Commercialisation, Peasant Differentiation and Merchant Capital in Late Nineteenth-Century Bombay and Punjab
Satish Chandra Mishra

Dispossession and Differentiation of the Peasantry in the Punjab During Colonial Rule
Naved Hamid

Agrarian Class Formation in India
Pranab Bardhan

Accumulation and Authoritarianism on the Pioneer Frontier of Brazil
Joe Poweraker

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BOOK REVIEWS
Dispossession and Differentiation of the Peasantry in the Punjab During Colonial Rule

Naved Hamid*

The Punjab has often been described as a land of small peasant proprietors. This description may have been true when the British completed the colonization of India by conquering the Punjab in 1850. But this certainly was not the case at the end of British rule a hundred years later when less than four per cent of the agricultural population owned more than 50 per cent of the land while poor peasants, landless sharecroppers and agricultural labourers accounted for 80 per cent of the population. This paper documents this dramatic transformation and examines the process by which it came about.

INTRODUCTION

This article is concerned with the Punjab during colonial rule. The Punjab, which literally means ‘land of the five rivers’, is a region in the north-west of the Indian sub-continent, stretching from Delhi in the east to Baluchistan in the west and from Rajasthan in the south to Kashmir in the north. The Punjab, the most ‘prosperous’ province in British India, was divided between Pakistan and India in 1947. The region to which the discussion in this paper relates comprises presently the Pakistani province of Punjab and the Indian states of Punjab, Haryana and parts of Himachal Pradesh.

The most important element in initiating the process of dispossession of the peasantry and the concentration of land ownership which took place in the Punjab under colonial rule was the exogenous change in the nature and form of the State which the establishment of colonial rule involved. The colonial State introduced in the Punjab laws dealing with property and credit, which were based on the advanced stage of capitalist development existing in Britain at the time, and a system of land taxation that represented British colonial interests. Private property in land was established and most of the communal restrictions on the sale or transfer of land were removed. A land tax was fixed at less than the potential rent, which made

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the ownership of land, as opposed to its cultivation, a source of income. This provided the motive for concentration of land ownership. The tax on land was converted from a share of the output to a fixed amount payable in cash which, because of fluctuations in harvests and market prices, resulted in increasing peasant indebtedness. In case of debt the law of contract was strictly enforced, and the State machinery was used to help the moneylender collect his debts. The moneylender, freed from the control of the village communities, was able to charge usurious interest and manipulate the accounts in his favour, so that once in debt the peasant could seldom escape.\footnote{1} As a result, a process of increasing indebtedness and dispossession of the peasantry was set in motion. With the development of market relations and the commercialization of agriculture that took place under colonial rule, this process tended to acquire a dynamic of its own, a dynamic which resulted in the emergence of a highly differentiated agrarian structure by the end of the colonial period.

The paper is divided into five sections. First, the development of a land market and its importance in the process of dispossession is discussed. Second, the mechanisms of dispossession of the peasantry operating during the colonial period are identified. Third, a theoretical analysis of the process of peasant differentiation occurring in the Punjab is developed. Fourth, a quantitative picture of the extent and nature of the differentiation that occurred during this period is provided. Finally, a brief review of the colonial policies which were instrumental in establishing and preserving the monopoly over land of the large landowners is undertaken.

DEVELOPMENT OF A LAND MARKET

In the pre-colonial economy, because of limited development of exchange relations and the existence of centralized state power, the State was able to appropriate almost the entire potential agricultural surplus leaving the cultivator with only a bare subsistence. As a result, to use Hiroshima's terminology, 'private rent property' had not as yet emerged in the Punjab.\footnote{2} Moreover, though individual or family shares in the village land were fairly well defined and recognized by the village community, individual rights in land were still subject to numerous communal restrictions. Therefore, in the pre-colonial period a market in agricultural land hardly existed. However, with the establishment of British rule conditions were created for the development of a land market.

Elimination of Communal Restrictions

One of the first measures taken by the British after annexation was to establish private property in land. For this purpose all the land was carefully surveyed and individual rights were defined and recorded. The basis for determining individual rights was generally as follows. First, cultivators were entered as owners of land in their possession, unless ownership was contested by other members of the village to the satisfaction of the settle-
ment officer, in which case the cultivator was entered as a tenant. Second, tenants were divided into two categories:

(a) Occupancy tenants: The practical criteria adopted to determine occupancy tenant status was 12 years of continuous cultivating occupancy of land by a resident and 20 years by a non-resident. The occupancy tenant was given a permanent, inheritable and transferable right of cultivation subject only to a rent fixed by the State (malikana) plus land revenue.

(b) Tenants-at-will: All other tenants were put in this category and in their case there were no legal restrictions on rents or evictions.

Third, all the land in the village, both cultivated and uncultivated, over which individual ownership was not established was classified as the common land of the village (shamaliat). It was considered the joint property of the zamindars (landowners), with the individual shares being those that were recognized by custom and tradition of the village. However, the individual shareholders could demand the partition of their shares from the common land and this was carried out at the next settlement.3 In other words, at the time of first settlement, the British defined and recorded individual rights which gave each person with any recorded interest in land a clear title to it. Moreover, under the legal system introduced by the British all land, like any other private property, was made alienable and transferable: i.e., it could be sold or used as collateral.

Development of Private Rent Property

In most of Northern India the British introduced the temporary zamindari land taxation system. Under this system the tax to be paid by each landowner was fixed in terms of money for a period of 20 to 30 years. The amount of the tax on any holding was taken to be a certain percentage of the ‘net assets’ of that holding, ‘net assets’ being defined as ‘the share of the produce of an estate ordinarily receivable by the landlord either in money or in kind’ [Douie, 1920: 27]. Where rental markets were well developed the actual rents were taken as the ‘net assets’. Elsewhere, as was the case for most of the Punjab, ‘net assets’ were worked out by estimating both the value of output and the costs of production and subtracting the latter from the former.4

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, in those areas of British India where this system was in use, the land revenue absorbed more than 90 per cent of the ‘net assets’ [Calvert, 1922: 101]. However, under pressure from industrial capitalists in Britain, who felt that the high land tax was the principal obstacle to increasing cotton production and expanding the market for manufactures, the land tax was reduced to 83 per cent in 1822, 66 per cent in 1833 and finally to 50 per cent in 1855 [Levkovsky, 1966: 27-28 and Calvert, 1922: 101]. Therefore, when the first ‘regular tax settlements’ were undertaken in the Punjab in the 1850s the ‘50 per cent of the net assets’ rule was generally used to fix the land tax and ‘private rent property’ came into existence in the Punjab. Moreover, the development of
exchange and the integration of the Punjab economy into the world capitalist system resulted in rising agricultural prices. Since the land tax was fixed for 20 to 30 years at a time, the increase in agriculture prices resulted in a decline in the tax as a proportion of potential rent.

Thus, fairly soon after the establishment of British rule two basic conditions for the development of a land market had been created. Land had not only been converted into private property and thus could be freely sold or mortgaged, but it also yielded an increasing rent to its owner. As a result the ownership of land became the object of struggle in rural society, which gave rise to a process of dispossession of the peasantry. However, with the establishment of private property in land, the dispossession of the peasantry could only take place through the market and that required the creation of a situation where the peasant would be forced to sell his land.

MECHANISMS OF DISPOSSESSION

Basically there were two mechanisms whereby peasants lost their land during the colonial period. The first was the process by which a small number of zamindars were able to expropriate most of the village common land; and the second was the process in which increasing indebtedness, primarily because of the development of the money relation through payment of land tax in money and the credit mechanism, resulted in forced sales of land. This section discusses these two mechanisms in some detail.

(a) Expropriation of the Village Common Land

In the pre-colonial period the panchayat was the governing body of the village and in the initial stages the colonial administration relied on the panchayats and upheld the customary law of the region. However, in line with their policy of indirect rule the British set about creating a small indigenous group which, on the one hand, would owe their loyalty to the colonial government and, on the other hand, would have considerable influence in the countryside. For this purpose the most influential members of the village community, who were generally also the largest landowners, were selected. They were appointed to the newly created post of lambardar (headman), one from each subdivision (patti) of the village, and in the 1860s chief headmen were also appointed in almost every village. The official function of the lambardar was to collect the land tax from the landowners and deposit it in the State treasury. For performing this function he was allowed to keep five per cent of the tax collected by him. In addition he received a grant of up to 75 acres from the village waste [Punjab District Gazetteer (hereafter referred to as P.D.G.) Gujranwala, 1893-94: 76]. The motive behind this policy was stated by one British bureaucrat as follows:

It is clearly our objective to have in these men a class which shall be possessed of some weight and authority in the country, and for this an income which shall place each individual above the necessity of
himself tilling the ground is *sine qua non* [P.D.G., Shahpur, 1883-84: 55].

The colonial administration not only used the *lambardars* for the collection of the land tax, but also operated through them in all civil and criminal matters relating to their villages. Thus the *panchayat* was deprived of its most important functions at the same time that the *lambardar* acquired increasing influence because of his position as mediator between the colonial administration and the village population. Consequently in a fairly short time the *panchayat* disappeared as an effective governing body, and its position was taken by the *lambardar*. In the process the *lambardar* also became responsible for the management of the common fund (*malba*) and the village common land. The *lambardars*, together with a few of the large landowners in the village, were able to use their position to appropriate a large part of the common fund for their own use and purchase most of the uncultivated village common land at a nominal price.

The first 50 years of British rule represent an episode in the economic history of the Punjab similar to the private appropriation of the village commons in Britain and Europe from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century. However, since the expropriation of the village common land in the Punjab took place with the connivance of the colonial administration, the literature dealing with that period, most of which was written by British bureaucrats, is understandably silent on the subject. Thus we have to rely on indirect evidence, some of which is presented below.

Between 1855 and 1891 the cultivated area increased from 15.3 million acres to 26 million acres, i.e., by 10.7 million acres, while the canal irrigated area increased by about 2.5 million acres [Calvert, 1922: 67-68]. Moreover, most of the canals constructed prior to 1890 provided irrigation to already cultivated regions. Therefore, the net effect of canal irrigation on the increase in cultivated area must have been even less than 2.5 million acres. In other words, between 1855 and 1891 some eight to nine million acres of village common land was brought under cultivation. The question of who appropriated this land can be answered by looking at the statistics on tenancy. If the land was brought under cultivation by small peasants it should show up as owner-cultivated land; otherwise it would appear as tenant-cultivated. At the beginning of British rule it was ‘calculated that of the cultivated area, nine-tenths is held by cultivating proprietors and only one-tenth by landlords (great and small) who do not themselves cultivate the land’ [Baden-Powell, 1972, Vol. II: 569]. Thus, we may assume that the tenant-cultivated area in 1855 was around 1.5 million acres. In 1890-91 the tenant-cultivated area in the Punjab was 46 per cent of the total area, i.e., about 12 million acres [Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1908, Vol. XX: 307]. In other words, the tenant-cultivated area increased by about 10.5 million acres, which is greater than our estimate of village common land brought under cultivation during this period. Thus, we may conclude that not only was the peasantry dispossessed from a large part of its share of the village common land, but it also lost some of the cultivated land in its possession.
(b) Increasing Indebtedness and the Forced Sale of Land

The process of increasing peasant indebtedness was initiated in the first years of British rule. On annexation the colonial rulers undertook ‘summary settlements’ and temporarily fixed the land tax at the assumed average of the collections of the three preceding years, converted into money at the market rates of the day. However, this tax proved to be too heavy for the following reasons: (a) The Sikh revenue demand, which was used by the British in their calculations, was on paper only and amounts actually collected had usually been much less. (b) In the pre-colonial period the tax was a share of the produce and automatically adjusted to the state of the harvest, while under the British the tax was an amount fixed in cash and had to be paid no matter how bad the harvest. A couple of bad harvests in the first few years added to the peasants’ problems. (c) The fact that the tax had to be paid in cash meant that the cultivator had to sell a large part of his produce at the harvest time. However, a local market for the produce, on the scale required, simply did not exist and there were no roads or railways to transport it cheaply out of the region. As a result there was a substantial fall in agricultural prices, e.g., the price of wheat in 1851 was only 60 per cent of that used for commutation of tax two years earlier. For these reasons the ‘summary settlements’ collapsed in a number of districts as the peasants refused to pay the tax in cash and offered considerable resistance [P.D.G., Gujranwala, 1883-84: 74 and P.D.G., Lahore, 1893-94: 241]. The response of the colonial rulers was twofold. On the one hand, the unwilling peasants were ‘rigorously’ dealt with by the settlement officers who transferred the land to those who agreed to pay Government revenue, or sold it to the highest bidder [P.D.G., Gujranwala, 1883-84: 146]. On the other hand, the tax was everywhere revised down by 10 to 20 per cent on the average. These measures and good harvests made it possible for the new rulers to tide over this crisis, but substantial indebtedness was incurred by the peasantry during this period. However, the fact that, under the system of taxation introduced by the British, the peasant was held responsible for the prompt payment in cash of a fixed amount at each harvest continued to be the primary cause of peasant indebtedness during most of the colonial period. The effect on the peasant of the system of land tax introduced by the British has been described rather dramatically by Thorburn [1886: 49-50] as follows:

For a hundred generations he (the peasant) had pastured his cattle, sown and reaped his scanty crop, and paid as little of it as he could to the Government of the day... Such terms as ‘individual rights’, ‘property’, ‘attachment and sale’, were incomprehensibly meaningless to him. In one day the old order passed away, and gave place to a new one, which imposed upon this unsophisticated Punjabi a responsibility to which he was unequal, in that he who had never handled coin in his life before was required to pay his Government twice a year a fixed sum of money — crop or no crop.
Therefore, to pay the tax the peasant was forced to turn to the money-
lender every time the harvest was poor, and in the Punjab, where agricul-
ture has often been described as 'a gamble in the rains', this was fairly
frequent.

There were other factors responsible for increasing peasant indebtedness.
Thus, firstly, the growing dependence of the peasant on the market made
him increasingly vulnerable to fluctuations in market prices, prices which
had little connection with the state of the harvest in the Punjab. A fall in
agricultural prices increased the burden of fixed money payments the
peasant had to make, such as taxes, water charges or interest and forced
him further into debt. Secondly, the famines which occurred quite
frequently during the first half of the British period contributed signifi-
cantly to peasant indebtedness. In periods of famine a peasant was forced to
borrow not only for consumption purposes but also for working capital,
i.e., seed and bullocks, before he could resume cultivation. Therefore,
according to Calvert [1936: 132] 'it was in the famine of 1860-61 that the
moneylender began to get a grip on the peasantry and the famine of
1868-69, which was of even greater intensity, further strengthened his hold'.
These were followed by even more severe famines in 1879-80, 1896-97 and
1900-01. Thirdly, the credit system itself was an important factor in
increasing peasant indebtedness, and it also served as the mechanism for the
dispossession of the peasantry. However, before undertaking a detailed
examination of this system it is important to note that an often stated cause
of peasant indebtedness is 'his extravagance and reckless expenditure on
marriage and social ceremonies'. But, as pointed out by the Deccan Riots' 
Commission of 1876, such 'expenditure by itself rarely appears as a nucleus
of his indebtedness The constantly recurring small items of debt for food
and other necessaries, for seed, for bullocks, for the government, do more
to swell the indebtedness of the ryot (peasant) than an occasional marriage'
(quoted by [Patel, 1952: 53]).

In the Punjab almost the only source of credit for the agricultural sector
was the moneylender. In the pre-colonial period the moneylender, having
neither the inclination nor the aptitude to farm the land, preferred to get the
products of land on which he could reap a double profit, one from the
producer to whom he lent and the other from the consumer to whom he
sold. However, under the British land became a good investment, yielding a
substantial income and increasing in price as well. Consequently the
moneylender began to use it as an outlet for his rapidly expanding capital
and sought to get the peasant in his clutches and oust him from the land.
The peasant 'to his surprise and delight found that his formerly petty
borrowing powers were now practically unlimited, his Bunniah (money-
lender) being ready to accommodate him to any extent' [Thorburn, 1886:
50]. However, once the peasant was in debt to a moneylender it was almost
impossible for him to escape. The latter used all possible means, legal and
illegal, to acquire the illiterate peasant’s land. The workings of the money-
lender of the Punjab have been described thus by Thorburn [1886: 37]:
He adds 50 per cent to a debt, calls the total principal, causes his debtor to execute a bond for that principal with interest at 36 per cent per annum more, a year or two after strikes a balance against his debtor and cajoles or wearies him into mortgaging to him an ancestral plot of good land or its produce, on the understanding — carefully excluded from the deed — that the mortgagor is to remain in cultivating possession.

The mortgage was usually followed by a sale, e.g., out of 742 families examined in detail by Thorburn in 1896 only in 13 cases did a man, once involved, recover his freedom [Darling, 1925: 228].

In the process of dispossession the legal system introduced by the British played an important role. Under this system the law of contract was strictly enforced and almost all the debtor's property, including land, was liable to attachment and sale. Moreover, with certain restrictions, the debtor was liable to a term of imprisonment at the insistence of the decree holder. In other words, the courts made an unsecured loan almost a mortgage and the whole authority of the colonial administration was behind the money-lenders to help them recover their loans by forced transfers of peasants' lands. The existing situation was described as follows by an important British bureaucrat:

The aid given by courts is all on the side of Marwari [moneylender], who alone knows how to turn that aid to his own advantage. The position of litigants is not therefore simply of debtor and creditor; it is the fraudulent Marwari, backed by civil courts, versus the helpless ryot signing any bond without even a true knowledge of its contents, and powerless to oppose any decree that may be passed ... In illustration of the present working of our usury laws, I shall give one instance which is on record. A man borrowed four maunds of jowari [millet], value about Rs.6. Two or three bonds followed, and in 16 months the borrower was sued for Rs.72, which the lender got with costs. The adjudicating authorities considered the thing iniquitous, but there was a bond, and this covers all such inequity. Thousands of parallel cases could be collected. Every division and almost every village teems with them [Thorburn, 1886: 63].

Some idea of the extensive use made by the moneylenders of the courts and the legal system in the Punjab can be had from the following facts. First, in the five years, 1880 to 1884, 44,874 persons were arrested in the execution of decrees. Of these 5,127 were imprisoned, while for the rest the threat of imprisonment, implied by arrest, was sufficient to 'make them come to terms with their creditors' [ibid: 146]. Second, in 1884 of the 213,000 'money due' suits decided by the courts, 103,000 were claims for money brought by moneylenders against agriculturists. This represented almost one suit for every 20 families [ibid: 130]. Third, of the suits for money or movable property, 88 per cent were for sums not exceeding Rs.100 and 59 per cent for Rs.50 or less [ibid]. Given that the price of land
at the time was about Rs.27 per acre, it is evident that most of the suits were against small peasants.

To sum up, the changes introduced by the British in the system of taxation and the growing monetary requirements of the peasant forced him to borrow from the moneylender at the time of poor harvests. The moneylender exploited his monopoly position and the ignorance of the peasant to extract an extremely high rate of interest on loans. This further weakened the position of the peasant and as the burden of debt mounted he was forced to first mortgage and then sell some of his land. This in turn made the peasant’s holding even less viable, and so that process continued until he had lost all his land.

A CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE PROCESS OF DIFFERENTIATION AMONGST THE PEASANTRY

Clearly the process of dispossession which took place in the Punjab during the colonial period did not affect all strata of the peasantry in the same way. In this section we shall discuss, on a conceptual level, the differential nature of the dispossession process. For this purpose the agrarian society of the Punjab may be divided into the following groups. (1) The landlord class, i.e., those owning 25 acres or more. Persons in this group cultivated little or no land themselves and derived most of their income by renting out the land to sharecroppers. (2) Rich peasants, i.e., those owning 15 to 25 acres. Persons in this group cultivated most of the land themselves, though they may have rented out some land or hired labour to help in the cultivation. (3) Middle peasants, i.e., those owning five to 15 acres of land. Most studies in the Punjab show that one working adult, with help from other family members and a team of bullocks, can cultivate, on the average, 12.5 acres. Therefore, persons in this group neither rented out land, nor hired permanent labour, but those at the lower end of the group probably rented in some land. (4) Poor peasants, landless sharecroppers and agricultural labourers. What distinguished these three from each other was that the poor peasants owned some land, a team of bullocks and implements of production; the landless sharecroppers owned only the team of bullocks and implements of production; while the agricultural labourer did not even have that. The common element between them was that they derived all, or a substantial portion, of their income by working on land which they did not own.

Society being a living organism, there was a constant movement both within each group, and from one group to another. However, this movement was not random but rather had a certain dynamic of its own. Each individual in the society had certain resources and these were not equally distributed. For example, the agricultural labourer had only his labour while the large landlord not only had a substantial income from his land but also the backing of the State machinery. Other individuals fell somewhere in between. In Punjab’s agrarian society land was the source of income, wealth, power and status, and each individual attempted to acquire
as much land as he could, or at least hold on to whatever he had. Thus there was a constant struggle for the ownership of land. On all this were superimposed natural events such as famines, epidemics and personal misfortunes which though random in occurrence were certainly not random in effect. In addition to natural events, fluctuations in the price level (which themselves were a product of movements in the world capitalist economy) also had similar effect.

Applying these general ideas to the concrete situation of the Punjab it can be argued that:

(1) The poor peasants and sharecroppers barely made ends meet during normal times and had little or no reserves to meet unforeseen expenses. Thus, personal misfortune, such as a death of a bullock, or natural disaster, such as drought or epidemic, forced them, in the first instance, to borrow from the moneylender. However, the added burden of interest payment made their existence even more precarious. Given that the rate of interest on unsecured loans was usually as high as 20 to 30 per cent and was compounded annually, even a small debt could assume large proportions in a short time. Sooner or later the poor peasant was forced to mortgage/sell his land and join the ranks of the sharecroppers. The sharecropper was in the same way forced to become a wage labourer. If, however, things should improve, for example, because of a fairly long period of high agricultural prices, or good harvests, a few agricultural labourers might be able to save enough to buy a team of bullocks and become sharecroppers, while some sharecroppers might be able to redeem their land and return to the ranks of poor peasants. But the sheer logic of a high rate of compound interest on debt and almost zero rate on savings dictated that the net movement over the long run would be in the downward direction.

(2) The fate of the middle peasant, over the long run, was also the same. Sooner or later he too got in debt and had to mortgage/sell a part of his land and thus moved slowly but surely down the scale. If he somehow survived without falling into debt during his lifetime, the prevailing system of inheritance, which divided land equally between the sons, was certain to catapult his descendants into the poor peasant group. It was only rarely that a middle peasant could increase his holding and become a rich peasant.

(3) Rich peasants had sufficient land so that during normal times they were left with a surplus. They could use that for moneylending or buying land and thus further improve their resource position. They were also in a position to educate their sons and find them employment in government service. Furthermore, they did not have to borrow even during the worst times, and if they did they had the means of repaying their debt before it became too large. In other words, they had the potential to acquire more land and become landlords. But that obviously does not mean that most of them did. In practice, only the more enterprising amongst them went up on the scale while a large number of them, in a generation or two, were reduced to the level of middle peasants.

(4) The landlord class was in the most fortunate position. Their land
provided them with a large surplus to which was added income from moneylending. Good harvests and high prices enriched them, as they had more to sell than any of the other groups, and even famines and low prices were to their advantage, as these provided an opportunity for them to buy or take on mortgage land from those who were forced by these events to part with it to meet their day-to-day needs. This does not imply that all landlords tended to acquire more and more land. Many an individual may have wasted his fortune in ‘riotous living’ and, for landlords too, the law of inheritance operated to reduce individual holdings after each generation. However, it is certain that landlords as a class would tend to own an increasing share of the land.

On the basis of the above discussion we may conclude that during the colonial period we would expect to observe a process of differentiation amongst the peasantry, with an increasing proportion of the peasantry being pushed into the bottom group (poor peasants, sharecroppers and agricultural labourers), and a growing concentration of land in the hands of the landlord class. We will now examine the available data to determine the extent to which this process actually took place.

THE EXTENT OF DISPOSSESSION AND CONCENTRATION OF LAND

In this section we shall examine data on transfer of land, tenancy, concentration of land, etc., to obtain a concrete picture of the process of dispossession and differentiation that occurred during the colonial period.

Sales and Mortgages of Land

In the section on the land market it was noted that once private property in land had been established the dispossession of the peasantry could only take place through the market. Therefore, an examination of the data on sales and mortgages of land should provide us with some idea of the scale of the process. Table I(A) presents data on land transfers by the Punjabi peasants between 1866-67 and 1896-97. We find that in the first 13 years for which data are available, i.e., 1866-67 to 1878-79, a total of 1.2 million acres of land had been sold and another 2.3 million acres mortgaged. According to Darling [1947: 172], by 1878 seven per cent of the land in the province was mortgaged, and from the above data it is seen that sales of land were at least half of the mortgaged area. Therefore, we may conclude that more than 10 per cent of the land had been transferred by this time. Moreover, the rate at which land was being alienated continued to increase and by the second half of the 1880s it reached a peak, with annual average sales being 350,000 acres and mortgages 658,000 acres. As a result in the 31 years, i.e. from 1866-67 to 1896-97, more than 6.5 million acres of land were sold and 11.7 million acres mortgaged. However, we cannot simply add the figures of sales and mortgages to obtain the total area transferred because a substantial portion of the mortgaged area was subsequently sold. In addition, in case of a rise in the price of land a certain area was redeemed and then
The Punjab During Colonial Rule

### TABLE 1
SALES AND MORTGAGES OF LAND — 1866/67 TO 1940/41

(A) 1866/67 TO 1896/97

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Average for the period</th>
<th>Area Sold (000 ac.)</th>
<th>Price* (Rs.)</th>
<th>% Sold to Moneymakers</th>
<th>Area Mortgaged (000 ac.)</th>
<th>% Mortgaged to Moneymakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1866/67-1873/74</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874/75-1878/79</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879/80-1883/84</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884/85-1888/89</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>27**</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>42**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889/90-1893/94</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894/95-1896/97</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>6,547</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>25***</td>
<td>11,733</td>
<td>38***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(B) 1896/97 TO 1940/41

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Average for the period</th>
<th>Area Sold (000 ac.)</th>
<th>Price* (Rs.)</th>
<th>Transaction size (acres)</th>
<th>Cultivated Area (000 acres)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1896/97-1900/01</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901/02-1905/06</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906/07-1910/11</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911/12-1915/16</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916/17-1920/21</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921/22-1925/26</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926/27-1930/31</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931/32-1935/36</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936/37-1940/41</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>10,305</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>10,075</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: M = Area Mortgaged; R = Area Redeemed; M—R = Net Change
* Price in Part A is per cultivated acre and in Part B per acre sold.
** Percentage based on four years only.
*** Excludes the years 1866/67 to 1873/74 and 1886/87.

Sources:
Part A: Price of land is from [Hirashima, 1974: 313], rest is computed from [Barrier, 1965: 103].
Part B: [Agricultural Statistics of the Punjab, 1937: 34-35] and its supplements, Table 5.2.

mortgaged again for a larger sum. Both these factors would result in double counting. But these figures do indicate how active the land market was in this period and the extremely precarious position of the peasantry. According to Darling [1925: 234] the area under mortgage in 1891 was 3.9 million acres, and adding to it the 6.5 million acres of land sold we get a total figure of 10.4 million acres, i.e., almost 30 per cent of the agricultural land, transferred during this period. This clearly represents alienation of land on an enormous scale in a relatively short space of time.
Data on the second half of the colonial period — Table 1(B) — show that though the alienation of land continued throughout the period it was at a somewhat lower rate than before, the reasons for which were as follows. First, in 1900 the ‘Land Alienation Act’ was passed under which it was made illegal for the moneylender to buy land from an agriculturalist. Thus, the moneylender, who was an important factor in forcing the peasant to sell his land, was to a large extent eliminated from the land market. Moreover, it is likely that whatever sales to moneylenders did take place after 1900 were not registered and therefore do not appear in the official statistics. Second, most of this period was relatively free of famines and, until the great depression, of generally high agricultural prices. Thus the peasantry was in a relatively better position. Third, by the end of the nineteenth century most of the cultivable village common land had been sold and this had been an important factor in the high rate observed in the earlier period. Finally, the rapid rise in the price of land and its mortgage value during this period allowed the peasant to incur a much larger debt before he was forced to sell his land. However, the lower rate still meant that another 10 million acres, i.e., more than 25 per cent of the agricultural land, was sold during this period.

It is evident, therefore, that an extremely active market in land existed in the Punjab for most of the colonial period, accounting for sale of over 16 million acres, and mortgages involving over 20 million acres. Considering that the total agricultural land in the Punjab was less than 40 million acres, these figures show the degree to which land had been commercialized under colonial rule.

**Development of a Landless Agricultural Population**

Clearly the most important indicator of the dispossession of the peasantry is the development of a landless agricultural population. In the Punjab the landless class had two components, i.e., sharecroppers and agricultural labourers. We shall examine each of these in turn.

(a) **Sharecroppers**: In the pre-colonial period, when the land tax absorbed almost the entire rent, tenants hardly existed. However, fairly soon after the establishment of British rule the land tax became less than the potential rent, making it possible for the landowner to appropriate the difference between the cultivators' subsistence and government demand, on the one hand, and the agricultural produce, on the other. As a result, a process of dispossession of the peasantry began to take place and a class of landless tenants began to develop. Data on land tenure in the Punjab for the colonial period are presented in Table 2. They show a remarkable increase in area cultivated by tenants-at-will (hereafter referred to as T-A-W), with the increase being especially rapid in the first half of the British period when the area cultivated by T-A-W increased from 10 per cent in the 1860s to 40 per cent in the 1900s. This was naturally accompanied by a decline in the area
TABLE 2  
LAND TENURE IN THE PUNJAB — 1890 to 1937

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage of total area cultivated by</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Owner Cultivators</td>
<td>Tenants-at-will</td>
<td>Occupancy tenants*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860s**</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880/81 (a)</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888 (b)</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890/91 (a)</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average for the period (c)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902/03-1906/07</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912/13-1916/17</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922/23-1926/27</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
* Includes those paying nominal or no rents. These varied between one and two per cent during this period.
** This is an estimate based on [Baden-Powell, 1972, Vol. II: 569], and the subsequent trend in occupancy tenant data.

Sources:
(a) *The Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1908, Vol. XX*: 307.
(c) *Agriculture Statistics of the Punjab, 1937 and its Supplement 3, Table 68 and Saini, 1975: 191.*

cultivated by independent peasants, which decreased from 78 per cent to 47 per cent during that period.

Since the figures on land tenure in the 1860s are an estimate (see note to Table 2), we have presented in Table 3 data on land tenure in a few districts for which earlier figures are available. These tend to support the above conclusions, as can be seen from the following: (i) Even 20 years after the establishment of British rule T-A-W cultivated only 11 per cent and 13 per cent of the area in Lahore and Gujrat districts respectively. Even in Gujranwala district, which was the home of the ruling Sikh family who had been allotted large tracts of land by the British for political reasons, land cultivated by T-A-W in the 1850s was only 18 per cent. (ii) All districts show a very sharp increase in T-A-W cultivated area, with increases ranging from 2.5 times in Gujrat to 4.5 times in Lahore.

The data on tenancy tend to confirm that during the colonial period large-scale dispossession of the peasantry from the ownership of land took place. It is seen that by the end of the colonial rule in Punjab, which the British writers continued to describe as the ‘land of small proprietors’, almost half the land was cultivated by T-A-W. However, it must be made clear that the entire area cultivated by T-A-W is not held by *landless* sharecroppers. In fact as forced sales and mortgages reduced the peasant’s owned holding, he attempted to maintain an economically viable holding by renting in land on a sharecropping basis. Therefore, some of the area
TABLE 3
LAND TENURE IN THREE DISTRICTS OF THE PUNJAB

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Percentage of area cultivated by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Owner Cultivators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahore</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869 (a)</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901-02 (b)</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujranwala</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854-56 (b)</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901-02 (d)</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujrat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870 (c)</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901-02 (d)</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources:
(a) P.D.G., Lahore, 1883-84: 75.
(b) P.D.G., Gujranwala, 1936: 212.
(c) P.D.G., Gujrat, 1884: 57.
(d) The Statistical Volume of Relevant P.D.G., Table XXXVIII.

cultivated by T-A-W was held by poor and middle peasants. However, it is possible to get an idea of landless sharecroppers from the population census, which shows that their proportion in the agricultural population was 24 per cent in 1901 and 34 per cent in 1931 [Hirashima, 1974: 124-25].

(b) Agricultural labourers: The other component of the landless class are the agricultural labourers, and Table 4 shows that there was a substantial increase in their proportion during the 60 years or so for which data are available. It is evident that full-time agricultural labourers did not exist prior to the establishment of colonial rule, and even in 1868 they were only 2.3 per cent of the agricultural population. However, because of the process of dispossession of the peasantry, their proportion had increased to 14.4 per cent by 1931. Agricultural labourers in the Punjab, though growing in number, were to a large extent an extension of the landless sharecropper group, in the sense that if a sharecropper lost his bullock and could not raise the money to replace it he would become an agricultural labourer, and if the agricultural labourer was able to save enough to purchase a team of bullocks he would take up cultivation as a sharecropper. Thus, the famines of 1878-80 and 1900-01 resulted in a large increase in the proportion of agricultural labourers in the following decades. But in each case there was a decline in the next decade. This decline was especially large in 1910-20, which was a period of high agricultural prices and relatively good harvests. Still, the overall trend was an increasing one, as clearly not all who were pushed into this group could save enough money to take up sharecropping again.
The Punjab During Colonial Rule

TABLE 4
GROWTH OF AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS IN THE PUNJAB

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Proportion of agricultural labourers (a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1868 (b)</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891 (c)</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891 (c)</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901 (d)</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911 (d)</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921 (e)</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931 (e)</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
(a) Agricultural population consists of landowners, tenants, labourers and herdsmen and does not include artisans and other traditional landless groups.
(b) Based on total number of males (including children).
(c) Based on males over 15 years.
(d) Based on total population supported.
(e) Based on total working population.

Source:
Calculated from the occupation tables in relevant Population Censuses of the Punjab, and [Patel, 1952: 29].

Concentration of Land Ownership

To get a complete picture of the process of dispossession and differentiation that took place during the colonial period it is necessary to look at the distribution of land ownership. This information is only available for two years, i.e. 1924 and 1939, and is presented in Table 5. It can be seen that by 1924 distribution of land had become extremely unequal. At one end, the poor peasants accounted for 59 per cent of the owners and only 12 per cent of the area, while at the other end, the landlord class represented only eight per cent of the owners but controlled 46 per cent of the land. Thus, starting from a situation at annexation when most of the peasantry was in the middle and rich peasant categories, by 1924 about three-fifths had been pushed into the poor peasant group while a small percentage of large landowners had appropriated almost half the total area.

The increasing bi-polar division of agrarian society continued through the next 15 years. By 1939 the poor peasants, who still controlled only 12 per cent of the area, made up 64 per cent of the owners, while the landlord class which now represented only six per cent of the owners increased its share of land to 53 per cent. Moreover, the increase in area controlled by those owning 50 acres or more is even more dramatic, i.e., from 26 per cent to 38 per cent. Finally, it is important to note that the middle peasant continued to be squeezed out, as the area under their control declined from 27 per cent in 1924 to 22 per cent in 1939.

The extent and nature of the process of differentiation that took place
TABLE 5
DISTRIBUTION OF LAND — 1924 AND 1939

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of holdings</th>
<th>% of holdings in each group</th>
<th>% of cultivated area in each group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1924 (a)</td>
<td>1939 (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) 0 to 1 acre</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 3 acres</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 5 acres</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor peasants</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>63.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) 5 to 10 acres</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 15 acres</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle peasants</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) 15 to 20 acres</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 25 acres</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich peasants</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) 25 to 50 acres</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 acres above</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landlord class</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source:
(a) Calvert, 1926: 17.
(b) Saini, 1975: 184.

during the colonial period now becomes clear. It was shown above that in 1931 the landless peasantry, i.e., sharecroppers and agricultural labourers, made up 48 per cent of the agricultural population, and now we see that in 1924 of the remaining 52 per cent who owned land 59 per cent were poor peasants. In brief, by the 1930s the bottom group consisting of poor peasants, landless sharecroppers and agricultural labourers accounted for four-fifths of the agricultural population while the landlord class, who made up less than four per cent of the agricultural population controlled half the agricultural land in the province. A point worth noting is that most of the dispossessed peasantry remained tied to the land. Poor peasants and sharecroppers, who made up 82 per cent of the bottom group, had no doubt lost part or all of their land but they still owned the remaining means of production, i.e., bullocks and implements. In other words, the process of differentiation had not resulted in the development of a class of ‘free’ wage labourers.

MONEYLENDERS, AGRICULTURIST LANDLORDS AND COLONIAL POLICY

In the earlier sections we identified two groups who acquired land during the colonial period, i.e., moneylenders and a small percentage of the
zamindars (hereafter referred to as agriculturist landlords). In this section we will discuss the relative importance of moneylenders and agriculturist landlords in the acquisition of land, and the British policies regarding the two.

In Table 1(A), information on the participation of the moneylender in the land market is presented. It shows that until the 1870s the moneylender was in almost a dominating position, accounting for 40 per cent of the sales and 60 per cent of the mortgages. However, during the rest of the nineteenth century his participation declined, and by the 1890s he accounted for only 20 per cent of the sales and 30 per cent of the mortgages. Despite the decline in the importance of the moneylenders, in 1900 the colonial government intervened by passing the Land Alienation Act, which made it illegal for an agriculturist to alienate permanently his land to a moneylender. Thus the moneylender was, more or less, eliminated from the land market and forced to collaborate with agriculturist landlords, whose monopoly was now firmly established. The reasons for this intervention were entirely political. In the eyes of the colonial rulers, concentration of land in the hands of the agriculturist landlords was desirable because their economic domination over the peasantry was the means by which the British maintained control over the countryside. However, the moneylender, though essential for the collection of the land tax, development of production for export and distribution of manufactured imports, was a political liability. He lacked an independent power base in the countryside and relied almost entirely on the State machinery for the enforcement of his claims. In other words, while the concentration of land in the hands of the agriculturist landlords tended to consolidate colonial rule, the dispossession of the peasantry by the moneylender created tension and brought the peasantry into direct conflict with the State machinery.

The British policy of encouraging the development of an agriculturist landlord class is also evident from the settlement policies adopted in the Canal Colonies. Three types of cultivators were selected to settle the colonies. In the official literature they are referred to as peasant, yeomen and capitalist grantees. Generally the peasant grant was one square of land (25 acres); yeomen and capitalist grants were 4-5 squares and 6-20 squares respectively. With regard to the so-called capitalist grants, the position of the colonial administration was quite frankly expressed by the Revenue Secretary, Punjab Government, as follows:

It supplies natural leaders for the new society; it gives opportunity to Government to reward its well-deserving servants, and to encourage the more enterprising provincial gentry; it attracts strong men who are able to command the services of considerable bodies of tenants; it furnishes a basis from which agricultural improvements may be hereafter extended; and, lastly, it enables Government to obtain a better price than might be otherwise possible for the ownership as distinct from the user of its land. [P.D.G., Chenab Colony, 1904: 29]
It seems clear that the British, for political and economic reasons, created a class of large landlords in the Canal Colonies as well, and the settlement policies tended to preserve the existing monopoly of the landlords by excluding the landless and poor peasants from grants of land. However, one impact that the opening up of the Canal Colonies did have on the process of dispossession was that for those middle and rich peasants who received land the decline in the size of holding, because of increase in population, was arrested at least for the time being. This probably was an important factor in the slowing down of the process of dispossession of the peasantry observed during the second half of the British period.

CONCLUSION

In this paper we have shown how the changes in the legal structure and the system of land taxation introduced by the British, along with the development of market relations, resulted in the commercialization of land and the dispossession of the peasantry. As a result, by the end of the colonial period a highly differentiated structure of peasantry had emerged in the Punjab, with most of the peasantry in 'poor peasant, landless sharecropper, agricultural labourer' categories and more than half the land in the hands of the landlord class.

In conclusion it may be noted that in our discussion of the process of differentiation we have not explicitly dealt with the impact of population growth. Therefore, a brief observation on that aspect will be useful to complete the analysis in this paper. Generally, the effect of population growth, without a corresponding increase in alternative employment opportunities, is to increase population pressure on the land, generate greater competition amongst cultivators, raise rents and reduce the size of operated holdings. However, in the Punjab, during most of the colonial period, the cultivated area was expanding more rapidly than population and the pressure on land actually declined: for example, the land–labour ratio increased from 1.05 acres in 1855 to 1.40 acres in 1891, around which level it stayed until 1921. But most of the new area brought under cultivation was either owned by large landowners (village commons) or the State (Canal Colonies) and the dispossessed peasantry did not have access to it. As a result, population growth tended to speed up the process of dispossession of the peasantry from the ownership of land but it had little effect on the size of the cultivated holdings or the rental shares.

NOTES

1. Traditionally the total accumulated interest on a cash loan could not exceed 50 per cent of the principal (100 per cent for a grain loan) [Darling, 1925: 218]. Moreover, the illiterate peasant, who could neither keep his own accounts nor understand those kept by the moneylender, fixed his thumb impression wherever the moneylender asked him to. This would have no standing with the panchayat, but it was considered binding in a court of law.
2. Hirashima [1974: 23] defines ‘private rent property’ as that ‘portion of the rent exclusively belonging to the holder of land after meeting the demand by the State’. Clearly if the State demand is equal to the entire rent, there is no ‘private rent property’ and land does not command a price.

3. At the time of the first ‘regular settlement’ in the 1850s and 60s these rights were recorded and the land revenue (tax) fixed. The purpose of subsequent settlements was to increase the tax and bring the ‘record of rights’ up to date.

4. The settlement officers used average figures for both, making adjustments in these according to the local conditions, such as fertility of land, type of irrigation, etc., to arrive at a figure for ‘net assets’ for each holding.

5. Between 1861 and 1895 the average rupee price of wheat, which in the Punjab is a good proxy for agricultural prices in general, increased by 40 per cent [Narain, 1926: 53-54]. The general rise in agricultural prices in the second half of the nineteenth century was primarily due to the fact that India, at the time, was on the silver standard and there was an almost continuous decline in the price of silver relative to gold in the world market during this period, which in turn meant rising rupee prices for agricultural exports.

6. In the pre-colonial period, because of the system of inheritance, the individual shares in the village land had probably become fairly unequal. Once these shares were recognized by the British, almost overnight, the potential inequality which had existed amongst the zamindars was converted into actual inequality, and those having the largest shares became the wealthiest and, therefore, the most influential members in the village.

7. Paustian [1930: 78-79] attributes the entire increase of 5.6 million acres in cultivated area during the period 1868-91 to the 1.6 million acre increase in canal irrigated area in that period. His reasoning is unacceptable because: (1) The entire increase in canal irrigated area cannot be considered as net increase in cultivated area; and (2) The indirect effect cited by him, i.e., a rise in the sub-soil water level which makes well irrigation possible in nearby tracts, not only operates with a considerable time lag, but is also refuted by data on well-irrigated area, which shows a decrease over this period [Calvert, 1922: 67-68].

8. As Calvert [1936: 12] points out, ‘the price of wheat in the Punjab mandi (market) depends, not on the local conditions, but on the price in Liverpool’.

9. Famines in Punjab resulted in a heavy loss of livestock, and loans taken for the purchase of cattle were responsible for a substantial portion of the peasant debt, e.g., ‘In 1877-78 some districts lost half, some two-thirds, of their stock’ [Calvert, 1922: 131].

10. This figure is to some extent arbitrary and depends on the number of working members in the family and on the region. For example, in the Lyallpur canal colony the peasant grantees were each allotted a square (27.5 acres) of land and a large percentage of them cultivated it with family labour. However, for most of the Punjab 25 acres is a reasonable demarcating line between rich peasants and landlords.

11. A fall in agricultural prices increased the burden of land revenue and interest payments and thus had the same consequence.

12. The poor peasant had no opportunities of investment open to him and usually put his money into jewellery which when sold brought even less than the original price paid.

13. Sons of quite a few poor and middle peasants joined the army and the additional income from this source may have allowed them to maintain their position, or even improve it.

14. For example in the 1890s most of the peasant settlers in Lyallpur colony were given a square of land each. As a result at that time only 35 per cent of the holdings were below 25 acres, but by 1924 58 per cent of the holdings were 15 acres or less [Calvert, 1925: 13-14].

15. According to Darling [1947: 17], in 1930 about half the total agricultural debt, i.e., Rs.700 million, was owed to agriculturist moneylenders and at least three-fourths of the usufructuary mortgage debt had been advanced by them.
16. In agricultural population we do not include the traditionally landless groups, i.e., artisans, menials, shopkeepers, etc.

17. This difference in rate in the two periods tends to confirm the conclusions of the previous section, where a similar difference in rate of sales of land and mortgages was observed.

18. In the calculation of these figures it is assumed, on the basis of the respective shares of tenant cultivated land, that occupancy tenants made up one-fourth and one-fifth of the total tenant population in 1901 and 1931 respectively.

19. These also include the chiefs and nobles who received jagirs or grants of land for their service to the British during the Sikh wars and the Great Revolt of 1857.

20. Also the peasant grants were large enough, at least for a generation or two, to remain outside the mechanism of dispossession.

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