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## **Agricultural Development In The North West Frontier Province (Khyber Paktunkhwa) Durig British Rule (1901-47)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The North West Frontier Province left economically lagging area during British raj on Subcontinent. The agricultural development has been considerably affected by geography and demography. The inter-regional economic inequalities mostly have developed during British raj. The inter-regional economic inequalities thus once born deepened with the passage of time. The Question arises, why frontier districts could not share equally the economic development? Whether basic cause of its deprivation from developments was non-feasibility and inaccessibility of hilly terrain of the border province? Or anti-British stance of the dwellers of this province thwarted or hindered its economic development? This paper will try to gather information about the causes of backwardness whatever that may be. The NWFPs remained lagging due to least attention paid to these districts as compared to other region of Subcontinent and inherited narrow base of agriculture as well as industry.

**Keywords:** NWFP, British, Development, geography, Land, regional and Agriculture.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The province of NWFP lies at the junction of three mountain ranges; Himalaya, Karakoram and Hindukush. Kashmir and Punjab are located to its east and Afghanistan to its west; Afghanistan also bounds the province on the north, Baluchistan and Dera Ghazi Khan District of the Punjab on the south.<sup>2</sup> The province with three main geographical divisions namely (i) Cis-Indus division of Hazara (ii) The comparative narrow strip between Indus and the hills, constituting the settled divisions of Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu and D.I.Khan. (iii) The rugged mountainous region located between these divisions and the border with Afghanistan (Durand line) known as tribal belt were the cradle of Gandahara and Hindushahi civilization. The province remained a corridor for countless invaders. Conquerors like Cyprus, Alexander the great; Tamerlain, Mahmood of Ghazni, Babur, Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali crossed the famous Khyber Pass. Several Muslim Pakhtun families like Lodhis and Duranis ruled over Indo-Pak Subcontinent.

The North West Frontier Province was made part of Punjab in 1849 after British takeover. The main cities of the province include Peshawar, Nowshera, Mardan, Mansehra, Swabi, Charsada,

Ayubia, Nathia Gali, Abbottabad, Kohat, Bannu and D.I.Khan. The most valuable asset of the districts is their unique cultural heritage that is thousands of years old. NWFP possesses number of historical buildings, archeological monuments and cultural history that is enhanced by natural beauty of their varied landscape. The varied geology endows the districts with enormous mineral wealth. The Peshawar, Mardan, Charsadda and Swabi have fertile lands surrounded by hills, while as one moves further south to Kohat, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan, one can see expanses of barren areas.

### **Formation of North West Frontier Province**

Before its birth as a separate province, it was part of Punjab from 1818-1899. Throughout the last quarter of the nineteenth century, various kinds of schemes for the formation of new administrative unit of the North West Frontier had been mooted by officials and debated by the government of India. Most of the Frontier experts of the time had agreed to the need of such a unit. The tribal uprising of 1897-98, when Wazirs, Swatis, Mohmands, Afridis and Orakzai rose against the government forward move referred to as the “Curzon Forward Policy”. It led the government to undertake seven military operations against the tribal<sup>1</sup> which expedited the process of the detachment of the tribal territory from the Punjab administration. On assumption of his office in January 1899, Lord Curzon had to tackle the two-fold problem of the Northwest Frontier of India viz. the reorganization of military defense and the reform of the administration of the trans-Indus districts. Curzon alleged British Government of Punjab of neglecting North West Frontier regions. So he sketched out his scheme for separating the administration of the Frontier districts from the Punjab government and constituting a new province<sup>2</sup> and placing it under direct control of the Government of India to ensure its efficient management.

The then Secretary of State, Mr. Hamilton and Lieutenant Governor of Punjab, Mac worth Young raised number of objections concerning this scheme of separate Frontier province, but Curzon flatly declined all of them and the NWFP came into being on the King’s birthday, 9th November 1901. The Colonel Harold became the first Chief Commissioner of the Province. The province was excluded from the reforms introduced in 1909 and 1919 Acts. During 1930 and onward the pro-Congress Khudai Khidmatgar Movement under the leadership of Abdul Ghaffar Khan dominated over the politics of NWFP, who never compromised with the British raj. They were tilted more towards Indian National Congress than All India Muslim League. As a result of communal award it was in April 1932, that its status was raised from commissioner province to governor province Sir Ralf Griffith became first governor of the province.

### **Research Methodology**

Historical as well as descriptive method of research were used in this research. It involved studying and understanding of the past events and to arrive at present conclusion. The causes, effects or trends of past occurrences that may be helpful to explain the present events and

anticipate the future events. As in historical method of research data is not administered by instruments or individuals but already available data is sought out. A major problem with historical research is excessive reliance on secondary data. In case of a descriptive study the things are reported as they are. Most of the sources used include record of archives; government published or released reports, statistics, surveys, gazetteers, books, magazines, newspapers and periodicals.

### **Economy of the province during (1901-47)**

The North West Frontier Province formed in 1901, took away nearly 1/14<sup>th</sup> of the Punjab's total area, and 1/15<sup>th</sup> of its total revenue and a little more than 1/18<sup>th</sup> of its entire population<sup>3</sup>. A huge public investment in hilly as well as rain fed area was the need of time but in subcontinent the development strategy followed was in egalitarian. Growth generating investments have received the top priority and the lion's share of public resources for agriculture has been directed to the irrigated areas of Indus basin. NWFP was a neglected one during the British rule as compared to Sind and Punjab, so per capita income was less than the national average at the time of formation of province. The more striking feature of the administration of the province was its frequent budget deficit. For the first decade the revenue and expenditures of the Province were wholly imperial. The revenue of the province increased steadily, but the expenditure of the administration too rose rapidly, consequently its budget was always a deficit one. The root cause of the excessive rise in expenditure was also on account of the expenses on the protection of India land and its frontiers. The expenditure on matter relating to the tribal tract was more than the revenue of the province.

Despite intensive efforts were made to reduce the deficit of the province, by bringing into productive sphere the marginal land. The steady increase in population and food consumption, as well as periodic drought and floods; have kept the annual deficit at about the same level as previously. The government main expenditure laid in matter relating to the tribal tract, and boarder defense. The increase in these expenditures appearing necessarily under political and police heads that included the tribal allowances, maintenance of tribal levies and the boarder military police. Political and police expenditure were Rs 3.2 million, 4.8 million and 9.42 million in 1902, 1910 and 1920 respectively<sup>4</sup>. In communal award of 1932, NWFP was raised to the status of full-fledged province. After becoming a Governor province, it was realized that the province could not afford its financial expenditure without assistance extended by center. Hence under Australian' Otto Niemeyer Award of 1939, it was given an annual subvention of Rs.10 million from the center that continued till 1947<sup>5</sup>.

### **Table 1 Table showing the total revenue, expenditure and deficit of the province from 1901 to 1947 in million rupees**

YEAR	REVENUE	EXPENDITURE	DEFICIT
1902-03	4.54	7.49	2.95
1910-11	4.66	9.94	5.27
1919-20	7.09	18.02	10.94
1929-30	8.54	34.08	25.54
1946-47	19.3	44.09	24.79

Source: The imperial gazetteer of India (Provincial Series NWFP) and D. C. Obhrai, The evolution of Northwest Frontier Province. Lal Baha, NWFP administrations under British rule (1901-1919) and Said Khan, The Voice of Pashtuns

### **Agro-based industries in NWFP during (1901-47)**

The area now constituting Pakistan was mostly agrarian and was backward industrially and the raw materials both agricultural and mineral were processed elsewhere in the Subcontinent or exported. "Much of the larger portion of cotton grown in Sind and Western Punjab used to go to the cotton mills of Ahmedabad, Bombay and Cawnpore. East Punjab and U.P. Similarly, Bombay bay mills turned raw wool produced in West Punjab and NWFP into finish clothe. Mineral oil and antimony mined in the hilly track of Chitral (NWFP) went to Bombay for refining<sup>7</sup>. NWFP lagged behind in industries and building of some thin industrial structure was started in late 1930s. The industrial establishments erected were mostly confined to the sugar and tobacco industries. A Frontier Sugar Mill (Takhtbai) Mardan was set up in 1938, with daily crushing capacity 880 million tons of sugar. Premier Sugar Mill (Mardan) was established in 1944 with daily crushing capacity of 3800 million tons of sugar cane<sup>8</sup>. The province possessed more potentialities for the development of sugar industry since the whole of Northern Pakistan zone was deficit in respect of sugar production. But no heed was paid. NWFP was rich in citrus fruit and was called fruit basket of Subcontinent, also possessed a fruit-processing factory at Nasir Abad (Peshawar) that provided Juices canes to the British forces in 2<sup>nd</sup> World War.

The province and the adjacent tribal belt formed a great wool-producing tract. The large number of sheep bred in this area yielded enormous quantities of wool. Out of about 4 thousand Maund (each Mound is of 40 kg) of wool available in the province, only 5 thousand Maund were used in the province. The remaining three and haf thousand Maund were exported to mills in different parts of the country and abroad<sup>9</sup>. Excellent blankets were made in Swat and Kaghan. The Pattis and Choghas of Chitral have worldwide reputation. Large quantities of skins of buffalo, ox, cow, goat and sheep were available in the province, which were exported and after tanning lump sum 43 thousand Maund were imported for local cobblers. These hides and skins that the province was exporting could be very profitably tanned in the province<sup>10</sup>.

### **(iii) Irrigation development during (1901-47)**

The British developed the Indus basin canal system the world's 'largest one' in Punjab and Sind during 1880-1930 that brought tremendous progress to agriculture in these provinces. The weak base of agriculture in the present NWFP is traced back to this period when as compared to other provinces no remarkable irrigation project was carried out in Frontier districts. The Famine commission (1898) and (1901) and the Indian Irrigation Commission 1901 recommended the development of irrigation in addition to its stress on the self-help and thrift and strengthening the staff of agriculture department. The Irrigation Commission considered the utility of irrigation as a protection against famine and drought. The British Government concentrated on the irrigation development of so called granary of Subcontinent (Indus Basin). In Punjab the Upper Chenab Canal, the Lower Bari Doab Canal and the Upper Jhelum Canal on River Jhelum were constructed in 1912, 1913 and 1915 respectively.

Similarly, the triple canal system was developed which linked the Jhelum with Chenab and Ravi, in the period 1907 to 1915. Later on Sulemanki Head works and Punjnad Head Works respectively with three and two canals were constructed in 1926 and 1932. The Trimmue Head Works with Havali and Rangpur canals, Jinnah Barrage and Kalabagh Barrage with Thal Canal were built in 1939, 1945 and 1947. It had increased irrigated land in Punjab from less than 3 million acre in 1885 to around 14 million acres in 1947<sup>11</sup>. The irrigation development in the North West Frontier Province entered into a new phase. The Commission stressed on the potential protective and remunerative value of the construction of the Hazar Khani branch of the Kabul River Canal in the Peshawar district and the Paharpur canal in the Dera Ismail Khan district. The Commission also recommended the improvement and development of private irrigation work. In NWFP the main canals dug were Kabul River Canal (1907) and Paharpur Canal (1910) and Upper Swat Canal (1915).

At the time of formation of NWFP, only 0.74 million acres (28 percent) out of its gross cultivated area of 2.64 million acres was irrigated. Of the total irrigated area about 2 percent was well irrigated confined mostly to the Swabi Tehsil of Peshawar and the Indus valley in Dera Ismail Khan, 3 percent of the irrigated area was watered by perennial streams in all the five districts. River floods inundated another 3 percent mostly in D. I. Khan and Bannu. The remaining 20 percent area was canal irrigated. Peshawar was the most irrigated district with 40 percent of its cultivated area under irrigation<sup>12</sup>. The other step taken was to improve the minor canals and to bring them under close supervision of government. The total irrigated area under private canals in the four districts of Kohat, Hazara, D. I. Khan and Bannu was 4 lacs and thirty two acres<sup>13</sup>. In 1907 the Punjab minor canal Act III of 1905 was extended to the Frontier province. The Daman system of irrigation in the Dera Ismail Khan, where, agriculture depended mainly on hill torrents (rod-kohi) using the water swelled by melted

snow or heavy rains in the hills. Until 1903, the government had taken no interest in the Daman irrigation.

In 1905 O'Dwyer suggested the improvement of Daman irrigation. Improvement was also brought in the irrigation system of the Bannu district, where the main sources of irrigation were the Kurram and Lohra canal. RIR Glancy, the Settlement Officer of Bannu pointed out the defective working of the Kurram canals. In September 1907, Deane asked for the improvement of irrigation works in Bannu<sup>14</sup>. Deane did not find much time for the improvement of minor canals in the other districts i.e. Hazara, Kohat and Peshawar. The hill streams in these three districts were snow fed and perennial. In Hazara and Kohat, they were fully utilized by a system of distributaries constructed and maintained by the people themselves. In Peshawar the hill streams were diverted into government and private canals. In addition to improving and extending private irrigation work, the provincial authorities paid heed to the construction of state irrigation projects like the Paharpur inundation canal, the Hazar Khawani branch of the Kabul River canal and the Upper Swat canal.

The main canals dug in NWFP during 1901-47 were Paharpur Canal (1910), Kabul River Canal (1907) and Upper Swat Canal (1915). The scheme for the Paharpur inundation canal was first mooted in 1900 by H. W. Gee, the Deputy Commissioner of Dera Ismail Khan, with the object to utilize the Indus water for irrigation of those parts of the districts that suffered most in the droughts. The tract to be irrigated lay on the western side of the Indus and extended from Bilot to Dera Ismail Khan Cantonment. In 1908, a revised estimate was submitted with about one-million-rupee total cost estimate. The total length of the canal including Hafizabad distributaries measured 57 miles. The canal was completed in March 1910. The new canal commanded an area of about ten thousand acres of government wasteland. The government regarded the expected income from this tract as one of the main assets of the canal. The Paharpur canal did not prove remunerative. In 1919-20 the total area irrigated was measured to be only twenty and half thousand acres whereas the cultivable area had originally been estimated sixty-three and half thousand acres. The total revenue generated from the canal in 1919-20 was about 14 thousand rupees as against working expenses one lac in the same year.

The second state project was the Hazar Khani branch of the Kabul River canal. In 1895 the Punjab government realized the need for its extension but due to lack of funds its construction was delayed till 1902. The extension work of the canal was completed in 1906-07 and as a result Kabul River canal irrigation capacity raised from 31,668 acres to 45,773 acres. At the same time the total revenue assessment of the canal rose from Rs.126, 572 to Rs.141, 477<sup>15</sup>. Finally, the boldest irrigation scheme of the government was the Upper Swat canal. The Upper Swat Canal was taken at Amandara in Swat valley with the total commanded area of 4.5 lacs acres of which about 4 lacs acres was to be perennially irrigated

in the Peshawar district<sup>16</sup>. The construction of the canal started in June 1907. The behaviors of the tribesmen towards the construction of canal were not as friendly as were being expected. In view of the political difficulties, some changes were made in the original plan of the canal. The new low-level alignment was added to the canal that shortened main channel by about 4.5 miles and resulted the construction of more than 11 thousand feet long tunnel known as Benton tunnel<sup>17</sup>.

In May 1915, a last revised estimate was made, which set the total cost at Rs.20.2 million and the revenue return at only 6.5 percent of the capital outlay<sup>18</sup>. Financially the canal proved a failure. In 1919-20, the canal watered one lac and thirty-eight thousand acres, little less than half of the original estimate. The gross revenue released from water rate amounted to about little more than half million whereas the working expenses of the canal for the same year came to about little more than half million rupees. The relativity unproductive nature of the canal was partly attributed to some political causes. In September 1915, a permanent remission of canal water rates on one thousand acres of land in the tribal territory was granted to tribesmen, as a mark of appreciation for their cooperation in the construction of the canal. This involved the irrigation department an annual loss of Rs.45, 000. The expenses on Khasadars and guards for the protection of canal were little less than half million in 1921. The central government was not unduly disturbed over the canal being non- remunerative as the canal helped to convert the turbulent and restless tribesmen of the Swat valley into peaceful and contented husbandmen.

An urgent need of establishment of separate irrigation department for the province was felt and was established in 1915 it ended the newly formed province's complete dependence on the Punjab Irrigation Authorities, who, in the past, had not been able to pay adequate attention to its water needs. The most important result of the development of irrigation in this period was the increase in acreage under irrigation. In 1911, state canals irrigated about quarter past two million acres while in 1921 it raised to more than quarter past three million acres, an increase of about fifty percent. The controls of civil canals were transferred from civil administration to the irrigation department in 1931. The Paharpur canal was remodeled in the year 1936-37. Water charges were fixed for Paharpur, Kabul as well as Upper and Lower Swat River canals in 1937<sup>19</sup>. In 1937-38, the total area of NWFP irrigated by major canals reached 4, 60,420 acres and the net profit was Rs.4, 45,261. The areas irrigated by the Lower Swat Canal, the Kabul River Canal, the Upper Swat Canal and Paharpur Canal were 15,7,545, 50,239, 2,12,632 and 40,004 acres respectively.

The profit was 12.3 percent for Lower Swat Canal, 8.6 percent for Kabul River Canal and 1.95 percent for the Upper Swat Canal on the capital invested for these canals. In case of Paharpur Canal there was loss of 1.02 percent<sup>20</sup>. In 1940, aggregate canal water withdrawal by each Punjab and NWFP was 32.05 and 3.81 million acres feet respectively<sup>21</sup><sup>49</sup>. The year 1943,

witnessed a famine that inflicted a severe setback to food production, coupled with the British involvement in the World War 11. Such a situation not only accentuated the need for, but also helped government to focus attention on over all reforms in agriculture. The government made more liberal allocation of funds for a large number of agricultural development projects under the impetus of 'grow more food' campaign of 1943. It brought some extension in NWFP irrigation system. Five irrigation schemes, chief of which is the New Michni Branch of the Doab Canal, have been completed at the cost of three lacs rupee, which brought an area of about five thousand acres under cultivation<sup>2250</sup>. An-other the Jui Sheikh linking scheme improved the irrigation of twenty thousand acres of fertile land.

Half of the cost of this scheme was borne by the Central government. The widening of the Bara Tunnels at the head of Bara Canal, and remodeling the Takkarwah distributary of the Paharpur Canal were other two schemes completed successfully. The next was Construction of the Right Bank lift irrigation scheme of Kabul River Canal that brought about 15,000 acres of land under irrigation<sup>2327</sup>. In spite of this fairly progressive development of irrigation in the province, there was also considerable under-utilization of assessed potentialities. The provincial government had done much but finance was a great handicap. It was the duty of the central government to come out with a generous help. Large quantity of water, which could have been used for growing crops, were taken away by the military authorities for the use of troops and for the lawns and gardens in the cantonments scattered over the province. For instance a considerable quantity of Bara water was taken away from that river for Peshawar Cantonment, while vast stretches of fertile land outside and up to the Afridi foothills have to do with what little was left over<sup>52</sup>.

### **Agricultural Development in NWFP (1901-47)**

In its simplest form agriculture is a profession for getting livelihood by exploiting natural resources e.g. land and water etc. By agricultural development one mean raising production of crops, fruits, vegetables and the number of animals reared. The main determinants of agricultural progress are existing land tenure, services like irrigation facilities, research and extension services, favorable government pricing policies of agricultural input and output, transportation and marketing and least revenue demands.

#### **(i) Land settlements, land revenue and land alienation**

The revised settlement was carried out in all the districts except Peshawar in NWFP between 1901 and 1908<sup>24</sup>. The term of the revised settlement in Kohat, Hazara, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan was provisionally fixed for 25 years, as urgent need of compilation of new record of rights in land and a new statement of Riway-e-Abpashi was felt to keep pace with the rapid changes in agricultural conditions. No change was made in the method of assessment in the revised settlement in Kohat, Hazara and Bannu except Dera Ismail Khan, where because of its precarious irrigation system; the fluctuating assessment system was adopted<sup>25</sup>. The



principles of assessment remained the usual half of the net assets, while the rent ratio had shown a steady upward tendency brought about by factors such as growth of population, the improvement of markets and rising prices. In Hazara district as a whole revenue demand increased by 67 percent, in Bannu by 65 percent, in Kohat by 44 percent and in Dera Ismail Khan by 17 percent over the first regular settlement<sup>26</sup>. The Central government was not pleased on this drastic and sudden increase in revenue demand.

So it granted relief to the cultivators of the local rate and of lambardari cess in the province, keeping in view, their hard and strenuous conditions and their constant exposure to raids and attacks of the trans-border gangs of robbers and dacoits. The people of Hazara and Bannu were relieved respectively of the goat tax and date palm tax introduced there in the revised settlement<sup>27</sup>. Thus, the total percentages of assignments were everywhere lower in the Province than they had been under the first regular settlement. Formerly the Patwaris and Qanoongos were all from Punjab and most of them were moneylenders and had acquired lands by exploiting the rural indebtedness. The government was against such land acquisition by members of non-agricultural community. Locals replaced many Patwaris and Qanoongoes. This change brought an improvement in performance of the subordinate settlement establishment. Several legislative Acts were enacted by land revenue administration of the province to ameliorate the condition of agricultural community. Curzon declared two important principles on which the land revenue administration will have to be based hereafter. (I) the first ban the alienation of land, so that to save the peasants from ruins, (ii) the second exhorted on encouraging the people to cooperate for the mutual supply of capital at cheap and reasonable rates<sup>28</sup>.

The land in the province was passing from the hands of agriculturists' families to an entirely new class of investors such as the moneylenders, the town's men and prosperous merchants. Land alienation showed a slow but steady passage of agricultural tracts into the hands of Hindu Sahukars (moneylenders) in NWFP between the first and second regular settlement. The problem was serious especially in Dera Ismail Khan where since the first regular settlement about four lacs acres land was sold, of which about thirty percent had been bought by Sahukars. In Bannu district, during the same period of time one lac acres of the cultivated area was mortgaged, of which Hindu moneylenders have taken 44 percent<sup>29</sup>. In Kohat district 5.3 percent of the cultivated land had been mortgaged and 1 percent bought by moneylenders since the first regular settlement. In Hazara district, the total area mortgaged and bought by money lenders since first regular settlement was 4 & 3 percent respectively.

The people in Hazara, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan were in favor of the extension of the Punjab Land Alienation Act 1900 to the province while in Peshawar and Kohat the public opinions were averse to any interference with their right of freedom to transfer. Deane the

Chief Commissioner of NWFP extended the Punjab Land Alienation Act to the former districts of Hazara, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan in June 1904 by expelling statutory agriculturalists class from Act as specified in it. This omitting class (statuary agriculturists) land owning kirars or moneylenders were regarded as the main danger to agriculturist community. To bring the occupancy tenants within the purview of the Act, the same restriction was imposed on their right to sell or mortgage land as had been imposed on them as was on the agricultural tribes. Also the amended preemption regulation (the right of a person to acquire agricultural land was restricted to the members of agricultural tribe) was implemented in the province in 1906. The regulation was intended to be complementary for the Land Alienation Act<sup>30</sup>. Later on, in 1921-22 the Land Alienation Act was extended to Kohat and Peshawar district when Government found local people of these districts in favor of the Act.

In addition to the right to buy and sell land freely among the agriculturist, relaxation /remission of revenue rate in case of crop failure further ameliorated the condition of agriculturalists. The relaxation/ remission of revenue was applicable in two types of situations, (i) in local calamities resulting from hailstorms, floods and locust and (ii) widespread calamities such as drought and famine and general failure of crops<sup>31</sup>. Through another resolution passed in May 1906, it was stressed that agricultural land improvements affected by private individual should be exempted from the rise in land revenue. In NWFP it proved “strong stimulus for reclamation of land” by private individuals<sup>32</sup>. It resulted in the reclamation of twenty-seven acres of wasteland in the Kohat district in just two years and similarly reclamation has been done in the Hazara district as well.

### **(ii) Landlords- tenants’ disputes and land tenure reforms**

In agrarian societies, land is the primary productive asset and the tangible expression of economic and political power. Therefore, the struggle for control of land and its fruit is unending one. The concentration of land ownership and feudalistic pattern of social relationship came to be regarded as main obstacle to sustained growth and development. The land tenure system determined the legal and customary relationship between the landlord and cultivators. The land tenure system was thus crucial element in determining the framework of socio-economic relationship in rural areas. During the last decades of the colonial rule, numerous congresses and commissions called for agrarian reforms and worked out appropriate suggestions but no change was observed in land concentration and the curse of tenancy.

### **Table 2 Proportion of owner and tenant cultivator in NWFP during 1930s**

Tiller	Total number	Percentage
Non-cultivating proprietors	36966	8.47
Cultivating proprietors	221032	50.62
Tenants cultivators	178690	40.92
Total	436688	100

Source: Memorandum by the revenue commissioner, NWFP and chairman NWFP franchise committee, April 1932, in report of Indian Franchise Committee vol.111, p.437. In 1930s, out of total cultivated area of 2.53 million acres in the Province, 1.12 million were cultivated by tenants at will and 0.28 million by occupancy tenants. 1.5 million acres were cultivated by Khudkasht Malikan. The cultivating proprietors were the largest group in rural society, followed rather closely by tenants. However, owners cultivated 44 percent of the total cultivated area. The remaining 56 percent, was under tenant's cultivation out of which 11percent cultivators were occupancy tenants.

Agrarian unrest has become an important issue in politics at provincial level. The discontent prevailed among the landlords and tenants. Main cause of the unrest was a number of cesses (taxes) and services in different forms, as a part of the rent payable by tenants. These cesses and services were fixed on the basis of the customs at the time of the last settlement in 1904, with the mutual consent of both landlords and tenants, and were subsequently given the force of law. There were twenty-five such cesses and services including gross cutting, ploughing, bringing of fire wood etc for a khan for fixed number of days in the year<sup>33</sup>.

The disputes between landlord and tenants erupted and intensified time and again and led to Muftiabad<sup>34</sup> (Peshawar) and Ghalladher<sup>35</sup> (Mardan) clashes in 1937-38. The tenants demanded ban on illegal taxes levied by the Nawabs such as malba tax<sup>36</sup>, khardari<sup>37</sup> and tora<sup>38</sup>. Moreover, they demanded ban on bigar, illegal eviction of tenants, illegal fines and their physical harassment. Kisan conferences were held in 1930s on the different places in the province under the leadership of Abdul Rahim Populzai. In 1938, two Kisan conferences were held in Hazara that demanded an end to the bigar and abwab<sup>39</sup>. For patching up, the disputes between Landlord and tenants, Doctor Khan Sahib, Chief Minister of NWFP put a ban on illegal taxes levied by the Nawabs. In March 1938, the Zaildari and Inamdari system was abolished so that to curtail the privileges of the notables. Again a bill recommending the forfeiture of the Jagirs and Inams was passed. According to official estimate, the agricultural indebtedness of rural population of NWFP was about 90 million<sup>40</sup>. So the Agriculturist's Debtors Relief Bill was passed in November 1938 to provide immediate relief to the smaller peasants.

Peasants and small Zamindars were facing the high handedness of the middlemen who were mostly Mahajans (moneylenders). They dominated the markets and habitually used all kinds

of fraud to deprive the producers of their hard-earned money. They deducted a portion of the produce as the allowance of the weigh man, another portion as dues of chawakidar (watchman) and still another as a cut for Dharmasala, mosque or Patsala in the market. Thus the producers were compelled to accept the minimum/low amount offered by them. For protection of peasants and small Zamindars from exploitation of Mahajans, the NWFP government passed Agricultural Produce Market Bill in 1939<sup>41</sup>. Fragmentation or continuous subdivision of holding was another major problem, which adversely affects the scale of operations like drainage, leveling and water supply in agricultural land. Land held by individual was scattered through out the village area in plots separated by land owned by others. This scattering of holding undermines the foundation of a sound agricultural economy since it involves wastage of time, money and efforts.

It was not easy to employ better equipment or improved cultivation practices. This problem of fragmentation attracted the government attention since long. The situations were more serious in NWFP. In 1930s, various laws were enacted for the consolidation of holdings to be undertaken on a voluntary basis. In 1946, the government of NWFP passed the Consolidation of Holding Act providing that if at least two-third of the owners possessing not less than three fourth of the cultivated area agreed to accept a scheme of consolidation, it could be imposed on others<sup>42</sup>.

### **(iii) Agricultural services during (1901-47)**

The farming methodology of NWFP was determined by local soil conditions. Specific farming techniques, crop selection and yields reflected the source of water available for the field. Irrigated fields were usually given manure and cropped twice a year. Barani (rain fed) lands were ploughed once while irrigated lands were usually tilled from three to six times according to the crop. Simple agriculture implements were used "Bullock tied to a six-piece wooden yoke pulled the apparently simply wooden plough (yiwa). Oxen were used to tread out grains. Weeding was never attempted<sup>53</sup>. Lack of research and extension services and the absence of encouragement to use fertilizers were responsible for less productiveness of the agriculture sector. The various classes in the agrarian sector were more inclined towards consumption rather than investment." Agricultural technology did not undergo any significant transition in the period of colonial rule and labor-intensive methods of cultivation were retained"<sup>43</sup>.

### **(a) Agricultural Education, Research and extension**

An agricultural institute was opened at Poona in Bihar in 1904. The provincial governments were also encouraged to set up agricultural departments, open agricultural colleges and to establish experimental farms. The first private Seed Company 'Suttons and sons' came into being in 1912.

In 1905, Deane submitted his proposal to the Indian government to open department of agriculture in NWFP under the supervision of Superintendent of Farms. He also proposed to establish experimental agricultural farms in the Peshawar District. In 1906 experimental agricultural farm was established at Tarnab, which later on served as a center of agricultural research in the Province. To equip the farm with trained staff, the Government of India granted agricultural scholarships to five students of frontier in 1905-07, for a three-year training course in the Kanpur Agricultural College. All of them were later employed in the farm. Improved strains of the cereals, imported from Australia and America and finer varieties of cash crops like sugarcane and tobacco were grown in Tarnab with the help of English and American imported implements. The finest varieties of peaches, plums, apricots, grapes and oranges were brought from Pusa, Simla, Quetta, Saharanpur and Lahore for Peshawar, Hazara, Bannu and Kohat.

The establishment of the Agricultural Department in 1911, however, was a great landmark in the agricultural development of the Province. It helped to promote an improved agronomy within the limits of an inadequate infrastructure. Various measures relating to the land and welfare of the peasantry introduced by the Indian Government for India as a whole or for the Punjab as a part were also introduced in the Frontier province. The Royal Commission on agriculture (1928) stressed on educating the farmers and instilling scientific information in them so that to bring about greater efficiency in the farm production. The commission exhorted on the spreading of rural education, improvement of lives stock industry, extension of irrigation facilities, improvement of marketing facilities and stoppage of further subdivision and fragmentation of land holdings. The commission also recommended establishment of the Imperial Council of agriculture. Imperial Council of agriculture was established in July 1929<sup>44</sup>.

In the early 1930s Brayne Rural Development Commission introduced village guide who served as a friend and philosopher of villagers. It also recommended introduction of the digging of manure pits and use of improved seeds and implements for the development of agriculture. In 1933 an agriculture section was attached to Islamia College to impart agricultural education to the students in province. Tarnab Farm (center of agriculture research) was part of revenue department until and was headed by the Superintendent of Gardens. It was attached to the Agriculture Department in 1935. Director of agriculture headed it together with other allied departments of cooperatives, marketing etc. E.W.N. Noel Director of agriculture NWFP tried several types of mechanical wheat threshers and winnows in 1936-38 but with little success. Nevertheless, this was the first attempt of mechanization of agriculture in NWFP. The Russell Wright Inquiry Committee Report (1939) recommended some measures for bridging gulf between the research workers and the cultivators and stressed on fuller use of knowledge rather than its accumulation. The report exhorted on research workers to work in the field rather than in the laboratory<sup>45</sup>.

The British Government found Peshawar valley an extremely suitable area for growing of a large variety of fruits so they stimulated the growing of fruits in the region on commercial scale. Agricultural nurseries were established in Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Hazara, Mardan and Kohat. Agricultural research institute Tarnab started growing fruits on commercial scale by distributing sapling to the farmer of this area free of cost. The landlords of Peshawar, Mardan and Charsadda began to take interest in fruits growing on commercial scale and fruit orchard were laid on small scale and fruit developing culture flourished in NWFP. Under the stress of the World War 11, an intense need of the canned fruits was felt for the British forces, busy in fighting in far-flung areas. So a number of fruit drying stations were established. The government of India provided 0.65 million for setting up of fruit canning factory at Nasirabad near Tarnab farm, which not only ensure supply of tinned fruits but also made certain availability of vegetables, meat and meat products to the royal forces. Cold storage for fruits was established in 1944. The Peshawar valley in NWFP gave a lead to other provinces when the sugar cane Research section then located at Tarnab farm got a 25 H.P Ferguson tractor in 1948.

#### **(b) Taqavi loans and cooperatives credit**

Central government introduced two measures for agricultural development; first the grants of more liberal state assistance to ryots in the form of taqavi loans and second the provision of credit facilities for tillers through cooperative credit societies established by an Act of 1904. Under the first measure long-term loans were provided for sustainable development of agriculture such as the sinking of wells, construction of dams and embarking and excavation of new tanks and channels. The second measure provided short-term loans for current agricultural needs such as the purchase of seeds, cattle, manure and implements. In the Frontier province slow and gradual increase took place in the amount of agricultural or Taqavi loans advanced by the government. In 1901-02 the loans amounted to about one and half lac that increased to quarter to two lacs in 1910-11 and further increased to half and two lacs in 1919-20. The Taqavi loans provided by government reached seven and half lacs per annum in 1947<sup>46</sup>.

The cooperative movement in the Frontier had a very slow beginning. In 1904, the local government started a few cooperative societies on experimental basis. Two such societies were established in Dera Ismail Khan. In 1907-08 their total membership raised to only 98 with a total working capital of Rs.860. It took several years before the cooperative movement got a substantial footing in the province. In 1925, the Frontier Province was first time fully exposed to the co-operative movement (although the Act was applicable in 1912). The cooperative movement and cooperative department functioned under the co-operative societies Act, 1912. In 1930, the number of societies had increased to 106, the number of members to 5,825 and the amount of capital to nearly 9 lacs<sup>47</sup><sup>61</sup>. The cooperative department

expedited its efforts from 1930 onward but little progress was made due to voluntary character of the program and lack of adequate trained staff. At the time of independence in 1947, NWFP had 1,119 societies with membership of 36,779 and a working capital of Rs.5.71 million<sup>48</sup>.

### **Conclusion**

During the British period under discussion the total cultivated area in NWFP reached 2.92 million acres at the time of independence. as compared to 1.04 million acres (35.6) was irrigated at the time of formation of NWFP in 1901. The total area under major and minor crops was 2.34 million acres out of which 1, 25,000 acres' area was under minor crops; 2.1 million acres' area was under food grain and 1, 11,000 acres' area was under cash crops. The tobacco was first cash crop. The share of tobacco acreage was 10 percent of cash crops in 1945-46. The commercial growing of Virginia tobacco was first started in 1948. The sugar was the second cash crop. Until 1939, 80 percent sugar was devoted to Gur production<sup>49</sup>. In Peshawar and Mardan 63000 acres of land was under sugar cane crop. The sugar cane grown was of excellent quality. Bullock drawn crushing mills called Ghanis crushed most of this sugarcane. In 1946, the commodities in which the province was in surplus were gur, tobacco, dried fruits, maize, bajra, pulses etc. The exportable surplus of the province in gur, tobacco and dried fruits were 62647, 3273, 61748 tons annually<sup>50</sup>. The exportable surplus in maize, bajra, pulses, etc. was 4058 tons. Exportable surplus in wool, hides and skins were 739, 3800, 1147 tons respectively<sup>51</sup>.

### **Findings**

Although extension in irrigation brought considerable benefits to the area now constituting Pakistan, they also gave rise to build in economic disparities. Due to the continuing differential increase in productivity of irrigated areas over the non-irrigated regions inter-provincial and inter-regional disparity emerged<sup>5266</sup>. At the out set of British rule, the basic cause for the differential production in different provinces was due to varied investment in irrigation in different parts of West Pakistan. 18 million acres' area was made irrigated in West Pakistan during colonial rule. The irrigated area increased about fourfold from 1890 to 1947. As already mentioned in NWFP 28 percent (0.74 million) out of (2.64 million) total cultivated land was irrigated at the time of formation of NWFP. At the time of independence total cultivated area in NWFP increased to 2.92 million acres out of which 1.04 million acres (35.6) was irrigated. This was no remarkable change in the irrigated area. About one fourth of the total area of Punjab was under cultivation, and of this, one sixth was regularly irrigated<sup>53</sup>. The vast irrigated land resources had a profound impact on the economy and society in Punjab. The Punjab obtained its most promising development. Similarly Sind, which was desert in the 1890s, had 5 million acres irrigated land at the time of independence<sup>68</sup> b A huge public investment in hilly as well as rain fed area was the need of time but in subcontinent the development strategy followed was in egalitarian. Growth

generating investments have received the top priority and the lion's share of public resources for agriculture has been directed to the irrigated areas of Indus basin. The Frontier districts received little attention during the British rule as compared to Sind and Punjab. So agricultural and industrial base of economy was not sound and the per capita income was less than the national average at the time of coming into existence of Pakistan.

**Recommendation:** The irrigation projects carried in the frontier districts were comparatively far less conspicuous. There are and were plenty of fertile lands available in the province, which had not yet been brought under the plough due to scarcity of water. Thousands and thousands acres stretch of fertile lands in Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu and Kohat could be turned into corn and fruit growing area if water was available.

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34 A village in Charsada, where about 650 jaribs of land belong to the muftis who leased it to Zardad. For some time the lessee was regular in payment, but later on defaulted and refused to pay. The owner secured ejection order from the court. Zardad resisted the court order. It gave birth to tension between tenants and mufti.

35 A bullock belonging to a tenant 'Gulzada' trespassed into the fields of another farmer (man of nawab) in Ghaladher (Mardan). Nawab fined Gulzada Rs. 40. When Gulzada failed to pay, Nawab's men sold the bullock. This aggravated Gulzada, who uprooted the newly planted orchard of the Nawab. The exasperated Nawab fined the entire village of Ghaladher that created a stir among the peasants who refused to pay fine. Nawab obtained eviction order from the civil court and the tenants resisted the court order.

36 Tax collected for supporting the guests of the Nawab.

37 Tax collected for the donkeys, horses and other livestock of the Nawab.

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**6628 | Dr. Mohammad Aslam Khan      Agricultural Development In The North West Frontier Province (Khyber Paktunkhwa) Durig British Rule (1901-47)**

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