measures to protect the landed elite from economic hardship. When estates fell into debt, the **Court of Wards** intervened to manage the properties and negotiate settlements with creditors. This system ensured that the landed aristocracy remained a reliable source of support for the colonial government, even during periods of economic instability.

Conclusion

This research paper accentuates the transformative impact of British colonial rule on socio-economic development in Shahpur District, between 1857 and 1914 and role of the landed elite in these developments. The British enforced political control by promoting loyalty among the rural elite through land grants and privileges. The development of canal colonies and irrigation systems converted barren lands into productive agricultural regions, bolstering Punjab's economy and connecting it to global markets. However, these developments also reinforced traditional social hierarchies. Laws like the Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1900 safeguarded the landed elite's interests and institutions like the Court of Wards ensured their economic stability. The British reliance on the rural elite as intermediaries ensured political control and made these families indispensable to colonial administration. Ultimately, canal colonization reshaped Shahpur District's economic landscape while entrenching existing power structures.

The colonial administration's reliance on the landed elite created a **patron-client system** that shaped the social and political structure of rural Punjab. This system maintained stability and order. As political movements advocating for independence and social reform gained momentum in the early 20th century, the limitations of this system became increasingly apparent. The legacy of colonial policies and the dominance of the landed elite continued to influence region's socio-economic scenario long after the end of British rule.

Conflict of Interest

The authors showed no conflict of interest.

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- ^{xviii}*Ibid*, 189.
- ^{xix}Malik Javed Ghanjera, *Phul Kirana Bar De* (Lahore: Ravi Publishers, 1993), 38-39.
- ^{xx}Mubarak Ali, *Jagirdari* (Lahore: Fiction House, 1996), 104.
- ^{xxi}Ian Talbot, *Khizar Tiwana, The Punjab Unionist Party and the Partition of India* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1996), 238.
- ^{xxii}Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, 21-22.

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- ^{xxiii} *Report on the Revenue Administration of the Punjab and its Dependencies for the year, (1865-66)*, (Lahore: 1866), 65-66, 87.
- ^{xxiv} *Report on the Revised Settlement of the Multan District of the Punjab (1873- 1880)* (Lahore: 1883), 72.
- ^{xxv} *Gazetteer of the Multan District (1883-84)* (Lahore: 1884), 79-80.
- ^{xxvi} Bakhshish Singh Nijjar, *History of the United Punjab*, Vol-1 (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and distributors, 1996), 23-24.
- ^{xxvii} G.S. Chabra, *The Advance History of the Punjab*, Vol. II (Ludhiana: n.d), 294-295.
- ^{xxviii} Mohinder Singh, "Punjab's Contribution to India's Struggle for Independence", *Punjab Journal of Politics*, 12 No. 2, (1988): 54-63.
- ^{xxix} Krishna Kapur, *A History of the Development of the Judiciary in the Punjab 1884-1926* (Lahore: 1928), 26-27.
- ^{xxx} Emmett Davis, *Press and Politics in British Western Punjab, 1936-1947* (Delhi: Academic Publishers 1983), 6-7.
- ^{xxxi} Ian Talbot, *Khizr Hayat Tiwana: The Punjab Unionist Party and Partition of India* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 61. Also see, Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj, 1849-1947* (New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1988), 56.
- ^{xxxii} Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj, 1849-1947*, 169-170. For detailed study, see Muhammad Ibrahim, "Role of Biradari System in Power politics of Lahore Post Independence Period" (Ph.D diss., Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, 2011). Also see Muhammad Khurshid, "The Role of Unionist Party in the Punjab Politics, 1923-36" (Ph.D diss., Islamia University of Bahawalpur, 1992).
- ^{xxxiii} The word 'agriculturist' means a person who holds agricultural land; cultivates this land and grows crops in it. This land may be his ownership or of his ancestors. The person who cultivates the land is also considered as an owner of the land. The cultivator can be as a hereditary tenant or as an occupancy tenant in any estate or in any region. The major agricultural tribes of Punjab were Arains, Jats, Gujars, Rajputs, Syeds, Kambohs, Qureshis and Sheikhs etc. For details see, David Gilmarton, Religious Leadership and the Pakistan Movement in the Punjab, *Modern Asian Studies* (1979). For detailed study, see H.A. Rose, *Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and N.W.F Province*, Vol-II, (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette, 1911), 312-317.
- ^{xxxiv} Bakhshish Singh Nijjar, *History of the United Punjab*, Vol-I, 171. For details see, Calvert, *The Wealth and Welfare of the Punjab*, 265-266.
- ^{xxxv} . History of Sargodha
- ^{xxxvi} *Gazetteer of the Shahpur District*, 1897
- ^{xxxvii} . Imran Ali, *Punjab under Imperialism, 1885-1947* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1988), 82.
- ^{xxxviii} . Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*.29.
- ^{xxxix} . *Gazetteer of the Shahpur District*, 1897
- ^{xl} . Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*.76.
- ^{xli} Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj: 1849-1947*, 39.

^{xlii} Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj: 1849-1947*, 39-40.

^{xliii} Ibid, 39.

^{xliv} . Mufakharul Islam, *Irrigation Agriculture and the Raj, Punjab, 1887-1947* (Delhi: Manohar, 1997), 25.

^{xliv} Andrew Porter, *The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 264.

^{xlvi} The government developed five canal colonies in the Bari doab situated between the rivers Bias and Ravi. These colonies were Sidhnai (1886-88), Sohag Para (1886-88), Chunian (1896-98), Lower Bari Doab (1914-24) and Nili Bar (1926-40). The canal projects that made these venture a practical reality were Sidhnai, Lower Sohag Para, Upper Bari Doab, Lower Bari Doab, and Sutlej valley project. There were two canal colonies namely Lower Chenab (1892-1905) and Upper Chenab (1915-1919) in Rachna doab situated between Ravi and Chenab rivers. Similarly, Jech Doab situated between Jhelum and Chenab Rivers. Two canal colonies namely Lower Jhelum (1902-1906) and Upper Jhelum (1916-1921) developed in this Doab. For detail see Imran Ali, *The Punjab under imperialism: 1885-1947*, 9.

^{xlvii} . Imran Ali, *The Punjab under Imperialism, 1885-1947*, 3.

^{xlviii} C. H. Buck, "Canal Irrigation in the Punjab", *The Geographical Journal*, 27 No. 1, (1906): 65.

^{xlix} Jasbir Singh, "Canal colonies: Social and economic impact on Colonial Punjab", *International Journal of Advanced Educational Research*, 3 No. 1, (2018): 245-247.

^l . Zahid Chaudhary, *Muslim Punjab Ka Siyasi Irtiqa 1849-1947*, 35.

^{li} The Colony was named after the Lower Jhelum Canal and its full name was the Lower Jhelum Canal Colony.

^{lii} . Triple Project comprised of the Upper Jhelum, Upper Chenab, and Lower Bari Doab canals in 1915. For details see Royal J. Roseberry, *Imperial Rule in Punjab: The Conquest and Administration of Multan, 1818- 1881*(Lahore: Vanguard, 1988), 153.

^{liii} Harry M. Raulet and Jogindar S. Uppal, "The Social dynamics of Economic Development in Rural Punjab", *Asian Survey*, 10 No. 2, (April, 1970): 340.

^{liv} Andrew J. Major, "state and Criminal Tribes in Colonial Punjab: Surveillance, control and reclamation of the 'Dangerous Classe'", *Modern Asian Studie*, 33 (July, 1999): 687.

^{lv} Ian Talbot., 39. Also see, Tahir Kamran, *Punjab Ghulami Say Azadi Tak, 1849-1947* (Lahore: Takhliqat, Ujala Printers, 1999), 54. For further details, see Ian Talbot, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement, The Growth of the Muslim League in North-West and North-East India, 1937- 47* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1988), 82-89.

^{lvi} The Government of India was afraid that half-squares, if added on to ordinary grants for horse-breeding, would then be insufficient to support men undertaking horse-breeding due to division or alienation of the land. The Government of India also felt that it might not be possible to tempt men already in possession of grants to undertake horse breeding. Land, therefore, would have to be granted on the breeding condition and on no other. For detail, see Imran Ali, *The Punjab under imperialism: 1885-1947*.

^{lvii} In the Jhelum Colony this concession was, withheld and it was meant an end to the horse-breeding scheme. This was to create much discontent in later years. For a comprehensive survey

of irrigation conditions on the Shahpur private canals in the early 1930. Imran Ali, *The Punjab under imperialism: 1885-1947*.

^{lviii} Among these rural offices were also included halqadar inamdar and zaildar

^{lix} Imran Ali, *The Punjab under imperialism: 1885-1947* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 81-82.

^{lx} The Landed Gentry grants were 5-10 rectangles in size and in some special cases 15 rectangles. Residence of the grantees in person was not insisted upon, as it would have involved the withdrawal of men of influence from their home districts, where their services were of the greatest use to the government.

^{lxi} *Gazetteer of the Shahpur District, 1897*, 237-238.

^{lxii} Qazi Muhayyuddin, *Sargodha Mera Shehr*.

^{lxiii} Ibid

^{lxiv} Sahibzada Abdur-rasul, *History of Sargodha*, (Sargodha: University of Sargodha, 2015), 186-187

^{lxv} Ibid., 30.

^{lxvi} Atta Muhammad, "Mastery over Geography and the rise of Social Development: A Case Study of the Canal Irrigation System of the West Punjab during Colonial India", *Academic Research International*, 1 No. 3, (2011): 65-66.

^{lxvii} Singh and Kaur, "Railway Development in Colonial Punjab: Social and Cultural Assimilation", *International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research*, 3 No. 1, (2015), 80-81.

^{lxviii} Abhijit Benerjee and Lakshmi Lyer, "History, Institutions, and Economic Performance: The Legacy of Colonial Land Tenure Systems in India", *The American Economic Review*, 95, (Sep., 2005): 1192.

^{lxix} Imran Ali, "Sikh Settlers in the Western Punjab during British Rule", *Centre for Management and Economic Research* (March 1994): 1-20.

^{lxx} Ian Talbot, "The Punjab under colonialism: order and transformation in British India," *Journal of Punjab Studies* 14 No.1 (2011): 5.

^{lxxi} Imran Ali, *The Punjab under imperialism: 1885-1947*, 39.

^{lxxii} *Report on the Administration of the Punjab and its Dependencies for 1900-1901* (Lahore, 1901), 124.

^{lxxiii} H.R. Haigh & P.W. Turner, *Punjab Military History in the 19th century* (Lahore: Vanguard, 1984), 5-9. , Robert Cust, *Manual for the Guidance of Revenue Officers in the Punjab* (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1868), 7.

^{lxxiv} S. Gurcharn Singh, *The Punjab Alienation of Land Act, XIII of 1900* (Lahore: Government Publication, 1901), 1.

^{lxxv} Tahir Mahmood, "Socio-Economic Engineering and the British Profit Motives in Colonial Punjab" 1885-1922, *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 54 No. 1 (2017):197.

^{lxxvi} Tahir Mahmood. "Socio-Economic Engineering and the British Profit Motives in Colonial Punjab" 1885-1922, *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 54 No. 1 (2017): 205.

^{lxxvii} Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj 1849-1947*, 38-39.

^{lxxviii} Tahir Mahmood. "Socio-Economic Engineering and the British Profit Motives in Colonial Punjab" 1885-1922, *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 54 No. 1 (2017): 205.

^{lxxix} Owing to shortage of land in the Lower Bari Doab Colony, further Landed Gentry grants were allotted in the Renala extension in this colony, and in the Chenab and Jhelum Colonies.

^{lxxx} Needham, Robert Cust, *Manual for the Guidance of Revenue Officers in the Punjab* (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1868), 7.

^{lxxxi} *Report on the Administration of the Punjab and its Dependencies for 1900-1901* (Lahore, 1901), 124.

^{lxxxii} H.R. Haigh & P.W. Turner, *Punjab Military History in the 19th century* (Lahore: Vanguard, 1984), 5-9.

^{lxxxiii} S. Gurcharn Singh, *The Punjab Alienation of Land Act, XIII of 1900* (Lahore: Government Publication, 1901), 1.