

## **A Temporal View of Socio-Political Changes in Punjab**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Punjab is a unique South Asian region with regard to its, political and administrative history and socio-economic setup. Its socio-political setup has been subjected to many changes in the past. The influence of its historical background on the population characteristics and behavior needs not to be over emphasized. The characteristics and attitude of population in Punjab, specifically socio-political and economic setup, either directly or indirectly is strongly linked to its long earned history. Social customs and economic activities of the people of this area are linked with their historically earned attitudes and traditions. It can be, therefore, worthwhile to have a brief analysis of its historical background pertaining to socio-political changes. The study in point is an earnest effort in this regard. It presents a brief view of socio-political setup of pre-partition and post-partition Punjab. Instigating from etymology, the entire endeavor have been divided into several temporal phases that are based on various groups and invaders which have influenced the region during different periods of time. The influence of these phases on the society has been integrated to present a clear picture of the socio-political set up of Punjab.

**KEY WORDS:** Punjab, socio-political setup, temporal phases, pre-partition Punjab, post-partition Punjab

### **Introduction**

The name, rulers and boundaries of this inhabited land of remotest antiquity have been subjected to many changes in the past. The Punjab, the Sapt-Sindhu of Vedic period,<sup>1</sup> the Pentapotamia<sup>2</sup> of the Greek historians, the Taki<sup>3</sup> of the Taks kingdom, the northwestern region of the pre-partition Sub-Continent of South Asia derives its appellation from two Indo-Persian words '*punj*' meaning five and '*ab*' meaning water, having reference to the five rivers which confer on the region its distinguishing physical features. Thus, etymologically, it means the land of five rivers viz., Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej, all tributaries of the Indus (Leigh, 1997; Ralhan and Sharma, 1994; Latif, 1984:1; Nijjar, 1979: 1; Gupta, 1976: 1; Cunningham, 1924: 170).

For the first time in history, the word 'Punjab' was used during 1850 in '*Tarikh-e-Sher Shah*'.<sup>4</sup> The name Punjab was also mentioned in '*Ain-e-Akbari*' Part 1.<sup>5</sup> Again in the second volume of '*Ain-e-Akbari*', title of a chapter contains the word 'Punjab'. Similarly, the Mughal King Jahangeer too, used this word on page 183 of his book '*Tuzk-i-Jahangeeri*' (Quraishie, 1973).

Being vast fertile agricultural region of the Indo-Pak sub-continent and meeting place of diverse people and cultures since the very dawn of history, Punjab has occupied a position of profound importance and has a unique history of continuous change in South Asia with rich cultural heritage. As it lays on the highway between the nomad breeding grounds of Central Asia and the fertile valley of Ganges, it had, therefore, been the arena of religious, social and political conflicts and almost all the major races and cultures have left their trace on it (Kirpal Singh, 1991:1). The gateway geographic location in the sub-continent has increased its historical significance which has been out of all proportions to its population, size and resources. Its location and climate produced enduring and belligerent people. Besides, Punjab is located at the cross roads of the areas where other great civilizations of the world also grew. Historically, the area in the east of Punjab was under the influence of Indian civilization, the area on the west was heartland of Persian civilization, the North was under Turko-Mongolian sphere of influence and south was under the influence of Arabs. This region is also the birth place of various saints and religious schools of thought like Sufism of Islam, Buddhism and Sikhism, which gained worldwide significance. The resultant religious and ethnic diversity is reflected in the cultural mosaic of even today's Punjab and has influence on its socio-economic and political setup. As the region has been invaded and ruled by many different empires and races like Aryans, Persians, Greeks, Muslims, Mongols, Sikhs and British, therefore its boundaries have been swelling and shrinking over different periods of time. Once, its area was defined to the east from Jamuna River, to the west from Indus River, to the north from Himalayas of Kashmir and to the south from Cholistan and Rajasthan deserts (Nijjar, 1979: 2).

By virtue of its typical location and geo-political position, Punjab, termed by Jinnah the 'corner' stone of Pakistan (Talbot, 1999:67), from the time immortal played a decisive role in the annals of this region. It has been the door way and key to the security of the entire Indo-Pak Sub-Continent by commanding the routes and passes of the North-Western frontiers. Its effective defense system protected the entire region from the aggression of invaders but when its defense weakened, the region was ruined by invaders. It suffered many invasions and beard the burnt of invaders attacks in the past which made Punjabis an enduring section of society. The people of this region therefore, have long back-earned reputation of being the sword arm in making the supreme sacrifices ultimately in liberating Sub-Continent from the grip of imperialistic ascendancy (Grover, 1995; Ralhan and Sharma, 1994). Thus, there has been a continual process of migration and assimilation of people following military invasions or diplomatic

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communications, which affected the population characteristics. Though, this epic land bore numerous invasions and its history is not very simple and not narrow but in spite of all sufferings and long historical journey, it did not entirely lose its glory and strength. It is therefore, suggestive to investigate its unique history which it holds in South Asia.

### **Temporal View of Pre-Partition Punjab**

Earth's approximate life is 4.5 billion years and homo-sapiens appeared on it, probably 5 million years ago (Haggett, 1983: 141; Guinness and Nagle 1999: 1). Whereas archeologists have traced the early signs of human habitation in Punjab to times immortal. Thus, along with Iraq and Egypt, Punjab can also claim to be the host of some earliest human settlements. The discovery of about 0.5 million years old items confirms that in one warm period between ice ages 0.5 to 3.0 million years ago, there were primitive men living in Soan Valley (Bajwa, 2002: 2). In Bahawalpur district, about 32 sites have been found along the defunct Hakra River (called as Sarasvati by Aryans) bed dating back to 4000 BC (Hussain, 1997: 9 & 13). It is generally said that the Indus basin hosted one of the earliest human civilizations with hundreds of farming communities, named as Indus valley civilization that flourished from small settlements to highly refined urban life. Its peak time was around 3000 BC when splendid ancient cities of Harrapa and Moenjodaro were swanked whose culture influenced Balochistan, Iran, Afghanistan and northwestern parts of South Asia. The inhabitants produced agricultural as well as manufactured goods and developed trade with other regions. But it is difficult to answer whether the vast area of this civilization was one or more political units and what was the population and religion of these people. Their disappearance is also not clear, which may be linked to many factors like climatic change, altering Indus River course, spread of desert and continual invasions. However, some views exist that their descendants are Dravidian people who now live mostly in southern India. Probably, the Brahuis of Balochistan are also their successors as they speak a Dravidian language (Hussain, 1997: 15). In addition, Taxila is also thought to be one of the oldest cities of this region which once remained the cradle of human civilization and influenced the surrounding areas.

A brief view of following temporal phases may help to understand the influence of various factors on socio-political set up of Punjab.

#### **Influence of Aryans**

Though, information about Aryans remains incomplete (Ahsan, 1998: 31) and opinions differ but it is generally accepted that North-Western mountains (Central Asia) were the real primitive home of this fairer and potent race, who immigrated through the passes of Hindu Kush mountains. Favourable weather and agricultural

land were the main attractions. Punjab became the real center of their culture where they developed four professional classes that later on, gave birth to rigid Hindu caste system consisting of Brahmina, Khushtria, Vasha and Shudra (Shehab, 1989: 18). They also abide the close relation to the inhabitants of the table lands of Iran, who also, called themselves Arya (meaning noble, admirable or ruling). Greeks called them Ariori (Latif, 1984:23). The period when the Aryans first penetrated into Punjab is unclear<sup>6</sup>. Some arguments indicate that they migrated between 1800 and 1000 BC not all at once but in groups of tribes over a long period of time (Latif, 1984: 25). This herder nation of Sanskrit language possessed cows, camels, sheep, goats and horses, and also increasingly involved themselves in agricultural pursuits later on. Being outdoor people, they worshipped different forces of nature like fire, storm, wind and male gods. Milk and ghee were important parts of their diet along with mutton, vegetables, fruits and various dishes made from barley. In the villages, females wove cotton and wool cloths. Their position was just to serve father first, then husband and then sons, no matter how badly they were treated. The oldest male member led each tribe while reaching in Punjab. A council of elders called *Sabha* was formed to deal day-to-day issues. The general assembly of the tribe called *Samiti* would also meet occasionally to deal various problems. They defeated the older inhabitants who lived in walled cities and whom they called *Dasas*. As they settled down well in the Punjab, each tribe claimed territories for themselves, which became small kingdoms and the chiefs started to think of themselves as Rajas or Kings. These were actually the early people who fully developed the idea of kingdom and king and strengthened cast system. Besides *Rig Vedas* composed in the Punjab, they also compiled myth and legend of songs and long stories called *epics*. *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*<sup>7</sup> are the two longest and most famous of them (Hussain, 1997: 26). Their cultural possessions kept on passing generation to generation and some are still alive specifically in rural areas of Punjab.

### **Influence of Persian**

Though, for various periods of time Punjab remained under the influence of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Egyptians and Tatars etc., but it also shared lot of history with Persian empires. In fact, it laid at the fringes of the great Persian empires and therefore, came under their control from time to time. In 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, Cyrus tried to invade the region but failed. Later on, King Darius occupied some parts of Punjab during his attack while Xerxes and the King Gustasp (516 BC) fully invaded the region and it became the most wealthy satrapy and the heart of Persian kingdom. Greeks, the rival of Persian's empire also had some knowledge of Punjab. The Persian emperor Darius-I (521-486 BC) appointed a Greek namely Skylax to explore the area around the Indus River for commercial expeditions who provided an account of his voyage in his book 'Peripulus'. Hectaeus (500 BC) and Herodotus (483-431 BC) also wrote informative accounts about this region. The description given by Herodotus leads to the assumption that

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the regions conquered by Darius comprised of Multan, Lahore and possibly Gujrat which, in those early days, were most populous and highly cultivated (Latif, 1984: 39). Currently, these populous areas are not only cultivated but are significant contributors of manufactured goods also and playing an important role in country's political system.

### **Influence of Alexander and the Followers**

Alexander, the Great of Macedonia was the first European invader that set foot in Punjab via Chitral and Swat (Shehab, 1989: 21). In 326 BC, after breaking the might of Persians, he entered their final satrapy of Punjab. After occupying many areas, he settled his multi-national army in which majority was of Greeks and Macedonians. His expeditions were documented in the works of Strabo (10 BC), Arrian (125 AD), Ptolemy (150 AD), and others. They also described that the region had plenty of mighty rivers and was divided into four kingdoms. In the Greek maps, it has been mentioned that mightiest river of the entire world is Indos (Indus) with its tributaries. Strabo and Arrian had described the areas between Indus and Sutlej, as they were when the great Macedonian marched through them (Thorburn, n.d.). Ibn Battuta who entered Punjab in 1333 AD writes; "we reached the valley of Sindh known as the Panjab, which means five waters" (as cited in Mahdi, 1953: 5). This was the tract lying between Indus and Jumuna (Nijjar, 1979: 1). Right from the invasion of Alexander, Punjab bore the burnt of several aggressive assaults of hordes from North. During the grisly period the kings like Porus, Chandragupta Maurya, Ashoka and host of other heroes, emerged to defend Punjab from the onslaughts of invaders. After a number of clashes Chandragupta Maurya was succeeded to establish Mauryan dynasty, on the entire landmass of the Sub-Continent for the first time in history. His grandson Ashoka while extending the empire made Buddhism, the state religion and Gandhara its major center. But the empire started to decline in size and supremacy after him. Next invaders were the Bactrian Greeks (200 BC) who were the former members of the Alexander's army pushed to Afghanistan by Chandragupta. Now, they got the occasion and succeeded in taking over the region. The Bactrian<sup>8</sup> Kings Eneradites and Menander (180 BC) invaded Punjab and included it to their kingdom. Menander and Appollodotus ruled Punjab up to 110 BC by establishing independent kingdom centered at Taxila. Later the capital was moved to Sagala (modern Sialkot) that has been described as a great trading center by ancient sources (Latif, 1984: 72 & 73). The empire was Buddhist in religion and the fusion of local and Greek art led to the famous style known as 'Gandhara Art' (Bajwa, 2002: 12). In the middle of the 2nd century BC, Yui Chi tribe of modern China started to move westward forcing the Sakas (or Scythians known as Jat ancestors) to move towards Punjab. This tribe of Caucasian nomads attacked on Bactria (Ahsan, 1998: 66) and ultimately established their empire centered at Taxila. Kushans (170 AD) were the next invaders who also managed to establish their capital at Taxila after defeating Scythians. Another Central Asian race to make

Punjab their home were the white Huns who made continuous campaigns towards Punjab, finally establishing their rule in 484 AD (*Ibid*). All these people and cultures have played their role in shaping Punjab as it is now, leaving it with a cultural and racial blend that only few nations of the world can match and with a fascinating history dating back to remotest antiquity.

### **The Muslim Rule**

During 6<sup>th</sup> century AD, following the birth of Islam, Arabs rose to power and replaced the Persians as major power in the area. In 711-713 AD, they advanced to the land of five rivers and established their dynasty up to Multan. Muhammad Bin Qasim was the first Muslim conqueror that set foot in the region (Aziz, 1989: 17). To further North, the region was divided into small kingdoms (Latif, 1984: 76). Meanwhile, Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi assuming power (997 AD) after the death of his father Subuktgin, attacked Punjab 17 times. It is interesting to note that he and almost all other invaders selected autumn season for their invasions perhaps because of favorable weather conditions. Punjab remained under the control of Sultans from 1000 to 1526 AD; under Ghaznavids or Yaminis (1000-1186), Ghorides (1186-1206), Mamluks (1206-1290), Khiljis (1290-1320), Tughluqs (1320-1414), Sayyids (1414-1451) and Lodis (1451-1526). During this period, Gakhars not only proved a thorn and challenged the authority of Sultans but also invited Mongols to invade the region and gave them free passage through their territory. Two powerful raids of Mongols who marched to Delhi during Alauddin Khilji's rule temporarily disrupted the rule of Khiljis. During the period of Ghorides and Mamluks dynasty, clashes of various governors, rebels and invaders created instability but the province heaved a sigh of relief under Khilji and Tughluq rulers. Economically, Punjab remained prosperous and rich. Agriculture was the main stay of economy, which gained the attention of rulers. Feroz Tughluk was the real founder of canal irrigation system of Punjab (Nijjar, 1979). The rural community was a working institution in full vigour and determined the economic out look of the population. In spite of the lack of sufficient incentives to increase production, the consumer goods like cloths, corn, ghee etc., were surplus and very cheap. Though, some of the Muslim conquerors tried to introduce a new faith of social equality to counter act the rigid caste system of Hinduism but the society largely remained dominated by the caste system. The sub-castes of workmen like brewers, smiths, barbers, oilmen, jugglers, carpenters etc., and social groups like *bhats*, *gujars*, *cambohas*, *kanetes*, *ahirs*, *aroras* etc., had developed an insularity complex. Socially landed classes such as *awans*, *janjuas*, *jats*, *gakhars*, *virks* etc., had important position in the countryside. The Central Asian Muslims, particularly, Turks and Afghans formed the ruling class. Females were mostly confined to homes. Fairs were common and people were fond of sports. Religious assemblages at Pak Pattan, Multan, Nankana Sahib, Jwalamukhi etc., gave the people an occasion to mix and develop a collective consciousness (*Ibid*).

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After Sultans, Punjab became a part of Mughal dynasty (1526-1707) whose founder was Zaheer-ul-Din Babur (1526-30). His descendants Humayun (1530-56) who was disturbed by Sher Shah Suri and his successors (1540-55), Akbar (1556-1605), Jahangir (1605-27), Shah Jahan (1628-58) and Aurangzeb (1658-1707) respectively ruled the area. During this period, the province was named as 'Suba-Lahore'. Akbar shifted his capital to Lahore in 1585 and stayed there for 13 years in a successful effort to clamp imperial Mughal power over the entire region (Richards, 1993: 49). The court historian of Akbar, Abul Fazal described its boundaries as;

Its length from the river Satluj to the river Sind is 180 kos. Its breadth from Bhimbar to Chaukhandi, one of the dependencies of Satgarh, is 86 kos. It is bounded on East by Sirhind; on North by Kashmir; on South by Bikaner and Ajmer; on West by Multan. It has six principal rivers which all flow from the northern mountains (as cited in Jarrett-Sarkar, 1949: 135; Sarkar, 1901).

Manucci who visited the region during Aurangzeb reign has described Punjab as:

It should be known that close to Bhakkar seven rivers unite, five issuing from the kingdom of Lahore, which have their sources in the mountains of Srinagar and Kashmir and reach the province of Lahore by five openings. This is why the kingdom of Lahore is called Punjab that is to say FIVE WATERS (as cited in Nijjar, 1979: 2).

At that time, Lahore was a very populous city larger than Agra with 0.5 million population, an important resort and commerce center having 1,000 sheet, shawl and carpet manufacturing units (Hussain, 1997: 195).

Later Mughal period of Punjab (1707-1759) spans out nearly 52 years which was contributed by Bahadur Shah (1707-12), Jahandar Shah (1712-1713), Muhammad Farrukhseer, Rafi-ul-Darajat, Rafi-ud-Doula, Muhammad Shah, Zakarya Khan, Yahiya Khan (Nijjar, 1972) etc. This period brought an instability and uncertainty. Various invaders (like Nadir Shah) and rebels clashed to put the region into a state of anarchy. Punjab started to split up into small kingdoms. Sikh power started to gear up after observing it. Eventually all such factors caused the end of Mughal reign. Punjab remained under Muslim influence for about eight centuries but unfortunately no stable and secure rule was established here during their regime and the population largely remained deprived, ignorant and backward as far as their socio-economic conditions are concerned. Now, all great emperors have been crumbled into earth, and nothing remains, but the remembrance of their good or bad deeds (Latif, 1984).

### **Influence of Sikh Rule**

After the collapse of Mughal Empire, the larger part of Punjab was once more annexed to Sikh kingdom (Leigh, 1997: 4). The commotions which followed the invasion of Nadir Shah (1739) and the uncertainty, into which the Suba-Lahore was thrown, were encouraging for the Sikhs. In 1709-10, Banda Singh Bahadur temporarily snatched the eastern part of Punjab from Mughals. His defeat and execution in 1716 were followed by a prolonged struggle between Sikhs on one side and Mughals and Afghans on the other. They continued to organize and struggle (1716-59) almost through out the later Mughal period. When Afghans retreated, Sikhs occupied Lahore in 1758. Jassa Singh proclaimed Sikh's sovereignty and became its head. Ahmed Shah Abadali (1748-73) and Shah Zaman (1793-98) tried hard to dislodge Sikhs but conceited. After the death of Abadali in 1773, power of Afghans declined in Punjab and consequently, it came under Sikh rule. The real Sikh rule on Punjab started when Ranjit Singh (1799-1838) took over Lahore in 1799. He fully established Sikh dominance in the region, built up Punjab into a powerful state, annexing Multan, Kashmir and Peshawar (Latif, 1891). He largely depended upon the loyal support of landed aristocracy and gave them considerable importance because Punjab being a land of peasant proprietors had 87% to 90% rural population at that point of time (Davis, 1983: 6). Though, land revenue was the main source of income for the government and at least 50% of the gross production was assumed as the share of government (Khurshid, 1992:15). But their revenue system was too loose and shaky that the local chief went to the villages to collect protection tax. The political situation also remained very fluid and geo-political changes often took place so that no stable superior proprietorship was created (Khurshid, 1992). Various Muslim feudal lords like *Tiwanas* and *Noons* were staunch supporters of Sikhs but all this was not sufficient to save their rule on Punjab (Ibid). Though, among the *Punjabis*, Ranjit Singh was the only ruler who could claim a strong united kingdom but after his death (1839), flaws crept into the system and finally the British East India Company captured the province (Ibid).

### **British Raj (1849-1947)**

Besides other clashes with British government, major downfall of Sikh rule in Punjab started with the battle of Gujrat when Sardar Chattar Singh, Raja Sher Singh and 35 other Sikh chiefs surrendered before General Gilbert on March 12, 1849 (Nijjar, n. d: 35). On the instructions of Lord Dalhousie, Punjab was annexed to British India by the then Governor General of India, Sir Henry M Elliot. On March 29, 1849, he held a Darbar at Lahore in which all Sikh chiefs including Maharaja Dalip Singh (the only surviving son of Ranjit Singh) were present, announced Punjab a part of British Raj in India (Morreson, 1934: 224). A treaty was made on April 5, 1849 between Sikh Regency and East India Company, ratified by Governor General. In addition to other rights, Kohi-i-Noor Gem that Ranjit Singh got from Shah Shujah-ul-Mulk was also surrendered by Maharaja of



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Lahore Dalip Singh to the queen of Victoria (Nijjar, n. d: 26; Lawrence-Archer, n. d).

Besides many other reasons, British government was keen to annex Punjab on account of its various economic and political aspects. The cotton of Punjab, favorable market for the consumption of their goods, availability of low wage man power, facilities for the development of extensive cantonments and mountainous training grounds for British troops were perhaps the chief attractions (Nijjar, n. d: 26 & 27). This is why, during the British rule several places, educational institutes and other things were named after the names of British governors, many of which still exist. After annexation, the administration of Punjab was handed over to the 'Board of Administration', comprising of Sir Henry Lawrence as president, Mr. John Lawrence and Mr. Mansel as members. The board 'was served by the most able officers, picked from civil service and army and assigned to Punjab' at discretion of Governor General Lord Dalhousie (Chhabra, 1891: 313; Latif, 1891: 574). The board enjoyed absolute executive, judicial and military powers and unhindered control over all matters, pertaining to Punjab. The emphasis was laid on, to the consolidation of power against any onslaught from within or outside and the maintenance of law and order. The board precisely worked to strengthen the British rule what it was expected and meant to do (Nijjar, n. d: 5 & 56).

The new government of the province generally brought peace and prosperity for the inhabitants of Punjab by establishing a powerful network of district administration with the active cooperation of cultivators and by their quasi-indifferent attitude towards religious communities. The rulers were interested in enhancing the role of rural population and the local aristocracy in administration, irrespective of communal affiliation. They believed that if the government succeeded in integrating the local aristocrats with the administrative system, their rule would be strengthened. Anyhow, later on, the British government practically failed to check the rise of communal feelings in the elections etc (Khurshid, 1992: 24).

In 1853, the board was abolished and John Lawrence was appointed as chief commissioner of Punjab. This opened a new episode in the eventful political history of Punjab. The period of transition from the Sikh to British rule was over. Lawrence made reforms and for administration purposes, the province was divided into seven divisions with respective headquarters at Rawalpindi, Lahore, Multan, Leiah, Ambala, Jalandhar and Amritsar. The divisions were divided into 24 districts, under deputy commissioners and the districts were divided into *tehsils*, administered by *tehsildars*. The villagers were concerned with these officials for the matters related to their land (Leigh, 1997; Kurshid, 1992). Though, not in its true form but this system still exists in Punjab. For the welfare of peasants and to lessen the burden of revenue, fiscal reforms were introduced. The concept of land ownership as a transferable thing, was introduced for the first time in the province. The local people were given employment opportunities in different departments like army, police, judiciary and other branches of administration. The British

believed firmly in the policy of creating a class of landed aristocracy who were loyal to their cause and who were given huge estates, titles and administrative powers as honorary magistrates as a reward for their services in army and various other fields, where needed. By using such devices, ultimately, British won over the people of this region, particularly the rural classes ranging from peasantry to feudal lords (Khurshid, 1992). As a matter of fact, British policy of this kind was an outcome of two factors, necessity of strong government as dictated by geopolitical requirements and need to evolve an administration suitable to simple agricultural people (Thorburn, 1889: 9).

From 1859 to 1902, Punjab remained under the administration of Robert Montgomery (1859-65), Donald McLeod (1865-70), Henry Marion Durand (1870-71), Henry Davis (1871-77), Robert Eles Egerton (1877-82), Charles Atchison (1882-87), James Broadwood Lyall (1887-92), Dennis Fitzpatrick (1892-97) and William Macworth (1897-1902). During this period, besides other problems, the Province faced plague of 1897 and some serious famines, which badly affected the population by enhancing mortality rates, especially among the old and young. Establishment of Punjab University, demarcation of Durand Line, Punjab Tenancy and Land Revenue Acts XVI and XVII of 1887, improvement and colonization of waste land and establishment of canal colonies are some of the chief outcomes of this period (Nijjar, n.d.: 109-174).

During 1902 to 1932, Punjab remained under the administration of Charles Montgomery (1902-05), Denzil Ibbetson (1905-07), Thomas Gordon Walker (1907-08), Louis William Dane (1908-13), Michal Francis O'Dwyer (1913-19), Edward MacLagan (1919-24), Malcolm Haily (1924-28) and Geoffrey Fitzbervey Montmorency (1923-32). This period was mainly characterized by the continued growth of canal colonies, movements like Arya Smaj, earthquake of 1905 and famine of 1908, which badly affected Punjab. About 20,000 souls perished by disastrous earthquake only. Moreover, political awakening, Ghadar movement (1914-15), agrarian rising (1915), Gurdwaras reforms, partial revival of Sikhism, Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy (1919) in Amritsar, domination of Hindu money lenders on Muslim peasants and lawlessness made the area a kaleidoscope of anarchy and mystification (Nijjar, n. d.). During this period, the role of Punjab was highlighted at the time of First World War when it made a massive contribution to war effort. About two-third of the Indian army was recruited from this area which had one-tenth of the India's population at that time. This influenced significantly its socio-political setup and gave it a weight out of proportion to its size and population. However, after war, Punjab changed from being a loyal into a furious and displeased province (Salamat, 1997: 427 & 429).

In 1932, Skinder Hayat Khan was appointed as acting Governor of Punjab just for few months, followed by G. F. De Montmorency (1932-33), H. W. Emerson (1933-38), H. D. Craik (1938-41), B. J. Glancy (1941-46) and E. M. Jenkins (1946-47). Many radical changes occurred in general political setup of Punjab during this period. Act of 1935 was implemented under which, in contrast to 1919

Act, whole provincial executive, though not in reality but apparently, was put under the control of Legislative Assembly of the province. Although, the province was given autonomy but the Governor was given discretionary powers to interfere every matter of the province. That is why, for practical purposes, the Act of 1935 was a still born child. Under this Act, elections of 1937 were held. The Unionists Party of Fazl-i-Husain and others (Pro-British landowners), backed by the British government, swept Punjab in these elections, (Ahsan, 1998: 325) and formed his cabinet under the chief minister ship of Skinder Hayat Khan consisting of three Muslim, two Hindu and one Sikh minister. The government at any cast did not want Quaid-e-Azam to dominate in the politics of Punjab. Meanwhile, rising power of Muslim League that swept the elections of 1946 and vindicated the claim to speak for Muslims, Second World War (1939-45), sudden death of Skinder Hayat Khan (1944) and Khaksar movement of Allama Mashriqi, entirely changed the tempo and pattern of politics in Punjab. Khizar Hayat Khan assumed the charge of Chief Minister and made no major change in the cabinet of his predecessor except for the addition of one more Muslim Minister. But he was unable to control the rapidly changing circumstances leading towards the end of British rule in the region (Nijjar, n. d.). However, the British interference had led to many changes in traditional setup of the people and had long reaching political, cultural, philosophical, literary and many other consequences on the inhabitants of Punjab which, to some extent, they are still experiencing. The loyalty of Punjabi rural classes became crucial to British imperialism. To ensure the security and loyalty of rural classes they launched a series of measures including the introduction of western education, a new revenue system, establishment of new administrative system, construction of canals, colonization of canal fed areas and the development of railways, which all had introduced a process of social change. Consequently, the socio-economic and religious factors created the political consciousness among Muslims that led to the birth of Pakistan.

Geographically, Punjab under British Governors extended between 27.65° and 34.3° North latitudes, and 69.38° and 79.3° East longitudes with its capital at Lahore. Himalayas on the North, divided this triangular piece of land from Kashmir and NWFP. Indus formed its western boundary, except the riverain strip that formed the Isa Khel *tehsil* of Mianwali district located on the west of Indus River. On the South-West it also extended to west of Indus, in order to form DG Khan District, thereby extending its frontier to the Sulaiman Range, which divided it from Baluchistan. Sindh and Rajputana desert formed its Southern boundary. Jamuna and its tributary Tons on the East formed its border with Uttar Pradesh (Nijjar, 1979: 2; Marshall, 1922: 32).

In 1901, Punjab was partitioned and NWFP was carved out of it. In 1912, Delhi district was separated from the province and made capital of India. Before partition of 1947, its geographic area, excluding the states, was 99,846 sq. miles.<sup>9</sup> The province comprised of 5 divisions, viz. Rawalpindi, Lahore, Multan, Ambala and Jalandhar, and 27 districts with Lahore its capital. Besides, there were 22

native states which were politically linked either with Punjab or Indian government. Four states, namely Bahawalpur, Malerkotla, Loharu and Pataudi were ruled by Muslims (Census of India, 1921: 25 & 172).

### **Socio-Political Setup of Pre-Partition Punjab**

On account of its religio-political and socio-economic veracities, Punjab had a unique position in the history of Sub-Continent. Before the 'great divide', its population comprised of a variety of ethnic and religious groups with a bulk, consisting of Muslims (50.6%), Hindus (35.7%) and Sikhs (12.1%). The remaining less than 2% comprised of Christians, Janis, Buddhists, Parses, Jews, etc. (Census of India, 1921: 87-90). Long history of Muslim dominance in the region had augmented their strength both through conversion and immigration. It means that they belonged to two groups, the descendents of Muslim conquerors like *Syeds, Mughals, Sheikhs* and *Pathans*, and the local Muslims whose ancestors had been converted to Islam, mostly at the hands of Sufi Saints (Ahmed, 1990: 146). Though, Muslims in the Sub-Continent were only about 28% of the total population but in Punjab they were in majority as compared to others religious groups (Kurshid, 1992: 30). Only about 10% of the Muslim population was urban dweller and majority lived in rural settlements, yet they comprised more than 50% of the urban population of entire Punjab. Apart from their ethnic regional classification, they also belonged to different schools of thought such as Sunnis, *Shias, Ahl-i-hadis, Deobandis* and *Barailvis*. About 97% of Muslims were Sunni while two-third of the rest were *Shia* and one-third *Ahl-i- Hadis*, and *Ahmedis*<sup>10</sup> were only 28,851 (Census of India, 1921: 176). A vast majority of Sunnis (which is a dominating religious group in today's Punjab also) among the Muslim population is a proof of the dominating role of Sufi Saints in spreading Islam in this region. Though, the province was highly variegated with a diversity of races, tribes, castes and religions (Leigh, 1997: 4), in western Punjab, the society was organized on tribal basis and castes hardly existed<sup>11</sup>. Three major religious communities Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs were easily distinguished by their names, nomenclatures, dress, dietary habits, social system, language and literature etc. Muslim population was predominant in Western Punjab and sub-mountain areas, while Hindus were dominant in Indo-Gangetic plane of Eastern Punjab. It has been remarked that in no other region of the world, one finds such diversity of people and languages (Salamat, 1997). The people belonging to one race or caste in a religion were also to be found among the followers of other religions. Another strange feature was that, before the British rule, Punjab had never enjoyed a settled government which might allow it to establish cultural traditions of its own like other provinces. It provided, rather, a hot bed for religious mystification, proselytism and social incoherence. Husain (1946) asserted that;

Old nomad tribalism, Hinduism, Brahmanism, Islamism and Sikhism, all through out the history of Punjab, counteracted

one another and none of them could become strong enough to a decisive influence in the life of province (Husain, 1946: 71).

Consequently, various new sects like *Arya Smaj* and *Qadiani* movements found fertile atmosphere for their home in Punjab.

The main economic activities in the region were agriculture, trade and money lending. Agriculture was the universal occupation of Muslims. Majority of them lived on it and suffered at the hands of money lenders. Though, some Muslim castes like *Khawjas*, *Parachas*, *Khokers*, *Sheikhs*, *Pathans* and *Kashmiries* were also involved in trade activities but Hindus and Sikhs dominated in the fields of industry, commerce and banking. The trade and money lending were mainly Hindu professions and high proportion of Hindu traders was found in Muslim dominating North-Western dry areas. They enjoyed better opportunities of wealth, jobs and education while Muslims remained ignorant and suffered poverty. Education was motivated basically because of the desire to get better prospects for employment in government sector. As Muslims lagged far behind than Hindus, so they had long urged for communal representation in government services. Due to better education urban elite had monopolized government services leaving rural classes (mainly Muslims) with a deep sense of being exploited (Salamat, 1997). Thus, the lack of equal opportunities in education, jobs, business and other spheres of life for Muslims, when compared to Hindus was a major threat to the political and economic interests of Muslims as a nation (Ali, 2001), which became one of the major reasons of Hindu-Muslim antagonism, and the economic domination of non-Muslims over the Muslims lent a force to the contention that they were in a constant danger of exploitation by Hindus and Sikhs (Kirpal Singh, 1991).

Since olden times, the land of the region is rich in agricultural wealth, so its socio-economic structure is basically rural. Long ago, people had given up their wandering habit and settled down in fixed abodes and developed permanent connections with soil. In this regard, Russian scientists have demonstrated that 'bread-wheat' originated from a center near Punjab (Parkash, 1976: 8). A large proportion of the agriculturists in Punjab owns the land, they cultivate; so that the region may also be as the land of peasant proprietors (Leigh, 1997: 3). Before partition, Punjab produced one-third of the country's wheat at a time when other provinces were facing agricultural crises (Talbot, 1988: 39) and Sargodha was one of the world's largest wheat markets (Salamat, 1997: 428).

Jat was the chief farming tribe. Muslim Jats were mainly confined to western districts, Sikh Jats to central and Hindu Jats to southeastern districts of Punjab (Salamat, 1997: 350). Arians formed another important Muslim agricultural tribe in Central Punjab. They were recognized as the most skilful and industrious farmers of Punjab, mostly settled in Lyallpur (Faisalabad), Lahore and Jalandhar. Many of them also served as civil and military officers and some were engaged in manufacturing industries (Salamat, 1997). The Rajputs,<sup>12</sup> who were mostly Muslims and known as the landed aristocracy of the province were mainly settled in Rawalpindi, Jehlum and Kangra whilst some were found in Jhang, Montgomery

(Sahiwal), Bahawalpur, Hissar and Karnal (Census of India, 1911: 437-38). Their participation in army, police and various other theaters weakened their prejudices and involved them in the flow of social change. The *Awans* were not only confined mainly in the Salt Range but had also spread throughout the province, comprising of considerable proportion of Punjab's population. They were heavily recruited in military. The Gujjars who were mostly Muslims mainly found in the sub-mountainous areas and riverain low lands. Gujrat, Gurdaspur and Hoshiarpur were their strong holds and they were largely involved in cattle breeding and dairy (*gowalas*) activities while rarely in cultivation. Baloch tribes formed another dominant part of Muslim community in Dera Ghazi Khan, where they lived under chiefs called tumandars. They were also in a considerable strength in Bahawalpur State, Muzaffargarh, Multan and Jhang districts. Though, because of economic and educational backwardness, the Pathans remained comparatively less important but they formed dominant agricultural tribe in Attock tehsil and Mianwali district. They practiced primitive agriculture and were also employed in military, police and small business. Syeds and Qureshis formed another important part of Muslim community in the province. They considered themselves superior to others and enjoyed positions and analogous to Hindu Brahmins. Though, Syeds were widely distributed but were strongest in Rawalpindi division whereas Qureshis were found mainly in Lahore, Multan and Rawalpindi divisions. They were largely land holders and claimed saintly character. Many of them were employed in teaching and civil administration (Salamat, 1997). The Syeds, Sheikhs, Mughals and Pathans were also known as Ashraf, belonging to ruling class. The Jats<sup>5</sup>, Arains, Rajputs, Kamboh, Gujjars and others were known as cultivating class having involved into agricultural pursuits (Khurshid, 1992: 11).

Occupational specialization was also a marked characteristic and status of the various caste groups of rural Punjab, which could be found among Ajlaf, belonging to lower strata of society (Khurshid, 1992: 12). According to their traditional work, they were strictly hereditary in their profession and were permanently associated with their arts and crafts. Such as Jullahas (weavers) and Telies (oil pressers) who formed the supplementary domestic industry of the peasant house hold, mostly performed the crafts like spinning, weaving, pressing and sugar manufacturing. The village community maintained other craftsmen also, such as Mochies (cobblers), Lohars (blacksmiths), Tarkhans (carpenters), Kumhars (potters) and Nais (hair cutters), collectively by allocating a share of crop for them or some times a small plot as fixed by tradition. As the landholdings were considered symbol of prestige, there was an influx of rural labor into land. *Chamars, telies, lohars and nais* also usually worked as farm laborers. However, changing modes of life, social consciousness and changing surrounding cultural environments weakened the restrictions imposed by caste system. Currently, in the province, this dichotomy of classes is not very strictly observed and there are ample chances for social mobility (Salamat, 1997).

Biradri was (and still is) another important social institution among Muslims, which has reflected both caste and kinship. In this system, marriage usually took place within close kinship while making it a prime force to strengthen Biradri cohesion. This system has developed very effectively through the organization of Panchayats (the decision making council of elders), which not only decided the issues regarding inheritance and divorce but also made social and political decisions to sustain and strengthen their entity. However, for Pirs and big landlords, this system was not so important and they often used it for their political motives. They also urge for prestigious position in the rural society led them to assume the role of leader of Panchayat and settle the dispute according to their own dictates (Kurashid, 1992).

Moreover, the Pirs and their shrines enjoyed great influence over illiterate and ignorant rural society that was unaware of true teachings of Islam. The Pirs claim themselves to be the descendants of Sufi Saints who had played an important part in spreading Islam and had led to the conversion of Punjabi tribal society (Nizami, 1947). By the passage of time, Sajjada Nashins of saints became to be known as Pirs and gradually turned into a very influential force in rural society. The simple rural Muslims showed deep attachment to Khanqahs and Pirs catered more to their own needs at the cost of spiritual values. They exercised tremendous political influence also, both over the masses and elite, right from Mughal period onwards as they helped the rulers to extend their hegemony over independent tribes. The government, therefore, could never ignore their political role. Particularly, in south-west Punjab, the Sajjada Nashins played an important administrative role as well, as *zaildars*, honorary magistrates and district board members<sup>13</sup>. Despite considerable socio- economic and other changes they still exercise tremendous political control in the areas of their influence, as in every election, they could sent the representatives of their own choice to assemblies and local bodies.

The rural society of Punjab was also categorized into following four groups, which, though not strongly yet exist. First group consisted of big landlords who owned huge *jagirs* and exercised feudal influence over peasants. Second group was of the peasant proprietors who owned small land holdings, some times uneconomic to support their families forcing them to seek employment as tenants. Third group consisted of tenants or farm servants who were landless labor and entirely depended on landlords for their livelihood. The fourth group was labelled as *kammis* (village artisans) like barbers, potters, carpenters, blacksmiths, oil pressers, singers, washer men and others doing menial works as being the lowest social ladder (Kurashid, 1992). Land holding structure varied greatly in different parts of Punjab. In western Punjab, with the exception of Rawalpindi, Jehlum and North-Western Gujrat, majority of Jagirdars (landed people) such as Kot Ghebas, Legharis, Noons, Tiwanas, Daultanas and Syeds (Bukharis, Gardezis, Gilanis etc.) owned big land holdings, and were close supporters of the British rule (Ibid).

The province was divided into following six regions, on the basis of geo-political and socio-economic conditions.

1. Potwar Plateau, consisting of three table land districts of Attock, Rawalpindi and Jehlum. Due to adverse relief, uncertainty of rainfall, scarcity of water and threats of droughts, this region was (and still is) not only poor in agricultural production but has been famous for the supply of man power. Most of the people sought their fortune in army or abroad (Talbot, 1999; Salamat, 1997).
2. Sub-Mountainous Region, comprising of four foot hill districts of Sialkot, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur and Ambala lay between Himalayas and Central Punjab. Though, the region had fertile arable land and sufficient rainfall but its farm production has remained low due to lack of irrigation facilities. An effort by the cultivator to improve his fate, often led him to fall into the trap of money lenders. This practice chilled badly the economic conditions of people (Khurshid, 1992).
3. Central Plain Region comprised of eight districts namely, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Sheikhpura, Lahore, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Ludhiana and Ferozepur. In this region, the Arains, who were Muslims, enjoyed prominence. They were mostly hard working cultivators, owning small land holdings and mostly grew surplus vegetables. They also produced more per acre than any other caste in the region. Despite all this, however, over 80% landowners were in debt and their economic conditions were poor (Ibid).
4. Eastern Region consisted of arid zone of Hisser and the area around Delhi that included four districts namely, Hisser, Karnal, Rohtak and Gurgon. This region had different life style and culture than other regions because the farmers were mainly Hindus and Muslims were their followers in customs and traditions. The Jats were dominating in number who worked hard for their survival. Due to the absence of irrigation canals, uncertainty of rainfall and insecurity of harvest, farmers in this region were in pitiable state (Ibid).
5. Great Colonization Region comprised of nine canal colonies in all,<sup>14</sup> situated in the interfluves, west of the Beas-Sutlej and east of the Jhelum rivers in Shahpur, Layllpur, Jhang and Montgomery districts that absorbed the available lands of Bari, Rechna and Chaj doabs (Ali, 1988). In the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, this tract was a vast expanse of desert and called the Bar or wasteland, which was sparsely inhabited by the variety of moving pastoral tribes. The great agricultural colonization schemes undertaken in 1886 onwards during British occupation, converted this area into a virtual human laboratory, as tribes, clans and castes from various parts of the province converged on new lands. This ethos has left its imprints on people of the region (Ali, 1988). Before 1860, people had no permanent habitation and seldom stayed at one location for a month or more. They were mostly Muslims belonging often to Jat or some times to Rajput races and split up into numerous small



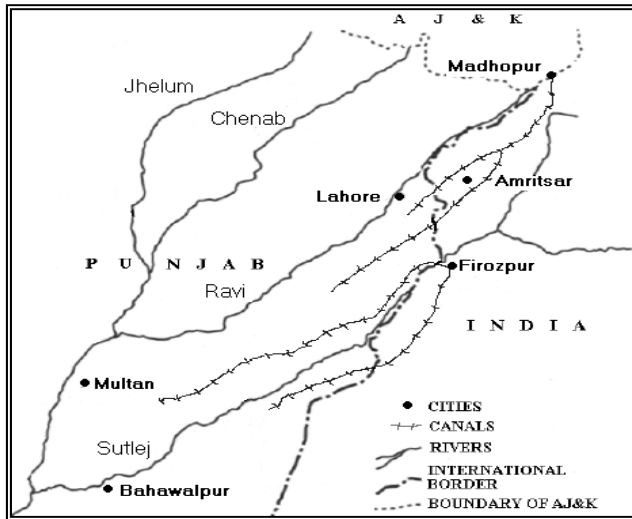
communities known by different names such as Baloch, Bhattis, Virks, Kharals, Sials etc. They were generally known as Janglies (primitive) and their population during 1891 census was recorded as 70,000 souls. However, with the colonization of area, these old cattle breeding people became largely the prosperous and progressive self-cultivating class of the region. They moved upward in the socio-economic rung and made the region flourishing and modern than any other area of the Punjab (Khurshid, 1992).

6. South-Western Region included Multan, Muzaffargarh, Mianwali and DG Khan Districts. Due to severe aridity and typical traditions, this region was quite distinct from rest of the province. That desert comprised of its major portion and except the north of Mianwali, the cultivation was a dream. Although, the land holdings were large, mostly over 50 acres yet the area were barren and due to shortage of water, peasants had to lead a miserable life. Baloch clans dominated DG Khan District, whilst Pirs and Sardars who enjoyed an open authority dominated other three districts. The cultivators were at the full mercy of Sardars, Pirs and money lenders. Nothing could be done to alleviate their economic difficulty because the sun burns up half of the region and other half was exposed to the damages of flood, which led them to heavily indebted region. In Muzaffargarh and DG Khan Districts, the standard of living was lower than all other districts of Punjab (Ibid).

## **Socio-Political Setup of Post-Partition Punjab**

British had ruled Punjab for about a century. Historiography of this region is mournfully underdeveloped, as the old Punjab province, now comprises of four different parts in two countries (Ali, 1988). Though, present Punjab, being the heart of newly born state, appeared on map 62 years ago on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1947; but, as has already been viewed in previous analysis, its history spans many millennia. The partition had been agreed on 3 June 1947 but practically implemented on 14<sup>th</sup> August in the same year. Quaid-e-Azam had sworn as the first Governor General and Liaquat Ali Khan as first Prime Minister of newly born state whose roots, though, can be found in pre-British period but was fully germinated on the eve of British departure from the region (Sayeed, 2000). The unjust division of Punjab into two parts, West Punjab as a part of Pakistan with its capital at historical city of Lahore and East Punjab as a part of India, gave rise to many problems and disputes. For further reorganization in 1966, East Punjab on the basis of language faced another split into Himachal, Haryana and Punjabi states. Thus, the pre-partition Punjab has been fragmented into four independent units now. It is evident from historical view that no and never in the past, its boundaries shrank as much as they did after the partition.

During partition, the boundary commission headed by Radcliff unfairly awarded some Muslim majority areas; contiguous to Punjab such as Gurdaspur, Jalandhar, Ferozpur and some portion of Lahore district to India (Hussain, 1997: 464) that disrupted the canal system in Punjab with the resent that canal water dispute appeared between Pakistan and India (Kirpal Singh, 1991). This division gave three rivers; Jehlum, Chenab and Ravi to our Punjab while two rivers Beas and Satluj to East Punjab. Main dispute was over water, coming down from Ferozpur Head Works to Bari Doab Canal in our Punjab (Fig 1), which was settled in 1960 through Indus Basin Treaty.



**Fig 1:** Canals Coming Down to Punjab from India

Another severe problem rose when largest ever migration in the world history took place. Millions of Muslims crossed the border of Pakistan and vice versa. Punjab was the worst effected place because its commercial activity was disrupted as Hindus and Sikhs controlled it mostly who immigrated to India and the province received the largest waves of refugees in return. This geared up the problems of accommodation, food supply and security. The government of Punjab was given the liability of lodging and the safety of refugees and the restoration of law and order. People of Punjab were able to tackle such difficulties, by following their Quaid who said;

...this mighty revolution that has taken place is unprecedented...now, if we want to make this great state Pakistan happy and prosperous, we should wholly and solely concentrate on the well being of people, and especially of the masses and poor<sup>15</sup>.

After the fall of Dhaka in 1971, the political predominance of Punjab was largely enhanced but it can be fully understood in terms of the colonial inheritance, which provided the strong basis for its agricultural prosperity, industrial development and association with army recruitment. After partition too, the recruitment of some Rajput, Awan and some other tribes of Potwar Plateau to Pakistan army and colonial policies of the allotment of land to military men continued which created a nexus of interest between land owners and army. Their entry into rural and industrial elite continued vigorously during various army reigns and the role of Punjabi dominating army has been immense in the state affairs since independence (Talbot, 1999).

In 1955, when West Pakistan was declared one unit, Bahawalpur was annexed to it (Ahmed, 1995). In 1960, the shifting of country's capital from Karachi to Islamabad put the Punjab into another gear of progress. On 1 July, 1970, during the reign of Yahya Khan, one unit was abolished and four provinces were restored. Since then Punjab have remained under several governors and chief-ministers and several changes in its administrative setup have been made, such as number of its districts have been increased from 21 in 1981 to 34 in 1998<sup>16</sup> and 36 in 2009 spreading over an area of 205,344 sq. km (Fig 2). At present, its administration is run through a Legislative Assembly, headed by the Chief-minister and a governor appointed by the president. During, Musharraf regime, the district administration was run by district *Nazims* and *tehsil* administration by *tehsil Nazims*, which were the respective heads of districts and *tehsils*. Each district was sub divided into several union councils, the smallest administrative units. However, currently the government had suspended this system turning back to commissioner system that was in practice before Musharraf regime.

Its population increased rapidly. *Punjabi* is the dominating language and agriculture is yet the leading occupation. It bears the largest population than all other provinces of the country. Having over 90 million inhabitants it is about 300 times larger than Maldives, 128.6 times larger than Bhutan, 4.4 times larger than Sri Lanka, 3.3 times larger than Nepal and 1.9 times larger than the combined population of these four South Asian countries (Population Reference Bureau, 2008). It contains about 56% population of Pakistan (Khan, 2009: 123) and 5.93% population of south Asia; whereas Pakistan's total share in South Asian population is 11.4%. Population of Punjab is highly complex and many faceted group of people consisting of several castes and races mostly inhabited in rural areas with high fertility rates encouraging doomsday projections that population would double within 23 years (Khan, 2008; Talbot, 1999: 39). According to 1998 census of Pakistan its population consists of 97.7% Muslims, 2.3% Christians, 0.1% Hindu, 0.3% Ahmadi, and 0.1% others. About 75.2% of its inhabitants speak *Punjabi*, 17.4% *Siraiki*, 4.5% Urdu, 1.2% *Pushto*, 0.7% *Balochi*, 0.1% *Sindhi*, and 0.9% other languages. Young population under 15 years of age is 42.5%, 15-64 years old population is 53.5%, and aged population of 65 years and above is 4% showing high age dependency ratio of 86.9 (PCO, 2001).



**Fig 2:** Punjab and Districts

Because of over-population in rural areas, mass migration to urban centers has been phenomenal. As a consequence, for instance, Lahore is stretched to Kasur, Shaikhupura and Gujranwala from its sides. Its population has augmented from half a million in 1947 to 6 to 7 millions at present (PCO, 2001). In addition, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi and Faisalabad have populations between 2 to 3 millions. There are numerous other cities with a population in hundreds of thousands. On the basis of bulging urban population, it is alleged that more than 31% population lives in cities while the rural share of population has decreased considerably below 69% (Ibid).

To the North of Salt Range, Potwari and Hindko are spoken, along side Punjabi as regional languages whilst Punjabi in central Punjab and Siraki is spoken by a considerable section of population in Southern and South-Western Punjab. The face of rural areas is changing radically. Due to mechanization in agriculture bulls, wooden ploughs, *khra*s (grinder), wooden *madhanis* (milk beater), and *charkhas* (spinning wheel) have disappeared from Punjab. Rural population in many parts has transformed into a semi-urban setting. Cities, towns and villages have expanded beyond imagination and most of the residual property has been encroached with or without the involvement of the officials. The entire province is an example of unplanned and uneven progress. However, it is clear that in Northern and North-Eastern parts there is no more feudal system as far as the socio-economic structure is concerned.

Except a few selected patches, most of Northern and North-Eastern parts are comprised of small peasantry populations. Most of the areas have gone through severe land fraction in the last 8 or 9 decades. In many cases, land holding has dwindled down to *kanals* and *maralas*. Even the residential plots in rural areas have been divided to the size that some households do not have enough space to accommodate carts for the entire family. For most house holds land cannot provide

enough for living and some members of the family have to go to cities or abroad to earn sustenance for the family.

Moreover, mechanization, spreading of commercialism and dearth of cheap labor in some parts of Punjab has led to another class transformation. Due to an increase in wages and commercialization, the customary *kammi* class (rural artisans and other landless labor) has ceased to exist. There are no more iron smiths, carpenters and potters in the villages. The only exceptions are the barbers who have become better-off than their employers (the peasants) by raising rates. From this angle, the social structure is transforming dramatically and new class relations are emerging.

On account of its socio-economic setup, currently four distinct regions in the province can be identified (Fig 3).

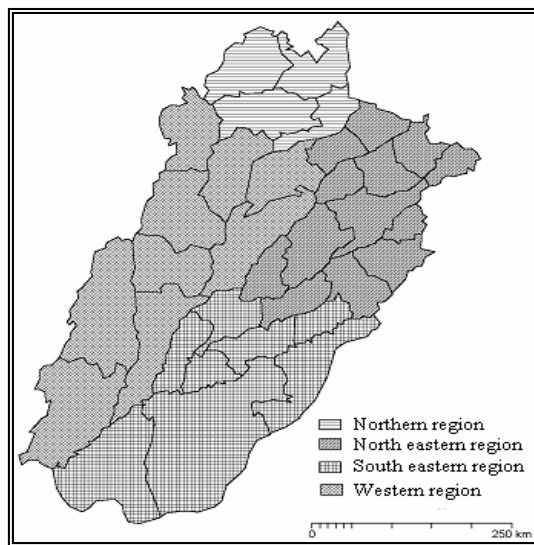


Fig 3: Socio-Economic Regions of Punjab

1. Northern Region includes Attock, Rawalpindi, Chakwal and Jehlum districts of Potwar Plateau and bears about 9.1% population of the province (PCO, 2001:113). As has already been pointed out, the inhabitants right from colonial era onwards, have supplemented low agricultural earnings with public services, dominated by army recruitment and with foreign remittances. Although, the role of other areas cannot be ignored but in reality, Punjabi dominating army is largely recruited from this region.
2. North-Eastern Region comprises of industrial as well as fertile agricultural districts of Gujrat, Sialkot, Mandi Bahauddin, Hafizabad, Gujranwala, Narowal, Lahore, Sheikhpura, Nankana Sahib, Faisalabad, Kasur, Toba Tek Singh, Okara and Sahiwal. About 47% of the province's

population is concentrated here which makes the region politically more important (Ibid). Well known figures of Pakistan movement, Allama Iqbal, Mullana Zafar Ali Khan and Chuhdary Rehmat Ali also belonged to this region.

3. South-Eastern Region encompasses Multan, Lodhran, Khanewal, Pakpattan, Vehari, Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur and Rahim Yar Khan districts. Very sparsely populated Cholistan desert forms its boundary with India. Canal irrigation has transformed previously the barren tracts into cotton growing precious lands. It contains about 23.6% of the province's population (Ibid).
4. Western Region embraces Jhang, Mianwali, Khushab, Chinot, Sargodha, Bhakkar, Layyah, DG Khan, Rajanpur and Muzaffargarh districts and economically, is the poorest region of the province. In contrast to other regions, its economy is organized on feudal basis and it contains about 20.1% population of the province (Ibid). The land lords of the region, though remained influential in government but have not profited from dictatorship because many of them are politicians and they cannot act in that role nor oppose land reforms, except in a democratic setting (Syed, 1984: 230).

To sum up, despite the fact that agriculture is a dominating feature of Punjabis, some areas of Punjab are relatively more industrialized. Lahore, Faisalabad, Gujranwala and Sialkot have become major industrial centers for producing small capital goods, textile, supports and surgery goods. Industrialization in these areas has reached to a point where major portion of labor force is employed in the industrial sector, leading to a basic transformation of agrarian society into industrial society. With the passage of time, diffusion of commercialism and growth of industrial base, the big feudal may be replaced by industrialists and middle level farmers or urban middle classes of professionals (lawyers etc). However, in most of Punjab since the essential mode of production has not changed, the political structure has remained feudal. Because of the continuation of agrarian economic set up and absence of widespread large industrial base Punjabi politics, with continual interruptions by military take overs, has not come out of the feudal political culture. Big feudal have been dominating all tiers of political life for a long time. The majority of chief ministers and prime ministers have been hailing from the feudal belt. In most parts, Bradri and cast system are still keeping an overall political fortune of Punjab within bounds of feudal culture.

## **Conclusion**

The temporal account tells that Punjab undeniably has a unique history in South Asia. It has been subjected to a lot of unrestricted changes and interferences in its

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name, administration, politics, and socio-economic setup by external factors. It has been a favorite ground of invaders because of vast fertile lands, enormous resources and favourable climatic conditions. Traditionally, Punjab is located at the cross roads of areas where other great civilizations of the world grew. It is also credited as birth place of various saints and religious schools of thought. The resultant religious and ethnic diversity is reflected in the cultural mosaic of even today's Punjab and influence its socio-economic and political set up in a great deal. As the region has been invaded and ruled by several empires and races therefore its boundaries have been swelling and shrinking over different periods of time. By virtue of its peculiar location and geo-political position, Punjab has remained significant through out its previous history. At present, due to its largest population size and decisive role in the politics, economy and other spheres of life, it has been labeled as elder brother of other provinces of Pakistan. Its role in political and other affairs of Pakistan is likely to remain leading in the days to come also. However, one should understand that even if the process of transformation of traditional agrarian society into industrial society is going on, the overall political fortune of Punjab, under the influence of caste and Bradri system, is still with in the bounds of feudal culture.

## Notes

1. As at that time, it included all the territory covered by 7 rivers, namely the Sindhu (Indus), the Vitasta (Jhelum), the Akesines (Chenab), the Parushni (Ravi), the Vipas (Beas), the Sutdra (Sutlej) and the Saraswati.
2. Greeks called this name when they occupied the province, which is rooted upon two Greek words 'Pente' meaning five and 'Potamas' meaning rivers. They named these rivers as Hypasis (Jhelum), Akesines (Chenab), Hydrotres (Ravi), Hypeasis (Beas) and Zaradvos (Sutlej).
3. The name was derived from the tribe of Taks, who once were the undisputed lords of Punjab and still exist as numerous agricultural races in lower hills between Jhelum and Ravi. Taki kingdom embraced the entire Punjab plains from Indus to Beas and from Himalayans foot to Punjnad. In 7<sup>th</sup> century AD, their kingdom was divided into three provinces, namely Taki in North and West, Shorkot in East and Multan in South.
4. This book mentions the construction of fort by a fellow named 'Sher Khan of Punjab'.
5. Abul Fazal has written this book and also mentioned that territory of Punjab was divided into two provinces of Lahore and Multan.
6. A German scholar, Max Ducker believes that Aryans have descended into Indus valley about 2000 BC. Hebrew denotes that Aryans were in possession of Punjab as early as 1000 BC. According to the internal evidence furnished in Rig Vedas, they had not spread beyond the North-West of Sub-Continent before 1500 BC or some 3500 years ago (S. M. Latif, 1984, History of the Punjab, 1<sup>st</sup> Pakistani ed., Lahore: Progressive Books pp. 25 & 27). Rig Vedas are among the oldest books of human history that are supposed to have been written in this region. Vedas are four, namely; the Rig, the Sama, the Yajar and the Atharvan. The Rig Veda entitled Mantra is perhaps the oldest religious text in the world, which contains the collection of songs or hymns, metrical prayers and invocations, 1017 in

- number all addressed to the gods i. e. Indra the god of rain, Agni the god of fire etc. (A. Ahsan, 1998, *The Indus Saga and the Making of Pakistan*, Oxford, p. 355).
7. Mahabharata tells of a great war between the Kauravas and Pandavas on the great plain of Kurukshetra, near Panipat and Ramayana tells the adventures of the prince Rama and his wife Sita of the North-Eastern kingdom of Kosala.
  8. Bactria or Bakhtar is the vast territory on either side of river Oxus that spans most of modern Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Northern Afghanistan. Ahsan, A., 1998, *The Indus Saga and the Making of Pakistan*, Oxford, p. 64.
  9. Including states the area of Punjab was 136,905 sq. miles.
  10. They were declared Non-Muslims by the Government of Pakistan in 1974-75 during Bhutto regime.
  11. Imperial Gazetteer of Punjab, 1908, Vol. XX, p. 287.
  12. They are of Brahmanical and Buddhist creeds and their offshoots. Lawrence-Archer, J. H., n. d., *Commentaries on the Punjab Campaign (1848-49)*, p. 5.
  13. The District Gazetteers of the Jhang (1908, pp. 58-60), Muzaffargarh (1929, pp. 75-77) and Multan (1923-24, pp. 106-110).
  14. These canal colonies were Sidhnai and Sohag Para (1886-1888, Bari Doab), Chunion (1896-1906, Bari Doab), Chenab (1892-1930, Rechna Doab), Jehlum (1902-6, Chej Doab), Lower Bari Doab (1914-24), Upper Chenab (1915-19, Rechna Doab), Upper Jehlum (1916-21, Chej Doab) and Nili Bar (1926-After 1940, Bari Doab). Ali, I., 1988, *The Punjab Under Imperialism, 1885-1947*, Princeton, p. 9.
  15. Quaid's speech on 11 August 1947, quoted in Bajwa, 2002, *Pakistan A Historical and Contemporary Look*, p. 143; and A. Ahsan, 1998, *The Indus Saga and the Making of Pakistan*, p. 336.
  16. The Punjab Provincial Census Reports, 1981 and 1998.

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