

**British Policy of co-option to *Sajjada nashins* and *Pirs* in
Western Punjab: A Case Study of Dera Ghazi Khan
District**

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Abstract

The British after the establishment of their rule in Punjab in 1849, introduced system of indirect rule. In this system, realizing the socio-economic and cultural environment of the area, they co-opted tribal and religious elite in western Punjab. They gave them economic and administrative powers by granting them huge lands, appointing them as honorary magistrates and zaildars. They were also nominated for privileged positions in district, divisional and provincial darbars. Later on, with the introduction of electoral politics, they were given the opportunities to be elected as the members of district boards and in provincial legislative councils and assemblies. They were also given honourific titles. So through these measures: ownership of land as major source of production, being part of the colonial administration, the British administration developed socio-economic hierarchical structure. In its result, a very tiny class of elite - tumandars and sajjada nashins became extremely powerful in their respective areas of western Punjab. This hierarchical structure became the power base of the elite and provided the foundation ground for the establishment of colonial rule. With this theme, in this article, the colonial policy of co-option to sajjada-nashins and pirs during the colonial rule in Dera Ghazi Khan District has been described. This colonial construct entrenched the power structure for the domination of religious elite in the area which even present times after the end of colonial rule for the last almost seventy years exists in some or the other form in western Punjab.

Keywords: Patronage, Intermediaries, Indirect rule, *Sajjada nashins*, *Pirs*, Socio-economic hierarchical structure, Landlords, Honourary Magistrates, *Zaildars*,

The important aspect of 19th century Islam in Punjab was widespread influence of *sajjada nashins*¹ and *pirs*². They possessed great authority in the eyes of the common Muslims which was derived from the traditional world view of the Muslims. According to this paradigm, God as a powerful ruler is inaccessible to common man. The Prophet Muhammad is the

only channel to contact to God. As according to Islamic tenet, the Prophet Muhammad is the last messenger to mankind and after him the responsibility to guide the people was rested on the *walis* (saints) commonly known as *pirs*. These spiritual guides played pivotal role in spread of Islam from eleventh century onward in Punjab. After the death of saints, it was commonly believed that their *baraka* (charisma) was transmitted to the *dargah* (shrine) of the saint itself. The ancestors of the original saint became the *sajjada nashins* of the *dargah* and in this way they inherited *baraka* from their ancestors. Writing about this religious milieu of the Muslims of that time of the western Punjab, a colonial administrator mentioned that:

All the districts that border on the Indus are thickly dotted with shrines, tombs of the sainted dead; and these tombs vary in dignity from the great mausoleums of men of renown to the heap of stones surmounted by a pole and a rag of some minor beggar. And to the shrines of the saints, thousands upon thousands of devotees resort, in the hope of gaining something on the sacred soil.³

Similar religious approach of that time has been presented about the western Punjab by another source that “this part of the Punjab is overrun by religious imposters of different kinds, and the agriculturists make them presents out of all proportions to their incomes, and vie with one another in the largeness of their gifts.”⁴ In the same way, another writer about the religious approach of the people of a district of that area of western Punjab in his description mentioned that “Every person has a Pir. It is not necessary that a Pir should be of known piety, - many indeed, are notorious for their immorality.”⁵ In 1876, like above mentioned sources, about this religious aspect of Dera Ghazi Khan District, a colonial official mentioned that from “the number of shrines scattered about the Dera Ghazi Khan District it would appear to have been in bygone days a favorite resort of saints. This I ascribe to the unattractive nature of the country, which contains so many places admirably adapted for the residence of those who desire to mortify the flesh”.⁶ likewise about the nineteenth century this religious aspect of Islam of this District, another colonial writer mentioned that “There are many small shrines in the district, and rag trees, *i.e.* trees for some reasons or the other come into veneration and

get covered with rags, are very common”⁷ This source further mentioned that the Muslims of the District had strong faith on omens, charms and spirits. They had firm belief in *nazar-bad* (bad omen), the psychic treatment of diseases. The exorcizing of evil spirit (*jin*) mostly in female was also common.⁸ These descriptions of the different colonial sources about the religious approach of the people of this district seems true as even present times evidences also confirms the religious nature of the people of that time.⁹ So at the time of the British conquest of the area the religious class of *sajjada nashins* and *pirs* has its strong influence over the masses in Dera Ghazi Khan District of West Punjab.

Therefore the British, from the very beginning were well aware about the influence of *pirs* and *sajjada nashins* on the people of the western Punjab.¹⁰ K. K. Aziz writing about this mentioned that “Soon after the annexation of the Punjab, the British discovered that the political influence of the *pirs* among the rural areas was too pervasive to be ignored in administering the province. Their decision to exploit it was instantly incorporated in their strategy of governance. The *pirs* were accordingly honoured and given positions of local authority”¹¹ In this regard, in the wake of the events of 1857, one of the colonial official as cited by David Gilmartin, (1988) about the influence of *sajjada nashin* of the shrine of Bahawal Haq, stated that his just “presence in our Court convinced the people that the most influential man of their own faith was on their side of order”.¹² So from the very introduction of colonial rule, the British administration gave *sajjada nashins* and *pirs* important place by co-opting them in their colonial administration. In its result, this religious class of *sajjada nashins* and *pirs* of different shrines having “potent weapon – jurisdiction over their follower’s soul”¹³ also played its role in establishing and strengthening the colonial rule in western Punjab. In this regard, in Dera Ghazi Khan District, at the time of British conquest of Sulaiman hill areas, Syed Zaman Shah of Kharsin, who had strong influence as *pir* in the Baloch inhabited area of Sulaiman Mountains,¹⁴ played important role as an intermediary for pacifying the Baloch tribes against the British.¹⁵ He also rendered important services to the British for the conquest of adjacent areas of Baluchistan Agency.¹⁶ Same

was the role of Mehr Shah of *Basti Azeem*, who was the *pir* of Leghari tribe and also had a strong following in the river area of the Indus, played important role for the establishment of colonial control over the area. In 1868, when Lieutenant Grey, Deputy Commissioner of Dera Ismail Khan District was abducted to Sulaiman hills by Koura Khan Qaisrani, one of the chief *mukaddam* (tribal elder) of the Qaisrani tribe, at that time, Syed Mehr Shah also rendered important services for the colonial masters in the release of Deputy Commissioner and for the arrest of Koura Khan Qaisrani.¹⁷ So like in other areas of the western Punjab, from the very beginning, in Dera Ghazi Khan District, *pirs* and *sajjada nashins* played important role in establishing and strengthening the colonial rule.

In this context, the British realizing the influence of *sajjada nashins* and *pir* over the people of western Punjab, in their policy of indirect rule of the area, co-opted the *sajjada nashins* and *pirs* of the area. It provided them patronage and privileges for the establishment and strengthening of the colonial rule in their respective areas. In this regard, firstly to further enhance their control over the local people, colonial administration officially recognized them as landed gentry and granted them huge *jagirs*.¹⁸ In this context, in Multan, Muzaffargarh and Jhang Districts, the families of the *pirs* of the different shrines got one third of the landed grants.¹⁹ In Dera Ghazi Khan District, *sajjada nashin* and *pirs* of the prominent shrines also got huge lands in their respective areas.²⁰ In this context, in Rajanpur tehsil of the Dera Ghazi Khan District, Mian Shah Nawaz Khan serai, the *pir* of Hajipur, was granted *jagir*²¹ of worth Rs, 10,300, whose cash assessment framed almost Rs. 8,600 per annum. The overall income of the *pir* of Hajipur was about Rs. 12, 500 per annum.²² In tehsil Taunsa Sharif, the *sajjada nashins* of the shrine of Khwaja Sulaiman got considerable land in the tehsil. They were also given huge land as gentry' grants in canal colony areas of Multan District. Like these families of note with their spiritual background, there were some other *pirs* and *sajjada nashins* who were also given land at different times by the British for their services to the colonial government. Like in tehsil Taunsa, Syed Mehr Shah of *basti Azim* was given 9, 665 acres of land free from revenue in his service for the arrest of Sardar Koura Khan Qaisrani.²³ In

the same way, in his services to the colonial government, in First World War, Mian Shah Nawaz Serai, *pir* of Hajipur was granted 5 squares of land.²⁴ More over when the British administration in its policy of revenue expansion and management of law and order decided to excavate and manage canals system, it along with the Baloch *tumandars* of the area also encouraged the families of note of *sajjada nashins* and *pirs* to invest in these projects. So in this regard, in excavation of canals where Baloch *tumandars* in Dera Ghazi Khan District invested and enhanced their economic and social influence over the people, the families of note with religious background also invested in these projects. Like in excavation of Dundhi canal in southern region of Dera Ghazi Khan District where Sardar Jamal Khan *tumandar* of Leghari tribe, Sardar Imam Bukhsh Khan, *tumandar* of Mazari tribe, Sardar Musso Khan *tumandar* of Nutkani invested, Mian Shah Nawaz *Sari*, *Pir* of Haji Pur also invested in this canal excavation and its management project.²⁵ He along with the other partner invested Rs. 5000 as his share.²⁶ In this way, when the administration gave *sajjada nashins* and *pirs* huge land grants and control of the canal system, it gave them control of means of production. Through having the control of means of production of huge area, they were given directly control of many people economically dependent upon them. This control of economic and spiritual authority established their control over the people in their respective areas.

Secondly, these *pirs* and *sajjada nashins* through their role as intermediaries were also given important positions in local administration in western Punjab.²⁷ They were appointed as Honourary Magistrates, and *Zaildars*.²⁸ Same was the colonial policy in Dera Ghazi Khan about the co-option of *sajjada nashins* and *pirs* in the local administration. Like Ghulam Haider Shah, Syed of Shahpur who was hereditary *pir* of many people of different Baloch tribes, was appointed as *zaildar* of Alidaha. His brother was also appointed an extra Assistant Commissioner.²⁹ In tehsil Taunsa, Syed Mehr Shah of *basti Azim* was also appointed as *zaildar* of Panjgarian *zail*. Moreover, Syed Chiragh Shah and Syed Bagh Ali Shah were also appointed as *zaidars* of their respective *zails* in this tehsil.³⁰ In Dera Ghazi Khan³¹ tehsil of the District, same was

the case in appointment of *sajjada nashins* and *pirs* as *zaildars* of their respective *zails*. Like Syed Ahmad Shah of Pir Adil, guardian of Pir Adil shrine was appointed as *zaildar* in his own *zail*.³² In the same way, Syed Dullan Shah, guardian of Shah Sadar Din shrine was also appointed *zaildar* in his own *zail*. Moreover in Dera Ghazi Khan Tehsil, Syed Dinan Shah of Marhatta, Mian Noor Muhammad Daha, Syed Ahmed Ali Shah who were men of religious background were also appointed *zaildars* in their respective *zails*.³³ In the same way, in two other tehsils of the District, Syed Hassan Bakhsh Shah, Syed Mubarak Shah, Syed Doolan Shah and Syed Zaman Shah were also appointed as *zaildars* in their respective *zails*.³⁴ So when these *sajjada nashins* and *pirs* were given judicial and revenue collection powers by the colonial rulers, by appointing them as magistrates and *zaildars*, the British combined both secular and religious powers in them. In this way, these *pirs* and *sajjada nashins* under the colonial policy of indirect rule, by becoming part of the administration got substantial authority over the people of their respective regions of the District.

Thirdly, under the colonial policy of indirect rule, the leading *pirs* and *sajjada nashins* in western Punjab were also entitled to *kursi* (seat) in district, divisional and provincial *darbars* (courts).³⁵ Under this policy, in Dera Ghazi Khan District, the *pirs* of Taunsa Sharif, Mian Hamid³⁶ was entitled to nominate any member of his family for provincial *Darbar*. Mian Qadir Bakhsh, *pir* of Taunsa Sharif held this seat for many years. He was died in 1887 and then Mian Khair Bakhsh held this position till his death in 1890.³⁷ In the same way, in this district another well known *pir* family having considerable spiritual followings was of *Serai* of Hajipur tehsil Rajanpur. Two members of this family, Mian Jan Muhammad and Mian Lutf Muhammad were both provincial *darbaris*.³⁸ Their sons and brothers were also district *darbaris*.³⁹ In the same way, Syed Mehr Shah of *Basti Azim*, Ahmed Shah of *Pir Adil*, Dinan Shah of *Marhatta*, Mian Fatah Muhammad Daha, a descendant of a holy man, Nur *Mujawar*, representative priest of *Sakhi Sarwar* shrine, Mian Akil Muhammad of *Basti Panah Ali*, a *pir* of Gurchani tribe, were also entitled to chairs in district *darbar*.⁴⁰ According to Aziz, "They received *afrin-namas* (*shabash* papers, or certificates of appreciation, or 'pat on back'

testimonial) written either in silver or gold lettering. They received *lungis* (a piece of cloth to be wound round the head as a covering of different qualities and worth, which were a lowly remnant of the Mughal *khil'at* expensive and fine ceremonial dress)".⁴¹ As being the members of different elite governmental administrative set ups, they were given opportunity to come in contact with the colonial authorities. It enhanced their social status in their respective areas. Therefore, the bestowing of prestigious positions in government institutions to these *sajjada nashins* and *pirs* by the colonial rulers also enhanced their power over the people in their own areas.

Fourthly, these *pirs* and *sajjada nashins* because of their political role were also provided with patronage by the colonial administration at the time of crisis under Court of Wards.⁴² These crises might be of different kinds like falling into debt, mismanagement, family disagreement or the minority of the holder of the estate. In this context, among the families of note in Dera Ghazi Khan District, when the family of Mian Shah Nawaz Serai the *pir* of Hajipur fell into debt, the colonial administration took the charge of administration of their estate under their control. The administration maintained this control until the family came out of debt.⁴³ The administration used to keep these estates under Court of Wards until the owners maintained their political importance and influence over the people. Therefore this provision of patronage by the colonial administration to the *pirs* and *sajjad nashins* under court of Wards gave them consistency for the maintenance of their influence over the people in their respective regions.

Fifthly the British administration in its colonial revenue policy had divided the landowners into two categories. The land owners in first category were granted revenue free *jagirs*. The second category was of those landowners who had to pay revenue in cash on their lands. Under this policy, the landed class of second category was facing serious economic crisis in payment of their land revenue incurred upon them. They were either selling or mortgaging their lands to non-agrarian money lenders. In 1900, because of the political role of agrarian classes, to give protection, the government passed Land Alienation Act. This Act was supposed to give protection to landed class of Punjab against the money lenders. Under this

Act, they divided the masses into agrarian and non-agrarian castes. Under this law, only the agrarian castes were eligible to buy land. Because of their political role, the special privilege was given to *sajjada nashins* who were mostly Saiyids or Qureshis, to protect their estates against the money lenders by declaring them as agrarian tribes. In this context, James Wilson, as Punjab Settlement Commissioner realizing the political importance of Muslim Religious elite stressed the protection of their lands. As quoted in Gilmartin, Wilson referring to *sajjada nashins* and *pirs* mentioned that:

They are generally poor managers and very ready to part with the lands, which in most instances their ancestors have acquired by gift in recognition of their sacred character. If it is desirable to maintain their possession of their land, they require protection almost more than any other class. They are generally very poor agriculturalists, but they often own large areas, they do not lend money on interest, and for political reasons they should be protected.⁴⁴

So in this way, in the beginning of twentieth century, the *sajjada nashins* and *pirs* of many important shrines of western Punjab were thus given the status of landed class and their ownership of land was protected.⁴⁵ In this background, on the one hand where under colonial policy of patronage, the landed elite of the area were being rewarded for their loyalties to the British, on the other hand, the peasant proprietors due to harsh revenue colonial policies, were losing their land which was the only source of production in their respective areas. In this context, in Dera Ghazi Khan District, the poor people of the area, during the period from first regular settlement of 1876 to the time of revision of settlement in 1897, huge area of land was alienated either by sale or by mortgage. Thorburn, who served as Deputy Commissioner of Dera Ghazi Khan District, in his report about the condition of debt of the poor Muslims of the district mentioned that “two-thirds of the Mahomedan landowners and fully half the tenants, whether occupancy or tenants-at-will, were involved in debt.... The Mahomedans, with the exception of the best of the great Biluch tribal chiefs whom government has wisely treated very liberally, are generally as depressed as are their brethren Cis-Indus in Muzaffargarh”⁴⁶ In Muzaffargarh District, they were in worst condition as compare to the other regions of the Punjab. This can be judged from the writings of Darling that “I can count on

my fingers,' wrote the settlement officer of Muzaffargarh in the seventies, 'the men who are free from debt.' Twenty years later the next settlement officer wrote that things had become worse and that probably not more than 5 per cent were free".⁴⁷ Under the harsh colonial revenue policy, so was the pathetic condition of the peasant proprietors of the Dera Ghazi Khan District that they were obliged to sell or mortgage their land, the only mean of their livelihood. In this regard, in Sangarh tehsil, almost one third of the total cultivated land of the peasant proprietors was transferred. Same was the transferred percentage of the total cultivated land of Dera Ghazi Khan tehsil. In Jampur tehsil, out of the total cultivated area 34 % was either under mortgage or sold. In Rajanpur tehsil of the district, it was 27% of the total cultivated area which went under mortgage or was sold.⁴⁸ So in this way, through these evidences of the contemporary documents, it can be judged that the people of Dera Ghazi Khan, because of colonial policies were, through the control of their means of livelihood dependent upon the landlords either in the form of tribal elite, *tumandars* or in the shape of religious elite of *pirs* or *sajjada nashins*. So through British revenue policy, the control of the land of the area, the only means of production and livelihood was going out of the ownership of the common people. In this way, by losing the control of their means of livelihood, the common people of the area were becoming dependent upon the powerful elite of the area. About this situation Darling, wrote:

The peasantry, almost to a man, confess themselves the servants of the one true God and the Muhammad his Prophet, but in actual fact they are the servants of landlord, money lender, and pir. All the way down the Indus from far Hazara in the north to Sind in the south these three dominate men's fortunes; and though they are found in greater or less degree all over the province, nowhere are they so powerful.⁴⁹

Therefore through colonial policy of patronage by having control over huge land of the area, the *pirs* and *sajjada nashins* got direct control of the means of production of the many people of their respective areas. More over by getting so important administrative positions like magistrate and *zaildars* in the British colonial administration, they got considerable

control over the people their respective areas not only through their religious influence but also with worldly authority.

In addition other than the colonial policy of direct cooption to the religious elite, many of these *pirs* and *sajjada nashins* of western Punjab were closely linked in social and economic relationships to different tribal elders who were closed ally to the colonial administration. In this way, they got enormous socio-economic power and prestige in their respective areas. In this context, in Dera Ghazi Khan District, Khwaja Suleman⁵⁰ was *pir* of Sardar Asad Khan Nutkani, the *tumandar* (tribal chief) of Nutkani tribe and very influential person of the area. The former came into Taunsa Sharif because of the request of the latter. Later on, Nawab of Bahawalpur State became his *murid* (disciple). On the death of Khwaja Suleman, Nawab of Bahawalpur also constructed shrine of Khwaja Suleman with the cost of Rs. 85,000. After that Ghulam Mustafa Khan Saddozai of Multan, a wealthy landowner of the region and *murid* of Khwaja Suleman built two dwelling houses and a *sarai* (dwelling house) at the shrine.⁵¹ These *pirs* and *sajjada nashins* were also attached to different tribal elders and the influentials with the bonds of marriages. Like Khwaja Allah Bakhsh, the grandson of Khwaja Suleman, got his third marriage with the daughter of Nawab Ghulam Qadir Khan Khakwani of Multan, a big landowner of the region. In this way, Khwaja Mahmood, the son of Khwaja Allah Bakhsh got three hundred squares of land in inheritance.⁵² Khwaja Mahmood himself got married with the daughter of another influential landlord of the region, Nawab Abdullah Khan Alizai of Dera Ismail Khan.⁵³ Khwaja Hamid, the nephew of Mian Mahmud married into the powerful Mamdot family of Ferozepore District. The later was the wealthiest landowning Pathan family of the province.⁵⁴ In the same way, Ghulam Shah Khan better known as Mian Shah Nawaz Khan Serai, *pir* of Hajipur, himself a *jagirdar*, was married to a daughter of Fazal Muhammad Kalhora, a *jagirdar* of Khairpur State. After former's death, his nephew Mian Lutf Hussain, became *pir* of Hajipur. He was also a *jagirdar* and provincial *darbari* and married to a daughter of Khudadad Khan Kalhora, a *jagirdar* in Judhpur State.⁵⁵ So in this way, these *pirs* and *sajjada nashins*, of Dera Ghazi Khan District

with their close socio-economic relationships with the powerful people of their respective areas, became influential and it enhanced their power over the people of their respective areas. Thus the *pirs* and *sajjada nashins* by getting religious as well as secular authorities under the British rule in their close relationships with the powerful people of the area got strong influence over the poor people in their respective areas in the district.

Moreover, when the British introduced representative institutions, they continued their policy of patronage to landed class at upper level to aristocratic elite being elected as the representatives of the people of the area and at lower village level to agrarian class to give them persistent support by giving them the right of vote. They in the process of electoral politics deprived the poor masses having any role in the mechanism of representation of the people of the area. So this class division from the very beginning became the basis of representative institutions in the upper level of the district for the legislative councils and at the village level for the formation of local government institutions which continued in post independence period and even present determines the behaviour of the rural people in the electoral politics.

As a consequence of above mentioned colonial policy of co-option to *sajjada nashins* and *pirs* of the western Punjab, the nature of relationship of the religious elite of the region with the poor people of their respective areas changed into critical equation. The religious elite became so dominant over the poor people of its respective area that the former had almost the control of the life of the later. This nature of relationship by the dominant landlord and the poor people of its area can be better imagined by the description presented by Darling, about a tehsil of an adjacent district wrote that:

Every five miles or so is the house of a tribal or religious leader, who maintains a band of retainers to enforce his influence on his poor neighbours, and to conduct his feuds with his equals. The poor man pays blackmail for his cattle to these local chieftains and for his soul to his *pir*, who may or may not live in the neighbourhood, but visits his followers yearly to receive his dues. As would be expected, the bulk of the land is held by the rich man, who is increasing their possession. Peasant proprietors exist on the outskirts of the small towns; elsewhere the small lord less man cannot

hold his own. If he attempted to do so, his cattle would be driven, his women folk carried off, himself prosecuted before an honorary magistrate on a charge of cattle theft, and in a short time he would be glad to hand over his land and secure protection on any terms. Society then in the main consists of the land-holding squires, whose local authority is only limited by their mutual jealousies, and of their retainers and tenants, who, holding on share in the land which they till, and knowing that an appearance of wealth will lead to exaction from their feudal and spiritual masters, are content to lead a hand-to-mouth existence.⁵⁶

In the same way, writing about an adjoining district of Dera Ghazi Khan, another British officer mentioned that:

Each person secures the intercession of his Pir by an annual offering called buhal, which the Pir goes round and collects himself or sends his deputies. They demand their buhal in the most shameless way, and even carry off things by force. If the disciples are slow in giving, the Pirs curse them, and pour filthy abuse on them. Besides his annual fee, the Pirs sell charms and amulets to obtain every object, and to avert every calamity, that can be imagined.⁵⁷

This description about the contiguous district also seems true at that time even in Dera Ghazi Khan District. In trans-Indus areas because of this role of *pirs* about their followers, it was common proverb that “MAY Allah not set Sayud and Mullah over us.”⁵⁸ The relationship of *pir* and *sajjada nashin* landlords with the poor people of their respective areas in Dera Ghazi Khan District was not different as was the role of *pir* landlords in Muzaffargarh. They were also harsh in their dealings with the people of their respective areas.

So from the above description it became evident that that how from the beginning of colonial rule, a special class of aristocratic landed elite of *sajjada nashins* and *pirs* were created in western Punjab and the District. They were given special patronage in the colonial policy measures to control the people. They were given huge *jagirs* and administrative powers. In this way, through indirect control mechanism, the colonial administration divided the people into different classes and established their rule over the area. This division of class even in present times in western Punjab and in Dera Ghazi Khan District exists which inhibits the development and growth of a just and honourable society.

References

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- ¹ *Sajjada nashin* is a local word. Its plural is *sajjada nashins*; and the literal meaning is who sits on the prayer carpet. It is generally used for saint and religious guide of the larger community of disciples.
 - ² The word is generally used for saint, spiritual guide. Its original meaning in Persian is “old man” or “respected elder”.
 - ³ Aubrey O’ Brien, “The Mohammedan saints of the Western Punjab”. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 41, 1911, p. 511.
 - ⁴ *Gazetteer of Muzaffargarh District 1883-84*, (Lahore: Arya Press, 1884), p. 83.
 - ⁵ *Land Settlement Report of Muzaffargarh District 1873-80*, 1882, (Lahore: Central Jail Press, 1882), p. 63.
 - ⁶ F. W. R. Fryer, *First Regular Settlement Report, Dera Ghazi Khan District*. (Lahore: Central Jail Press, 1876), p. 48.
 - ⁷ *Gazetteer of Dera Ghazi Khan District 1896-97*, (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette, 1898), p. 55.
 - ⁸ *Gazetteer of Dera Ghazi Khan District 1896-97*, Ibid, p. 60.
 - ⁹ This research is a part of larger Ph.D. project. In this context the researcher conducted lot of interviews about the present and past religious organization and influence of *Pirs* and *Sajjad nashins* of the region and the District. In this way, in this research, the elderly people of the area told that almost fifty years before, all the people of the region had their own *pirs*. The people used to visit different shrines and gave *nazrana* (gift) to the *pirs* of the shrines. They considered those *pirs* as *walli Allah*. In their approach giving *nazranas* would bring those favours of God. Up till 1960s, agriculture was the major source of livelihood and most of the villagers were associated with farming. At the time of division of grains at the end of the cropping, winnowing and other activities, a *mujawar* (custodian of a shrine) of *Sakhi Sarwar* shrine used to come on the horse and put his *naiza* into the *bar* (heap of grains collected after completion of all process) and receive his share which all the farmers used to give and consider it as a sign of good omen. They thought that the grains which he gets are bestowed by God to them because of these *pirs*. The women of the village also used to visit shrines for their good omen.
 - ¹⁰ Khalid B. Sayeed, *Politics in Pakistan: The Nature and Direction of Change*. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980); Ian Talbot, “The 1946 Punjab Elections”, *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 14 no. 1, 1980), pp. 65-91; Khalid. K. Aziz, *Religion, Land and Politics in Pakistan: A study of Piri-Muridi*. (Lahore: Vanguard, 2001); Adeel Malik & Rinchan Ali Mirza, *Religion, Land and Politics: Shrines and Literacy in Punjab, Pakistan*. Working Paper, no. 30, 2015).
 - ¹¹ Aziz, *Religion, Land and Politics in Pakistan*, opcit, p. 34.

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- ¹² David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the Making of Pakistan*. (London: I.B.Tauris, 1988), p. 47.
- ¹³ Peter Scragg, *The Muslims of the Punjab and their Politics, 1936-1947*, (Ph. D. Dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1984), p. 286.
- ¹⁴ Dera Ghazi Khan District is located in south-west Punjab. In the north, the district boundary touches Dera Ismail Khan District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and its contiguous Tribal Area. In the west, there are Barkhan and Musakhel Districts of Balochistan. In the east, River Indus makes natural boundary between Dera Ghazi Khan District and Layyah and Muzaffargarh Districts. While in the southern side, Rajanpur District is located. On the basis of its physiographic features, Dera Ghazi Khan District can be divided into three distinct regions. The western part of the district is mountainous region of Sulaiman Range which extends from the Gomal River to southward. Sulaiman range separates Balochistan from the Punjab. The eastern part of the district is plain area and consists of the west bank of the Indus River. The middle region of the district which lies between these two areas is generally level but sometimes rolling in sandy waves. This region is known as *daamaan*. The western part of the *daamaan* is arid while the eastern part is canal irrigated. The canal irrigated area of the southern tehsil.
- ¹⁵ At the time of British conquest of Dera Ghazi Khan District, the most powerful population in the district was consisted of Baloch tribes. These tribes were Mazari, Gurchani, Dreshak, Leghari, Khosa, Lund, Buzdar, Nutkani and Qaisrani were the major tribes inhabiting in the region.
- ¹⁶ *Gazetteer of Dera Ghazi Khan District, 1893-97*, opcit, p. 94.
- ¹⁷ Fryer, *First Regular Settlement Report*, opcit, p. 30; *Gazetteer of Dera Ghazi Khan District 1883-84*, opcit, p. 94.
- ¹⁸ David Gilmartin, "Religious Leadership and the Pakistan Movement in the Punjab", *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 13, no. 3, 1979), pp. 485-517; Talbot, "The 1946 Punjab Elections" opcit; Katherine p. Ewing, The Politics of Sufism: Redefining the saints of Pakistan. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 42 no. 2, 1983), pp. 252-268; Aziz, *Religion, Land and Politics in Pakistan*, opcit; Malik & Mirza, *Religion, Land and Politics*, opcit.
- ¹⁹ Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, opcit, p. 51.
- ²⁰ For the detail analysis of colonial patronage to landed elite in Punjab see P. H. M. Van den Dungen, *The Punjab Tradition: Influence and authority in nineteenth-century India*. London: George Allen & Unwin. (1972); Crag Baxter, "The People's Party vs the Punjab Feudalists", *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 8, No. (3-4), 1972, pp. 166-189; Khalid. B. Sayeed, *Politics in Pakistan: The Nature and Direction of Change*. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980); Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj* (Delhi: Manohar, 1888); Iftikhar H. Malik, "Identity Formation and Muslim Party Politics in the Punjab, 1897-1936: A

retrospective analysis”, *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 29, no. 3, 1995), pp. 293-323.

- ²¹ An estate granted by the British administration.
- ²² Lepel H. Griffin, and, Charles F. Massy, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, vol. I. (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1909), p. 350.
- ²³ F. W. Skemp. *Multani Stories* (Lahore: Superintendent Government Printing, Punjab, 1917), p. 61.
- ²⁴ Maxwell S. Leigh, *The Punjab and the War*. (Lahore: Government Printing, 1922), p. 174.
- ²⁵ For a detailed description of British Patronage to Baloch *tumandars* in Dera Ghazi Khan District, consult M. F. Anwar, “British Policy of Co-option of *Tumandars* (Tribal Chiefs) in Punjab: A Case Study of Dera Ghazi Khan District”, *Historicus*, Vol. LXI, No. 3, (July-September, 2017), pp.95-108.
- ²⁶ David Gilamartin, *Blood and Water: The Indus River Basin in Modern History*. (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), p. 49.
- ²⁷ Gilmartin, “Religious Leadership and the Pakistan Movement in the Punjab” opcit, p. 494; Talbot, “The 1946 Punjab Elections” opcit, p. 81; Malik, 1995, p. 302; Aziz, 2001, p. 34; Malik & Mirza, 2015, p. 5).
- ²⁸ In British administrative system of the province, at the bottom of the power structure, there was *zail*. It was made of between 10 and 30 villages. *Zaildar* was incharge of *zail*. He was to supervise the *lambardars* (headmen) of the villages. The position of *zaildar* as a mediator between the government and the people was a highly powerful and respected. He used to act as honorary police officer in charge of the village police. The British in their colonial administration ensured that it was held by local landowners who had demonstrated unquestionable loyalty. The institution of *zaildar* reflected the significance which the colonial administration attached to win the support of the rural notables.
- ²⁹ *Gazetteer of Muzaffargarh District, 1929*, p.76).
- ³⁰ Hakam Chand, *Twarikh-i-Zilla Dera Ghazi Khan* (Karachi: Indus Publications, 1876), p. 457.
- ³¹ From the initiation of British administration, the Dera Ghazi Khan District was consisted of four tehsils. In 1982, a new district Rajanpur was created and Jampur and Rajanpur tehsils were separated from Dera Ghazi Khan District.
- ³² Chand, *Twarikh-i-Zilla Dera Ghazi Khan*, opcit, p. 453.
- ³³ Chand, Chand, *Twarikh-i-Zilla Dera Ghazi Khan*, Ibid, p. 453.
- ³⁴ Chand, *Twarikh-i-Zilla Dera Ghazi Khan*, Ibid, pp. 456, 457.
- ³⁵ Talbot, “The 1946 Punjab Elections”, opcit; *Punjab and the Raj*, opcit.1988; Aziz, 2001; Malik & Mirza, 2015).
- ³⁶ Mian Hamid was a *sajjada nashin* of *darbar* of Khwaja Suleman of Taunsa Sharif.
- ³⁷ Griffin & Massy, *Chiefs and Families of Note*, opcit, p. 389.

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- ³⁸ Griffin & Massy, *Chiefs and Families of Note*, ibid, p. 351.
- ³⁹ Chand, *Twarikh-i-Zilla Dera Ghazi Khan*, opcit, p.463.
- ⁴⁰ Fryer, *First Regular Settlement Report*, opcit, pp. 30, 31.
- ⁴¹ Aziz, *Religion, Land and Politics in Pakistan*, opcit, p. 22.
- ⁴² Court of Ward was an institution established to give economic stability to the local intermediaries, who were the main supporters of colonial administration in the province.
- ⁴³ Rai Bahadur Hatto Ram, *Gul Bahar* (Urdu), 2nd edition, (Quetta: Balochi Academy, 1982), p.156. The first edition of the book was published in 1862.
- ⁴⁴ Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, opcit, p. 50
- ⁴⁵ Sayeed, *Politics in Pakistan*, opcit, pp. 5-7.
- ⁴⁶ Septimus S. Thorburn, *Muslims and Money-Lenders in the Punjab*. (London: William Blackwood, 1886), p. 168.
- ⁴⁷ Malcolm L. Darling, *The Punjab Peasants in Prosperity and Debt*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), p. 116.
- ⁴⁸ *Gazetteer of Dera Ghazi Khan District 1996-97*. (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1898), p. 90
- ⁴⁹ Malcolm L. Darling, *Rusticus loquitur: The Old Light and the New in the Punjab Village*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1930), p. 214.
- ⁵⁰ Khwaja Suleman was a prominent *pir* of *Chishti* revivalist *silsala* (*sufi* order). The *pirs* of this *silsala* were strict adherent to *sharia* (the law of Islam). They lacked the historical tradition of close contact of the established shrines with the government. They derived their authority from religious influence rather than from economic power. They were much responsive to state patronage. But later on for economic reasons, they became involved in local political system and same was the case of the *sajjada nashins* of the shrine of Taunsa sharif (Talbot, 1988a, p. 25).
- ⁵¹ (Griffin & Massy, *Chiefs and Families of Note*, opcit, p. 388).
- ⁵² David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the Making of Pakistan*. (London: I.B.Tauris, 1988), p. 65.
- ⁵³ Griffin & Massy, *Chiefs and Families of Note*, opcit, p. 389.
- ⁵⁴ Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, ibid, p. 66.
- ⁵⁵ Griffin & Massy, *Chiefs and Families of Note*, p. 350.
- ⁵⁶ Malcolm L. Darling, *The Punjab Peasants in Prosperity and Debt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), p. 113.
- ⁵⁷ Edward O'Brien, *Settlement Report of Muzaffargarh District, 1873-80*. (Lahore: Central Jail Press, 1882), pp. 63-64.
- ⁵⁸ Edward. E. Oliver, *Across the Border or Pathan and Biloch*. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1890), p. 63).