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Rethinking Socio-Economic Development of Sahiwal (Montgomery) During British Period from 1857-1947

Dr. Saeed Ahmed Butt
Assistant Professor, Department of History, GCU Lahore
saeedbutt@gcu.edu.pk

Abstract

This research article examines socio-economic transformation of Sahiwal District (formerly Montgomery) in Punjab, Pakistan, during British colonial period from 1857 to 1947. The study explores the multifaceted changes in agriculture, trade, infrastructure, society and governance that occurred under British rule. It investigates the impact of British policies, role of Christian missionaries and creation of collaborations as political agents in shaping the district's socio-economic landscape. The article highlights both the positive developments and challenges faced by local population during this transformative period.

Key Words: British, Allotees, collaboration, social, economic, development, Impacts, tehsil, Administration, transformation, headquarter, zaildar, allies, district

Introduction:

"The Montgomery district, formerly known as *Gugera*, is south-eastern most of four districts of Multan division", (Punjab, Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1884) occupying an area of 4253 square miles. Its "headquarters station lies on North-Western Railway and is almost exactly equidistant from *Lahore* and *Multan*." (Punjab, Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1935). "It is bounded on the north-east by district of *Lahore*, on north-west by district of *Jhang*, on south-west by district of *Multan* and on south–east by river Sutlej, which separates it from state of *Bahawalpur*." (Punjab, Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1884). Before arrival of British, the areas from Montgomery to *Lyallpur*, were consisted of bars (*Sandal Bar*, *Ganji Bar* and *Neeli Bar)*, having high land in *doabs* between Punjab's rivers and un-settled area, having grass and forest shrubs, irrigated by seasonal rainfall. In order to administer smoothly, British made a new district, having an area between Rivers *Sutlaj* and *Ravi* having district headquarter at *Pakpattan*, which was later shifted from *Pakpattan* to *Gugera* in1852. "*Gugera* was situated on *Grand Trunk* Road at a distance of 8-km from river Ravi and included areas in it from districts; *Faisalabad*, *Jhang* and *Sheikhupura*, extending its areas by adding twenty more villages in 1855." (Butt, 2010) With the spreading of railway line, another change took place by abandoning *Gugera* as a civil station and transferring district headquarters to a village *Sahiwal*. (The only habitation in neighborhood before the foundation of modern town was a small settlement of local Sahu tribesmen called *Sahiwal*) In 1865, District of Montgomery (Montgomery district was named to *Sir Robert Montgomery*, Lieutenant Governor of Punjab) was renamed from *Sahiwal* having located on main Lahore–Multan railroad to Karachi port. (Ijaz, 1986) The adoption of this

particular place showed its importance in eyes of British, providing a safe passage to British cargo goods through railroad, leading to Karachi port. The Board of Administration brought various changes in boundaries of many districts as they did with those of district Montgomery. The process of constructing buildings in district accomplished in 1852, then district headquarters was shifted from *Pakpattan* to *Gogera* and declared *Sayyidwala tehsil* head-quarter. Besides *Sayyidwala*, various demarcations were made in other *tehsil* headquarters like *Gogera, Harrapa, Pakpattan and Hujra*. The areas of *tehsilSayyidwala*, which were situated at south of *River Ravi*, were separated& included in *Gogera tehsil*." (Ijaz, 1986)

When railway between *Lahore* and *Multan* was made under construction, it was considered desirable to move headquarters of *Gugaira* District to some point on line about which *Gugaira* was not conveniently situated. The place selected for head-quarters of district, together with district itself, was named *Montgomery*, after Lieutenant Governor." (Latif, 1997) The need was felt that such district headquarter would be selected which would have a railway station and occupy central place in district. In this regard, the village *Sahiwal* was chosen. So, Secretary of Punjab Government wrote in his letter numbered 232 dated on 5 Feb.1864 to Secretary Public Works Department that a proposal regarding transfer of district head-quarter from *Gogera* to *Sahiwal* was under consideration." (Anwar, 1993)

With the change of district head-quarter from *Gogera* to Montgomery, a new development was taken in demarcation of boundary of district. As *tehsil* status of *Harrapa* was abolished and Montgomery was made its head-quarter. Similarly, headquarter of *Sayyidwala tehsil* was ceased and amalgamated into Gogera *tehsil*. In 1871, eastern *tehsil* head quarter was shifted at *Depalpur* from *Hujra*. In 1871, British abolished the status of *Gogaira as a tehsil*. When a new tehsil was formed at *Okara* in 1915, *Gogaira* was included in it. Now Montgomery district had four *tehsils* like Montgomery *tehsil*, Pakpattan *tehsil*, Okara *tehsil* and *tehsil* Depalpur. (Mushtaq, 2009) Mr. Captain Elphinstone has mentioned in Settlement Report of 1858 following important tribes and castes, residing in Montgomery District; "population is distinctly divided into marked sections-purely agriculturalist inhabitants and pastoral tribes. The former consists of castes, both Mohammedans and Hindus, as *Araians, Kambohs, Hindu Jats* etc. but latter are almost entirely confined to region, which extends from southern extremity of Multan district to within thirty miles of Lahore. They are all *Mohammedans* and their favorite occupation is breeding and grazing of cattle. They are locally known by names of*Jats*... The most important tribes are *Kharrals, Fattianas, Murdanas, Kathris, Wahniwals, Baghelas, Wattus* and *Joyas*. The two latter are chiefly confined to *Sutlej*, but others only possess land on Ravi and graze their herds in two Doabs adjoining that river." (Punjab, Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1935)

During War of Independence (1857), many individuals such as *Rai Ahmad Khan* gave a great resistance to British but on the other hand, "many collaborators helped British in Punjab to suppress revolts against them. The news of mutiny at *Meerut* and the disarmament of indigenous soldiers at *Mian Mir* of *Lahore* flamed the ambers of discontentment among natives of district *Gogaira*. On 13th May 1857, British Deputy Commissioner, Captain Elphinstone, gave an order for disarmament of indigenous soldiers of 49th N.I. stationed there as Treasury Guard and sent it back to Lahore. Captain Tronson's sepoys and his police battalion replaced them and stationed in district." (Butt, 2010) It was the valor and bravery of *Rai Ahmad Khan Kharral*, who led all the important tribes of River *Ravi* tribes against British in *Sahiwal* district. Those tribes had found

Rai Ahmad Khan Kharral as their savior against British, who founded "parallel government against British."(Ghazali, 1988) In district Sahiwal, British found many allies with their support and they defeated him. "British collaborators served British interests in district. They not only gained *Jagirs,* but also performed administrative functions as *Zaildars*, *tehsildars* and other dignitaries at lowest level." (Butt, 2010)

Colonial Administrative policies:

The post-British annexation period of Punjab in 1849 shows that British constituted a Board of Administration, consisting of *Henry Lawrence*, *Mr. John Lawerance* and *Mr. Charles Grenville Mansel* as its members, was in April 1849 at Lahore so that province of Punjab could be made smoothly functional. This Board had enormous powers to deal with the departments of judiciary and revenue as its members had "to work jointly," (Latif, 1997) but those acted as incharges of their respective departments. The British appointed the most competent and most experienced military and civilian officials having great administrative powers. In order to maintain law and order situation in province, British raised Ten Punjabi regiments so that assistance would be given 8000 strong military force. (Ian, 1988) *Sir John Lawrence* was made Punjab's first Chief Commissioner after abolishing Board of Administration in February 1853. He was a communicating officer under direct guidance of Supreme Government in England& played role of intermediary between Supreme Government and Indian administrative machinery. He had to take all decisions in India on behalf of British Government, because he had powers to carry out its orders regarding appointment of heads in all political-cum-civilian departments.

By giving so much importance to the administrative unit of district, British abolished the system of Doabs and Bars and introduced its own administrative hierarchical system dividing Punjab province into seven divisions (its head-quarters were situated at *Rawalpindi, Multan, Lahore, Leiah*, *Jullunder*, *Ambala* and *Amritsar*) consisting of 24 districts (Kamal Pasha, 1988) and districts having more efficient and competent officers at the district level. The importance to the district was given only because of its importance "in a tall hierarchical ladder, whose lowest rung was village and highest, the province itself…and gave head of district discretionary powers." (Kamal Pasha, 1988) The Deputy Commissioner was the district head, administering district with the help of Assistant Commissioners selected from Indian civil service. A district was functioning as a middle administrative tier between tehsil and Division. On the other hand, British further divided district into different number of tehsils having an assistant commissioner as administrative head of tehsil. Each *tahsil* was consisted of 150 villages, divided into *zails* and subdivided each *zail* further subdivided into a number of villages. The *Lambardars* had to help the revenue officials for collection of revenue in each village. Meanwhile, *tehsildars* and *naib-tehsildars* possessed enormous judicial as well as revenue collection powers. The *Tehsildars* had the responsibility to maintain law and order situation in their own areas of jurisdiction. At the lowest administrative structure, *Zaildar* possessed highest authority because he had to act as "village headmen (*lambardars*)" (Ian, 1988) and intermediary between society and government. While he had to look after the law-and-order situation at the village level as a honorary head of police. After annexation of Punjab, British found such allies at district level whose loyalty and commitment to British interests were unquestionable. As *zaildars* had a unique significance in the local administration of Punjab province because "their collaboration became vital with Punjab's growing value for imperial interests (Ian, 1988).

By giving so much importance to land upon which British administration was rested, possession of maximum land had become a symbol of respect and honour for an individual."Redefinition and reconstitution of power structure on land"(Kamal Pasha, 1988) was the immediate change introduced by British in administration, which was also based on distribution of land among native people and commenced British hunt "for allies amongst rural population." (Ian, 1988) British gave them an opportunity to those native leaders in "decision making process in government" (Ian, 1988) as collaborators. In this way, those collaborators acted as "guardians of status quo" (Kamal Pasha, 1988) resulting into a social revolution to establish a land relationship between local allies and British. The local collaborators of British achieved many rewards and titles strengthening British colonial policy and punishing the forces of resistance against British. "The class of land owners produced by British dominated Punjab politics, who persuaded their tribesmen for recruitment in British army. This class supported British policies in Punjab, who maintained British help for this class by granting lucrative awards." (Butt, 2010)

Before the British arrival in Punjab, the agricultural production was very limited due to insufficient water and agricultural dependence on traditional irrigation methods such as wells and seasonal canals etc., which allowed cultivation around the adjoining areas of the rivers. After the annexation of Punjab in 1849, British established the permanent canal system by replacing inundation canal system. This system enabled British to make society having the basis of a truly hydraulic in Punjab, which attracted people from congested districts of East Punjab and canal water supply. "Colonial canal-building in Indus Basin in second half of 19thcentury, British built this canal system in Indus Basin, which assumed an important ideological as well as political importance. The British officials had a desire to use "science to fertilize the *bar*," (Gilmartin D. , Nov. 1994) be expanding and maintaining the canal network in Punjab. Bringing many socio-economic as well as political changes, this canalization in Punjab by British brought "unprecedented extension in agricultural production" (Ali, 1988) and established British power state system on the basis of controlled canal system, political control through agricultural reforms and settlements. The completion of Triple Canal system (Ali, 1988) in 1917 "involved the construction of a quarter mile-wide level crossing barrage linking water drawn off from *Chenab River* with that from *Ravi* in order to irrigate Montgomery District." (Ian, 1988) In order to irrigate vast tract of land of Montgomery district, British administrators hit over a plan to dig out a canal. As a part of Triple Canal Project, British started construction of *Lower Bari Doab* canal having headwork from *Balloki* in December 1906, "which watered 882000 acres, mostly owned by State, in *Montgomery* and *Multan* Districts." (Nijjar, 1854) Having a total length of 1000 miles, about 36 distributaries took water from *Lower Bari Doab Canal*. This canal had different distributaries known as *Gugera & Jahanian providing water to tehsils of Okara* and *Montgomery*.

The other canal known as *Lower Sohag Para Canal* derived its name from "*Sohag Nala* (with its off-shoot at *Para*), which taking out of right bank of *Sutlej* at *Lalu Gudar*." (Mohnem) It follows a westwards course towards *Dipalpur and Pakpattan Tahsils* of*Sahiwal* district. Having total length of 19 miles, this canal took its present form old natural *Sohag Nala*, which irrigated *Soahg* and Para Branches. Before reaching at *Bhila Gulab Singh* of *Depalpur Tahsil, Depalpur* Canal follows about 40 miles in Lahore District. The *Khanwah* Branch of this canal (following in main alignment of old *Khanwah* Canal) is divided towards north at *Hujra* and southern Distributaries, which provided water to northern lands of *Depalpur Tahsil* and directed

towards North-East corner of *Pakpattan* and irrigated few miles of *tehsil*. However,*Chunian Distributary* of *Depalpur canal* irrigated Northeast corner of *Depalpur Tahsil*. "*Dipalpur* Canal bifurcates at *Rukanpur* into Upper *Sohag* and Lower *Sohag* Branches, of which Lower Sohag is by far longer and more important, extending far into *Pakpattan Tahsil*: this branch trifurcates at *Gurdita* into *Para*, *Malka Hans* and *Nurpur* Distributaries, of which *Nurpur* is longest." (Punjab, Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1935)The total length of *Pakpattan* canal is about 12 miles, having its headwork at *Sulemanke* and passes through *Depalpur Tahsil*, "but supplies no irrigation till it has runs for another 5 miles in *Pakpattan*. It then throws off, on left bank, a small non-perennial distributary, *Bhatti*, and a mile further on at *Ghumariwala*, important *Khadir* Branch, which runs along southern edge of *Pakpattan Tahsil* and supplies single-harvest irrigation to that area, and far on into *Mailsi Tahsil* as well."(Punjab, Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1935) After Gumariwala its main line is directed towards north-West corner of *Pakpattan Tahsil*. Its left distributaries provided water to area north of *Khadir* boundary on permanent basis. "The most important of Distributaries are 2-L (*Qabula* Distributary) which flows past *Arifwala* and ends north of *Jamlera* and 3-L (*Fatna* Distributary)." (Punjab, Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1935)

Socio-Economic Development in District:

In district Montgomery (Sahiwal), British founded three canal colonies named as: *Lower Bari Doab and Nili Bar* (British started both these colonies in *Montgomery* and *Multan* districts in 1925) *and Sohag Para* (British began its construction in Montgomery district in 1886) canal colonies. During last quarter of 19thcentury, major developments like migration of Punjabi from congested districts, recruitment of military purposes as well as creation of job opportunities were linked with establishment of canal colonies. British had many considerations to distribute lands of these canal colonies based on priorities of military allotment, individualized grantees, skilled labour grantees and landlords, pacification of criminal and wandering tribes. "Colonization policy was framed to serve a number of political and economic needs, though military interest remained predominant." (Butt, 2010) British administration started establishing canal colonies in province. British set for themselves various aims and objectives regarding introduction of canal colonies and land distribution among settlers. Like other important aims such as food requirements and personnel needs of British army, they also wanted to ease out population pressure in congested and crowded cities of Central Punjab (Bhatti, 2020).

The British gave preference to skilled and experienced peasants in distribution of lands in three canal colonies as in *Sohag Para* colony, "British also brought skilled and experienced peasant colonists from other districts of province. Their utility of farming techniques made them well-recognized agriculturists in district as compared to those of other districts." (Butt, 2010) Mostly immigrants were *Kambohs* and *Jat Sikhs* belonged to districts of *Amritsar* and Lahore, as mostly *Kamboh* people were already living in the district. As the peasants of Central Punjab were very much expert in cultivation process so British allotted a tract of eighty thousand acres for people belonging to districts of *Hoshiarpur, Gurdaspur, Jullundur* and *Amritsar,* having castes

of *Saini, Kamboh* and *Jats.* British gave similar preference to allotees belonging to over-populated districts of Central Punjab in *Nili* Bar colony.

The provision of land reserved for any superior class was not mentioned in original scheme of *Lower Bari Doab Canal colony*. However, on the recommendation of Sir *Michael O'Dwyer,* more land was recommended for landed aristocrats so that those would be made as British collaborators in Punjab for smooth functioning of the provincial affairs. This idea was implemented in Lower Bari Doab Colony by allotting "Seven and a half percent of *Lower Bari Doab* Canal Colony was in this way earmarked for landed aristocracy."(Ian, 1988) By getting the loyalty of Pirs, the British also made *Pirs* as an important part of landed gentry, because they possessed extra-ordinary influence over rural population and they were made *tehsildars, zaildars* and landlords. In this category, British distributed about sixty thousand acres of land as gentry' grants resulting into creation ofan elite rural allies 'structure in this colony.

Keeping political considerations, British allotted lands to specific individuals in Sohag Para canal colony as *Jat Sikhs* achieved about twenty-nine thousand acres of land (38% percent of total allotted area). About four hundred eighty-four such grantees received land from the British. From Rawalpindi district, about thirty-seven *Khatri Sikhs* also took about 3500 acres of allotted land in *Nili Bar* Canal Colony. For this purpose, administration set a criterion for such allotments consisting of war recruitment in British army, service and help to British against political agitations, such as *Akali* and *Khilafat* movements. For development of canal colonies, British also attracted rich people for investment by granting individual grants as "fully 10 percent of colony, an area of 7800 acres, was allotted to one man, *Baba Sir Khem Singh Bedi*, who held considerable influence over Sikh community due to strong religious affiliations with *Baba Guru Nanak*, founder of Sikh religion." (Ali, 1988) This was one of the largest granted lands in the history of canal colonies. This granting of land not only enhanced the prestige and role of Bedi family in district administration rather it gave a great political importance to the possession of massive lands, which also set a mechanism to accommodate Punjab's elites and connect them with the British imperialist structure having claim of nationalism. Other big allottees of bigger land in District Montgomery were *Sardar Joginder Singh* (British rewarded him two thousand acres of land with the condition to produce see through experiments) and *Sardar Daljit Singh* (British gave him 2500 acres land on lease for constructing of tube wells network) of *Kapurthala*. The other individual grantees received land between one to five squares with a condition that they would help British to maintain law and order situation in Punjab. "A large proportion of reward grants in *Lower Bari Doab Colony* were allotted for help in recruitment of soldiers and for other services related to World War-I. The recipients were usually local notables or government officials," (Ali, 1988) belonging to divisions of Multan, Ambala, Jullunder and *Lahore.* Such recipients selected by Divisional Commissioners and "the rewards were mostly given in *Lower Bari Doab Colony* on conditions applicable to landed gentry grants." (Ali, 1988)

During course of First World War, British adopted a new strategy to fulfill her military needs of War and decided to give lands to ex-military personnel and war concerned collaborators. The war situation persuaded British to ponder more reservation of land for the servicemen as they granted lands to *Jat Sikhs* in Lower Bari Doab. In original scheme of Lower

Bari Doab colony, a land of 103000 acres was reserved for this purpose, but later seventy thousand acres more land was added to the military personnel. "Meanwhile the war reward was also increased and about 180,000 acres were reserved for war veterans rather than pensioners. However, the later were not neglected for confidential orders were issued that pensioners would be given land from tracts allocated for civilian grantees. The land reserved for war veterans alone compromised around 20 percent of total allotted area in colony." (Butt, 2010) Indeed, "wherever suitable land became available in years following 1918, priority lay in reserving it for war veterans."(Ali, 1988)Meanwhile twenty thousand acres land was granted to ex-officials in *Nili Bar colony*. As a major land holder in *Nili Bar* Canal Colony, around one lac acres land was reserved for ex-soldiers. The British also emphasized to give land only to military veterans, not to military pensioners. To reserve land specifically for war veterans was an incentive for recruitment and promotion of rewards for war service.

The British Government also introduced the method of auction and lease-holding in canal colonies of District Montgomery. About 360000 acres of land was kept for auction by government. Through auction, most of land was purchased by Hindus and Sikhs. "Till 1944, Sikhs had purchased 30 percent, or 36000 acres, while Muslims bought 33000 acres. Hindus purchased 49000 acres." (Ali, 1988) As British needed healthy horses to fulfill their army needs therefore five lac acres of land was reserved in *Lower Bari Doab Colony* for horse-breeding. The process of lease-holding brought a very handsome amount of profit in form of money as "in *Lower Bari Doab Colony* old leases of state land, called *tahud Khahi*, were converted to colony grants on the basis of amount of land brought under cultivation. Similar measures were adopted in *Nili Bar Colony*, where 40,000 acres were reserved for *tahud Khahi* lessees. In addition, local notables were allotted grants for several other purposes, and were given temporary cultivation leases on canal irrigated land often at concessionary rates." (Butt, 2010) In canal colonies of *Lower Bari Doab* and *Nili Bar* in district Montgomery, the auction by British opened new avenues for non-agriculturist class, which allowed non-agriculturist class to purchase the land through auction in *Nili Bar Colony* as later figures show. The British also brought changes in lifestyle of *Jangli* and criminal tribes of Montgomery district by granting each 5000 acres land reserved for them in Lower Bari Doab as well as *Nili Bar* canal colonies. Later British enhanced more allocated twenty thousand land for criminal tribes and depressed classes like *Ods (Od or Beldar-Beldar* is properly the name of an occupation merely; derived from *bel*) in *Lower Bari Doab Colony*. The British also made arrangements of those criminal and depressed classes in different villages of the district with the help of Deputy Commissioner.

After introduction of Land Alienation Act, role of village shopkeeper as a moneylender was replaced by Sikh grantees. They started giving credit and loans to peasants more freely as compared to professional money-lenders, because they would be able to snatch "land on mortgage unrestricted by Land Alienation Act. They are also in closer touch with their debtors and in a better position to press them for repayment."(Punjab, Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1935)The following figures show sales and mortgage of lands from cultivators to money-lenders;

Mortgages

Name of *Tehsil*	1930-31		1931-32	
	Area transferred in acres	**Consideration in rupees**	**Area transferred in acres**	**Consideration in rupees**
Montgomery	751	1,19,698	1,329	1,52,053
Okara	1,191	1,76,162	2,923	2,33,868
Dipalpur	3,206	2,33,510	3,017	1,42,929
Pakpattan	1,674	1,40,312	4,012	2,65,430
Total	6822	17,52,602	11,281	7,94,280

Source: (Punjab, Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1935:167)

Under land improvement loans act 1883 and agricultural loans act of 1884, their effect on agriculture credit was negligible due to smaller amount of loans advanced in district. The basic objective of these societies was "to promote growth of credit societies and to encourage peasants to turn to other alternatives other than money-lenders." (Mukharjee, 23-Nov-2005) However, suspicions rose among agriculturists' minds, because "some agriculturist debtors have taken to cutting their losses by resort to Bankruptcy court."(Punjab, Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1935) Some administrators took it as a new tendency, which would obstruct investors for financing more in agricultural field in future. However, these societies failed absolutely in reducing economic pressure upon agricultural classes in province due to various factors.

Consisting of mostly pastoral, the people used to live on banks of river *Ravi* and *Sutlej* in Montgomery district. As nomadic people, they adopted way of sedentary living searching for food and water needed for their land irrigation. They had no permanent jobs to feed their families except involving in robbery and theft. (Hassan Askari, 2010) The establishment of canal colonies such as Lower Bari Doab, *Nilli Bar* attracted attention of British administration to settle agricultural skilled people in district Montgomery. "But in late 19th and early 20th centuries much of southwestern Punjab had come under canal irrigation-leading both to settling of pastoralists and to migration of settlers from central Punjab. However, in canal colonies as elsewhere in western Punjab, great majority of population remained Muslim and rural. (Gilmartin D. , 1989)" As in *Ravi Tehsils*, mostly army ex-servicemen and agriculturalist came to district Montgomery and reduced population of congested districts of Punjab. "Among Central Punjabis, are *Arains* from *Jullunder* and *Lahore* Divisions, Muslim *Jat* and *Gujar* from *Gurdaspur* and *Hoshiarpur*, *Jat Sikhs* from *Lahore* and *Jullunder Division* and *Saini Sikhs* from *Doaba*." (Punjab, Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1935) On the recommendations of *Sir Michael Fenton* (incharge of colonization in Lower Bari Doab Canal), a land of about 80000 acres was allotted to agriculturists of congested districts–*Amritsar, Jullundur, Gurdaspur and Hoshiarpur*- belonging to *Jat, Arain, Kamboh and Saini*and they were adjusted in *Lower Bari Doab* Colony, which was a horse breeding colony, so that "a nucleus of Central Punjab agriculturists will, moreover, serve as a channel for the introduction into colony of best classes of tenants from congested districts, thus relieving strain of *Hithar* tracts of *Montgomery, Multan* and *Lahore*." (Mohnem)

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British gave more importance to people of districts "*Jullundur, Lyallpur, Lahore, Jhang, Amritsar, Hoshiarpur, Ferozpur and Gurdaspur*"(Punjab, Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1935) in Lower Bari Doab Colony. On the other hand, military grantees were also given space in colonies of Lower Bar and Nili Bar resulting into "homogenous groups of *Jat Sikhs, Mazhabi Sikhs, Muhammadans from Rawalpindi Division, Jats from South East Punjab and Dogras* from low hills, named in their order of merit as colonists, as well as smaller groups of classes less frequently recruited in army." (Punjab, Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1935) The Census of 1931 give number of 61000 persons as immigrants came into *Nili Bar Colony*(Punjab, Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1935) mostly belonging to *Amritsar, Jullunder* and Lahore districts. From 1883 to 1933, population of district enhanced enormously from about 348312 to nearly one million as a result of making canal colonies in district particularly after year 1911.Figures for total population in last four decades are as follows;

Years	Population
1901	429,674
1911	481,965
1921	685,690
1931	999,772

From 1921 to 1930, about three lack acres of cultivable land was enhanced in district Montgomery, which also added about 314000 persons in the total population of district.

Source: (Punjab, Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1935:82)

British brought tremendous developments communicative means in *Montgomery* district by construction of metallic& un-metallic roads. "*Sutlej Tehsils* are particularly well served with a thorough metalled road. Most of crossroads communicating north and south of railway line are unmetalled. There is, however, a good metalled road between *Pakpattan* and *Montgomery* and between *Okara and Dipalpur*." (Punjab, Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1935) On recommendation of Executive Engineer of Public Works Department (head of road construction in district), the roads were constructed in *Nili Bar Colony*; so that hardships of people could be minimized. On the other hand, two Railway lines as *Lahore-Karachi* line (This Line was considered one of most important, connecting Indian areas with Karachi port) of *North-Western Railway*and *Sutluj* Railway Line (This line was passing from Amritsar via Kasur in *Lahore district* to *Lodhran*in *Multan* district), were also passed through district of *Montgomery*. Entering Montgomery, Lahore Karachi Railway Line passed through "*Wan Radha Ram* and runs through *Okara, Montgomery* & *Chichawatni*, leaving district near *Iqbal nagar*." (Punjab, Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1935) The *Sutlej Valley* Line of *Southern Punjab Railway* passed through *Pakpattan tehsil*, later converted into headquarter of Railway Division as a main railway station between *Kasur* and *Lodhran*. (Butt, 2010) Some critics pointed out that building of main railway line between Karachi-Lahore was a proof for transfer of headquarters from *Gugera* to *Sahiwal*. As cultivators of district only produced raw material getting no remarkable benefits but native *mandis* (markets) were connected with Karachi port as well as with Central Punjab. The

commodities of one locality became accessible to other part of British Empire through railway network between Karachi and other parts of India, bringing great economic boom in Indian society. "Prior to opening of railways, a good harvest often caused a glut in rural economy, while in times of famine no immediate relief could be provided to famine-stricken people…With opening of railway, prices were mostly determined by markets. So, railway provided a huge impetus to commercial agriculture." (Banerjee, 1982) Irfan Habib declares that establishment of railway network "commercialized agriculture" (Habib, 2006) resulting into rising prices of agricultural possessions.

During British period, process of industrialization was started. Though district of Montgomery did not have any fame for cloth manufacturing but there were many countryside handloom machines, where *Khaddar* was woven in every village. In some of villages and towns like *Fatehpur, Harappa, Basirpur, Haveli, Attari, Hujra, Diplapur, Kabula, Malka Hans* and *Pakpattan*, sheets, *lungis* and cotton carpets were made," (Habib, 2006) which accomplished the native market needs. In order to weave clothes, many weavers were brought by many colonists from their respective districts and settled in Sahiwal district. In *Central Jail of Montgomery*, only one factory was started, which began manufacturing of blankets, rugs, carpets, woolen and cotton goods. On the other hand, another industry of manufacturing the trunks and tin boxes and trunks had its origin in tehsils of *Arif Wala, Chichawatni, Okara* and *Montgomery*. In canal colonies of Montgomery district, wealthy Sikhs and Hindus commercial classes began investment in opening started installation of manufacturing and processing flour mills and largest cotton ginning industries. British also started allotting a site of eight to ten acres reserved for establishing such factories as individuals like *Kirpa Ram Bri Lal* held cotton ginning and pressing factory at *Okara* and *Bhagwan Singh in Diplapur*. The subsidized seed provided by British government improved the quality of cultivated cotton in the reserved land of about 7500 acres in *Lower Bari Doab Colony* for British Cotton Growing Association. "The primary function of this allotment was to grow improved cottons for export to textile mills of Lancashire. The BCGA became, in fact, one of largest rentiers in Punjab, for after 1925 it leased by areas of state land on temporary cultivation terms in *Lower Bari Doab and Nili Bar* Colonies. This area was estimated to be about 70000 acres in 1929 and cultivation on it was entirely dependent on sub tenancy system.(Ali, 1988)For the effective functioning of those factories, the demand of the skilled labourer mostly fulfilled"from *Lahore, Gujranwala, Amritsar and Sialkot*." (Punjab, Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1935)

In tehsils of *Montgomery, Dipalpur* and *Okara*, factories also manufactured the refined saltpeter, which was only exported to various cities like Madras, Karachi and Bombay through Messrs, Ralli Brothers. In order to consume needs of district, many industrialists began investment in opening ice factories at Montgomery and *Okara*, which set a great attraction for investors in district. "The cotton factory at Pakpattan has also an ice making plant, while Messrs Dishaw at Arif Wala also makes ice for local consumption."(Punjab, Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1935) The Military Farms of *Okara*produced a fine good quality of *bhusa* transported to *Abbottabad* and *Banu* utilizing for the purposes of military needs.

In the district of Sahiwal, Muslims was consisted of seventy percent (70%) of total population having more backwardness than other communities of district. Their reluctance to get education like old *Ravi* tribes of Sahiwal district was its primary factor, which lost their share in

administrative affairs of British administration in India. "They aspired to share power and privileges of office with English administrators, although this aspiration was mostly expressed in vocabulary of request. (Kumar, 1989)" (Punjab, Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1935) The British established many schools to educate the people of district as "Anglo-vernacular education is making slow progress among original inhabitants of district, but most of colonists appreciate value of higher education and make full use of such facilities as district can afford to provide. There is practically no indigenous education. Instruction is imparted everywhere by teachers trained in system approved by Education Department. Occasionally in temples and mosques boys and girls may be seen learning in old way from *Pandits* and *Mullahs*." (Punjab, Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1935)

British opened various educational institutions in district known as Government High schools at *Montgomery*, at *Pakpattan* and at *Renala Khurd*. While they also established District Board high schools at *Depalpur* and at *Haveli* and Notified Area Committee high schools at *Okara* and *Chichawatni*. These educational institutions also provided accommodation for students, hailing from far-flung areas. The Anglo Vernacular middle schools were also opened in various localities like *Kamalia* and *Depalpur*, *Sayyadwala*, *Hujra* and *Pakpattan*. A large number of educational institutions based on modern education were established. The objective of all this development was to extract wealth and to take advantage from resources of Punjab." (Ahmad, 2007) The British also gave importance to the skills of handicraft with education by opening A Government Industrial School at Montgomery, "where wood work and blacksmiths work are taught in addition to ordinary subjects." (Punjab, Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1935) Following schedule provides expenditure, incurred on education:

Total Expenditure on Education in Montgomery District during year 1932-33

	Government funds Rs.	**Board funds Rs.**	**Municipal funds Rs.**	**Fees**	**Others**	**Total**
For Male						
Direct	370786	128652	31451	87614	4820	623332
Indirect	28215	24663	5011	1836	3330	63055
Total	399001	153315	36462	89450	8159	686387
For Female						
Direct	19002	6223	11264	1891	4717	43097
Indirect	311	11	1725	…	5895	7942
Total …	19313	6234	12989	1891	10612	51039

Source: (Punjab, Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1935:302)

The British opened various types of board and government schools in district, so that all communities and classes could get education without imposing any sort of restriction upon any class of society. "The District Board awards each year 8 middle school scholarships of value of Rs. 4 per mensem each to children of depressed classes as an encouragement to education. The Board has also remitted fees to members of depressed classes in primary schools. After the implementation of Compulsory Education Act, the British waived off the fees from boys of Primary classes between the ages of six and eleven years in 147 schools of the Montgomery district. Female education was also an important feature of education policy of British. Though

in rural areas, task for enhancing female education could not be materialized. But in urban areas, the colonial masters established girls' schools at *Pakpattan, Arifwala, Renala Khurd, Okara* and *Chichawatni*; while they also opened a very good girl's high school at *Montgomery*. The female education would be very bright, because its curriculum consisted of sewing, cooking, knitting& embroidery.

Conclusion:

The socio-economic transformation of Sahiwal District during British colonial period was a complex process influenced by a combination of factors. The economic changes brought about by shifts in agriculture, land tenure & infrastructure development significantly affected the region. The introduction of canal irrigation, improved transportation networks and promotion of cash crop cultivation altered district's economic landscape. However, these changes were not without challenges, as they led to disparities in land ownership and economic outcomes. In district Montgomery, British introduced various socio-economic changes. The British not only demarcated geographic boundaries, but also reshaped boundaries of district Gugera for its administrative convenience and renamed it district Montgomery. The socio-economic and political structure of district revolved around various tribes and castes like *Araians, Kambohs, Hindu Jats,* Muslim Jats, *Kharrals, Fattianas, Murdanas, Kathris, Wahniwals, Baghelas, Wattus* and *Joyas*. These tribes had their own particular villages to live. During War of Independence (1857), some of indigenous personalities of district like *Rai Ahmad Khan Kharral, Murad, Nathu Kathia* etc. displayed exemplary valor and bravery against the British. Later, British administrators established a patron-client relationship in district, in which they gave importance to landlords and religious leaders of district. Under analytical scrutiny, British found such persons from different tribes of district, who served as collaborators in coming years of British turbulence. During Sikh wars and War of Independence (1857), the indigenous landlords and local elite helped British armies and showed loyalty to them, gained influence and power in their respective areas. By opening of an organized system of perennial canals such as Lower Bari Doab, *Sohag Para* and *Depalpur* etc., the whole fate of the district was transformed, having multi-dimensional effects in anthropological, socio-economic and political life of district. British also established three canal colonies named as *Lower Bari Doab, Sohag Para & Nili Bar* in district. The influx of people from congested eastern districts of Punjab also continued to these canal colonies and British started a mechanism of land distribution among those people. British also founded educational institutions, communicative network system, trade and commerce. The passing of railway network and establishment of roads by British monetized economic life of district, due to which issue of indebtedness and moneylenders took birth in district. In order to gauge dissenting voice against British steps like establishment of police, judiciary etc. was taken by British.

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