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Agrarian Economy of Kashmir Valley under Dogras

Abstract

The agrarian economy during the Dogra period was manifested by stagnation and decline having much in common with the rest of rival British India. The yield of various agricultural crops were low and production of food grains and other agricultural commodities was much less than existed potential and frequent seasonal weather fluctuations were some of the reasons advanced for such low production. These reasons along with poor methods of cultivation were important in their own ways.

The farmers generally chosen the cultivation of rice because rice was a fasten crop of Kashmir. Most of the cultivation was pedestaled on a single crop *which* led to a detrimental and lucrative prominence on certain crops like paddy and maize. The benefit derived by the farmers from the livestock was not a good deal. The reasons for this was that the agriculturists had taken to agriculture as the chief means of continued existence and did not worry much for the additional occupations like trade in wool and formation which required safeguarding of sheep and goats.

Colonial intercession had a reflective impact on the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, which led to the centralization and bureaucratization of state structures along the lines of British India. The early Dogra rulers fetched Kashmir into nearer contact with British India. They displayed Kashmir to the British in unambiguous ways. The history of land revenue administration in Jammu and Kashmir State under the Dogras was a history of the continued mistreatment of peasantry by the ruling class. .

The revenue increased as new areas were taken under the regime of taxes but the real values of land revenue and total revenue had decreased because of persistent rise in index of wholesale prices and land revenue and total revenue had remained stagnant or fallen at prevailing prices because of that the real revenue and total revenue had decreased The *begar* was obligatory on the cultivators as these were healthy, strong and hard workers and were in large quantity and

were measured irrelevant and vulnerable. It was the convention to let off the people of Srinagar from *begar* and to budge the claim for labour on the villagers. In 1920 the state government had taken steps to put an end to forced labour. In the sowing and harvesting seasons, the ruler needed transportation of supplies for which a greater number of cultivators were engaged. The rest of the cultivators run off to the distant hills and did not come back for a long time to their homes and lands were left unsown and gradually turned unproductive. Kashmir had trading relations with Central Asian countries. The demand of Kashmiri commodities enhanced after the direct contact with Punjab. The trade between the Kashmir province and the Punjab was conceded through the Jhelum Valley Road. There were fluctuations in the import and export of commodities due to many causes, like natural calamities, catastrophes and the changing demand. The loss in volume of export was originated by floods and scarcity of grain, which particularly exaggerated the trade. The State claimed a large portion of each crop as land revenue, jagirdars and *chakdars* exacted equivalent shares out of what stayed behind with the peasant. The floods were pursued by awful famines, which further wounded up the anguish of common masses. There was a general enhancement in the population of Kashmir from 1891 to 1941. There was an increase in 2.2% in the growth rate of population in 1901, 1.18% in 1911, 0.86 % in 1921, and 0.15% in 1931 and 1.01% in 1941 per annum.

However there was a drop off in growth rate of population from 1901 to 1941 mainly origin by transmittable diseases like cholera, floods and by the occurrence of influenza in the province. The censuses of 1911, 1921, 1931 and 1941 which is imitated to the less number of females, as females did not endure long due to early child marriage and death during childbirth due to ignorance and poor health care facilities. And working population diminished owing to diseases and other causes which resulted dependency increased on agriculture and other allied activities.