

Urbanization in Punjab due to the Establishment of the Canal Colonies

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Abstract

The study determined the object to explore the dynamics of change, occurred due to the establishment of canal irrigation under colonial administration. The research work has suggested the shift in patterns of agriculture under the scheme of settlement along with a new irrigation system. The additional trade pattern was based upon the exchange of raw material with the finished goods from abroad, particularly from the United Kingdom, which also drove the new phase of social development in the lives of the people of this region. In the Canal Colonies in British Punjab, the British government tried its level best to increase the production of crops to fulfil the gap between supply and demand. The conflict arose between the past and present dominant classes. The study also emphasized its basic objective to explore the ratio of development in the District Multan due to the establishment of the Sidhna Canal Colony. The district remained prominent always in the past and even under British rule just due to its central geographical position. The perennial Canal system and the scheme of Sidhna Canal Colony changed the whole landscape and economy of the Multan District, which had a far-reaching impact on the lives of the people of this region.

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Introduction

Punjab always remained center of attraction for every invader and rulers of India. Even when the British authorities began their settlements in India, they had their eyes on Punjab, and at last, they succeeded to annex Punjab in 1849. The British authorities always developed plans and policies which left distant effects, not only fulfilling their objectives, even their policies influence lives of people where they ruled. Punjab witnessed the same effects after the annexation, especially when the British administration decided to established canal colonies in Punjab (west). It's a fact that the British administration had deep concerns towards peace and stability in the region to achieve their desired objectives from the fertile and rich land of Punjab. To achieve their objectives, the British authorities introduced new patterns of irrigation with whom the indigenous people were unaware of this kind of modern techniques for irrigation—the new methods of irrigation directly influenced agricultural products and increased crops production's ratio. The British authorities wanted to transfer these agricultural products to their homeland and to European Markets, and they developed rail networks and roads from canal colonies to seaports. Tan Tai (Yong, 2005, p. 71) and Imran Ali (Ali, 1988, pp. 5-7) both agreed that due to the establishment of the canal colonies, Punjab witnessed large-scale development in trade, communication, settlements of inhabitants; and peasants from neighboring areas due to which old towns were re-build and new towns were also built. The migrants in canal colonies recruited in British Military too. Furthermore, Punjab became the center of attention of the British authorities because of the huge increase in revenue. By this, the districts in canal colonies became appropriate for serving the objectives of British authorities. With the passage of time, all these developments led Punjab towards urbanization and many new towns were emerged due to these canal colonies in Punjab.

The basic objective of this research paper is to analyze the relationship between multi-dimensional developments in Punjab and the requirements of their ruler to achieve even control over the political situation as well as the economic resources of Punjab. On the other hand, this research paper also focuses on the impact of the establishment of the canal colonies over the increase in urbanization in Punjab. The research highlighted the significance of urban towns and the conversion of old towns into new ones through the proper planning of the British authorities. This research paper also discusses that how these new towns, cities and villages became supportive of their policies and how they became successful in achieving their desired goals of having control over the population, economic resources and gained political and strategical control over the region. The map (Fig 1.1) shows the areas of West Punjab, which are the basic focus of study, where the British authorities had introduced new means of irrigation such as the canals for increasing agricultural land through the allocation of land to indigenous peasants and to migrants in colonies.

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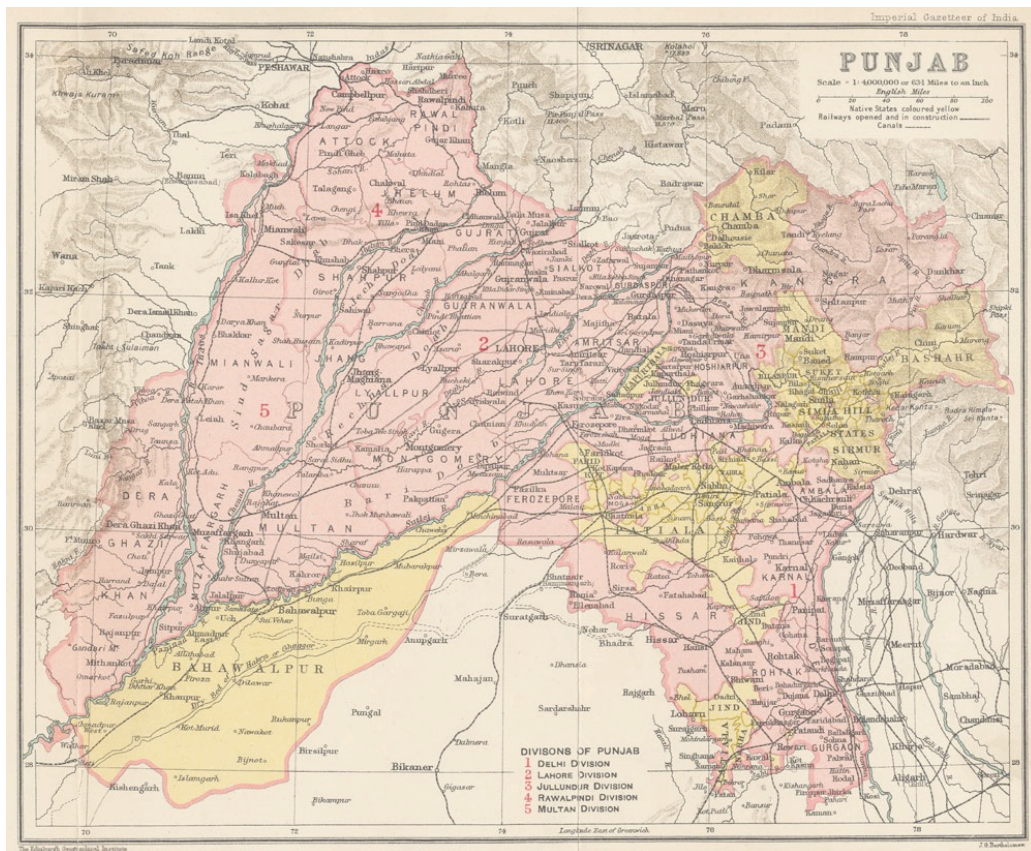


Figure 1: Doabs and Districts in Punjab

Objectives of the Research Study

1. To study root causes of the establishment of canal colonies.
2. To explore the impacts of the canal colonies in the development of urbanization in Punjab.
3. To delineate the political and economic control of the British administration after the emergence of new towns and urban units in Punjab.

Research Questions

There are three main research questions which will be answered in this research study;

- a. Why has the British administration chosen Punjab for introducing new techniques of irrigation via establishing canal colonies?
- b. Why Punjab received an increase in population, and a huge number of people migrated towards these canal colonies and formed new town and urban areas?
- c. Did these new towns and urban units sufficiently fulfill the objectives of the British administration for which they had focused in the development of canal and colonies along these canals?

Significance of the Study

There are many research studies, articles and books having through analyses over the British rule in India and its different aspects. However this research paper is emphasizing on two different parameters. At first it has a deep discussion about the process of development of urbanization in Punjab under the British rule due to their policy of colonization and on the other hand it will explore the facts and figures of increase in production of crops, good and revenue generation for their rulers from the emerging districts of the Punjab.

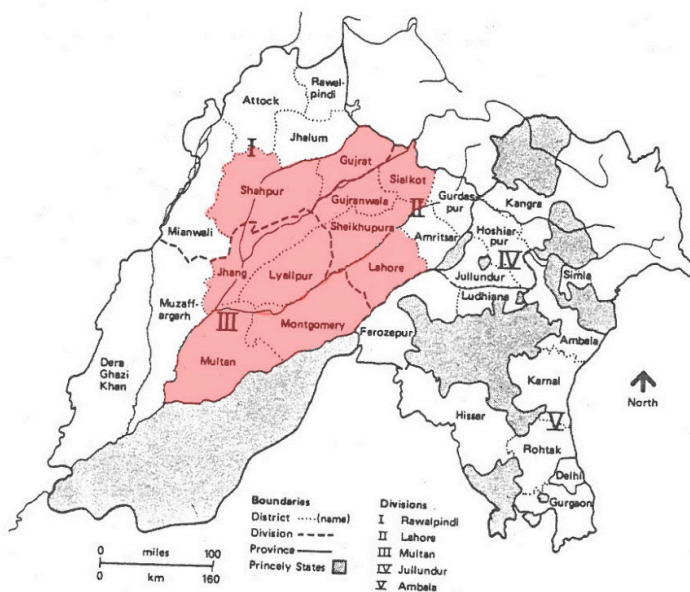


Figure 2: Districts of Punjab around canal colonies 1880-1947

The Early Phase of Colonial Policies (1849-1880)

After the annexation of Punjab, the British administration had deep concerns about the peace and order of the region. They were seriously worried about the placement of military soldiers who lost their jobs after annexation. To manage this issue, the British administration began to allocate the land to them (soldiers) in Upper Bari Doab Canal in eastern districts of Punjab (1850-1861) and in Sirhind canal in 1869 (Roy). The political objectives were more important for the British administration at that time rather than their economic objectives, which kept them intact their interest in the establishment of early canal colonies (Upper Bari Doab Canal & Sirhind Canal) (Gilmartin, 1994, p. 1132).

The policy of the British administration to sustain peace and engaging the indigenous peasants in the land of canal colonies proves fruitful for administration; when mutiny occurred in 1857, Sikh settlers and soldiers worked against Indian troops (Mazmuder, 2001, pp. 95-98). Due to giving preference to peace in Punjab, the British administration couldn't emphasize much over reforms regarding the law, and Punjab remained the most neglected region in this regard (Gandhi, 1919, p. 33). Almost 75,000 Punjabis were serving in Bengal armies which were just 30,000 at the time of Mutiny 1857. This rapid increase became the cause of the birth of the theory "Punjabization of the British Army", and Punjabi became populous as martial races and huge recruitment from Punjab leaves contrary effects over Madras army (Gandhi, 1919, pp. 31-32). This ratio of military recruitment had great significance due to the ratio of Punjab's population in India that was just 10 percent of the total population of India. (Mazmuder, 2001, p. 30) Ultimately Punjab received more part in the military budget, and as it became more populous, it began to boot out many socio-economic and political effects on this region (Khawaja, 2012, p. 7).

The Canal Colonies 1880-1947 in Punjab

During this period, nine canal projects were established by the British administration in Punjab, i.e.

- i. Sidhnai
- ii. Sohag Para
- iii. Chunian
- iv. Lower Chenab
- v. Lower Jhelum
- vi. Lower Bari Doab
- vii. Upper Chenab
- viii. Upper Jhelum
- ix. Nilli Bar

Due to progress in agricultural production, instant need raised there to transfer crops and raw from fields to mandis (markets). Therefore, the British administration concentrates on developing railways and roads network from these canal colonies to the mandis

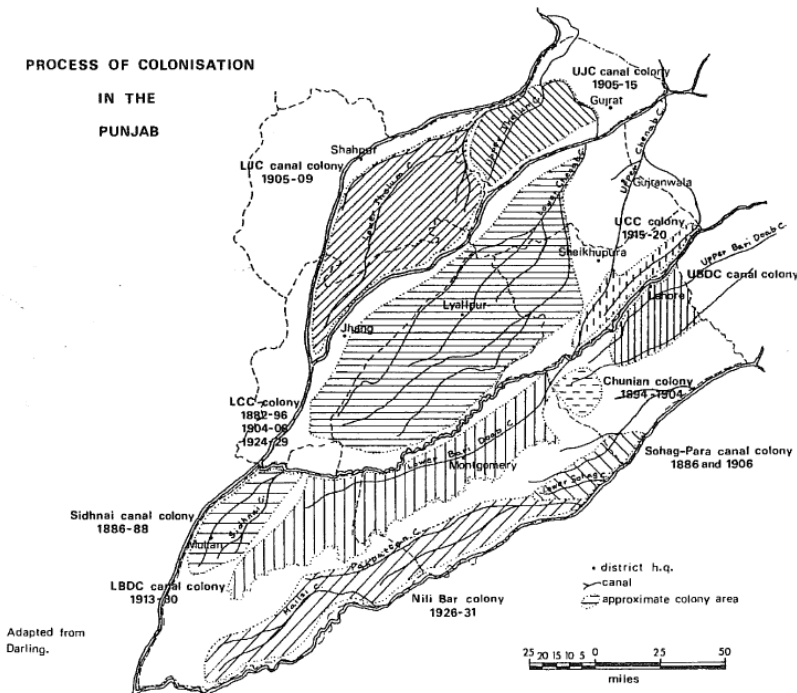
and seaports. By this way the canal colonies in Punjab seen rapid progress in transportation and communication, which ultimately helped the rural areas and old towns in emerging new towns and districts such as Multan, Montgomery(Sahiwal),Lyallpur,Jhang,Lahore,Sheikhpura,Shahpura,Gujranwala,Gujrat and Sialkot (Ali, 1988, p. 5) .See Figure 1.3



Figure 3: Districts lying in Canal Colonies of Punjab (Ali, 1988, p. 5)

The Sidhnaï Colony (1886-1888) was the first canal colony in Punjab with 250,000 acres allocated areas that were beginning to irrigate through River Ravi in 1882 (Zafar, 1981, p. 48). Then the British administration started construction of the Sohag Para canal colony located in Montgomery district through River Sutlej, in which 86,300 acres area were irrigated through seasonal canal irrigation. In the Sohag Para canal, landlords and indigenous peasants were allocated 55.5 acres of land on an average basis (Ali, 1988, pp. 77,187,189). The Sohag Para canal colony was extended in 1906, and it also covered almost 86,315 acres of crown land and latterly known as the Sutlej Valley Project in 1924 (Zafar, 1981, p. 44). Meanwhile, the Sidhnaï Canal colony also received an extension in allocated land of 175,702 acres in Multan district's wasteland.

After the completion of the construction of Khanki headwork on the Chenab, the Lower Chenab Canal project upgraded as the Chenab Colony, during 1892-1896 the first process of land allotment occurred while in the second phase from 1924-1929, land allotments of almost 1.9 million acres were allocated to settlers of the Chenab Canal Colony (India, Department of irrigation, 1915-1920, pp. 8-9). Then 15,000 acres wasteland under crown near Lahore District at Chunian, the Chunian Canal Colony began to build in 1894 (Abell, p. 2). On the land under government control was 437,751 acres in Shahpur district began irrigated through Lower Jhelum Canal and process of colonialization was began there in 1902. This canal colony majorly served the British government for facilitating them for horse breeding (Wase, 1933, p. 17). After it in 1905, 18,000 acres land in Jhang Colony began to allocate among peasants. The Lower Bari Doab became the reason of establishment of three canal colonies named 'The Triple Canal Project', the project was interlinked and separated as well at same time. Under this project 350,000 acres land was allocated in Gujarat district in the Upper Jhelum Canal Colony, in the Lower Bari Doab Canal Colony. 500,000 acres came under allotment in Gujranwala and Sheikhpura district while in the districts of Okara, Montgomery,khanewal and Multan districts were extended 26000 square miles of land under the Lower Bari Doab Canal Colony. From 1913 to 1930 around 1450,000 acres land was allocated in the Lower Bari Doab Canal Colony (Zafar, 1981, p. 46). The process of allotment of land in the Upper Chenab Canal Colony began in 1915 and near 64,846 acres of land had allotted till 1920,322,000 acres land had allotted from 1905-1915 in the upper Jhelum canal colony (Darling, 1925, p. 131). The Nilli Bar Colony (1926-1930) was the last colony under the Sutlej valley project, where most of land was allocated through auction in contrast to other colonies in Punjab (Wase, 1933, p. 24) (Figure 1.4). The policy of the British administration regarding administration of canal colonies had different aspects at state and provincial level. Usually the authorities gave more importance to military, economic and political benefits in these canal colonies.



Impacts of Canal Colonies: Process of Urbanization

Transports

Railways

The establishment of the canal colonies became the basic reason for an increase in railroads on three sides of the triangular Punjab plains, connecting the canal colonies to Delhi at one end and at the other end to Peshawar through Lahore. The rapid increase in construction of railway lines in plains of west Punjab during the British rule was basically had the intention to support the British army politically and military in the region, especially when they want to intervene in Afghanistan; however, it has few commercial purposes too (Thornton, 1972, p. 93). The state government was responsible for the construction of railways till 1880; however, after the establishment of the canal colonies, the railway's construction policy had seen a change in policy (Malik, 1963, p. 5).

The construction of the rail network now connected with the construction of every new canal colony. The rail network started to build from center of every doab to the edges of doabs and from there to other banks of doabs for the transformation of goods and military equipment as well (Ali, 1988, pp. 9-12).

On 8th February 1859, the railway's network began officially in Punjab from the Lahore railways station (Lawrence, 1859, p. 3). The British government wants to connect all military and cantonments areas from Peshawar to Calcutta via the "Great North Western Railroad". From Lahore to Amritsar, railways lines had been completed in 1892, which was later extended towards East to Ghaziabad (Near Delhi) and in South till the district Multan. Moreover, the Indus Valley State Railways also finished their work on the construction of the railway's network from Kotri to Lodhran and then Lodhran to Multan in 1878. On the other end, the Punjab Northern State Railways was also working on the construction of railways lines in between Lahore and Jhelum, which was completed in 1873, and in the second phase in (1873-1883), the PNSR build another railway line that's linked Jhelum to Peshawar. Although all the linked railway's lines were built by keeping the purpose of meeting military needs, however with the passage of time, these railways lines proved their commercial significance too. The British administration was well aware of the significance of railways networks. That's why just in a single decade (1872-1882), Punjab witness increased in railway lines from 410 miles to 600 miles and in next two decades from 1882-1902. The different canal colonies of the Punjab were linked through 3086 miles long railways networks and there were 600 railways stations in Punjab till 1920s (Mazmuder, 2001, pp. 68-70). (Fig 1.4)



Figure 4: Railways and Inland Navigation in Punjab (Imperial Gazetteer of India, v.26, Atlas 1909 edition, Railway Map—Sectional(1)).

Even though no one can deny the construction of railways network was purely to fulfil the requirements of military purpose however as Mazmuder discussed that as these railways lines began their functioning, this network started to help civil communities to meet the needs of transportation and communications and resultantly these areas became more populous and urbanized (Mazmuder, 2001, p. 69). The agricultural products and crops were also transferred from town Mandis to seaports of Karachi and Bombay through these railways (Grewal, 2014, p. 289). Through this process, trade got a huge increase from the canal colonies to European countries, which ultimately left positive impacts on the conditions of peasants of all canal colonies and became the reason for the beginning of urbanization in Punjab. Most urban areas were developed due to the emergence of market town and mandis, mainly interconnected through railways. These new market towns acted as a medium of communication with and trade between big cities and villages and ultimately left a deep impact on the growth of urbanization during British rule in Punjab (Jahngir, December 2018, p. 191).

Roads

As the British administration established canal colonies in Punjab, they started to construct different means of communication and transportations along with districts, towns and cantonments areas. Almost all major towns, districts and divisional headquarters are located on main Grand Trunk Road. The infrastructure of roads followed on the patterns of railways networks. The only metaled road from Delhi to Lahore that's touched Peshawar at the northern side was GT road. After the construction of railway line between Multan and Lahore, the newly emerging town Montgomery (Now called Sahiwal) were established as district headquarters in 1864, while on the main Chiniot road, Lyallpur as a new town, emerged. On same patterns, the divisional capitals of Rawalpindi and Lahore connected through new town of Gujranwala at main GT Road. While in between Lahore (divisional headquarter) and Sargodha (District headquarter) were connected through Sheikhpura (Punjab G. o., 1884, pp. 2-4). Although there were many un-metaled roads that's worked as feeder's roads (M.F.O'Dwyer, 1894, p. 8).

Development of Market Town and increase in urban areas

As discussed earlier, the network of railways lines and roads linked mandis and market town to big cities and seaports that's became the reason for increase in production of crops and exports of local goods from the canal colonies. Every Canal colony has some reserved land for Mandis such as only in the Lower Jhelum Canal colony at the railway stations of Phullarwan, Bhalwal, Sargodha,

Sillianwala and Shah Jiwan has mandis/markets. These market town were supervised by Chowdris (Chudhary) of villages/towns and worked as a facilitator of exports products from nearest the canal colonies to European countries. The local goods and products usually sold by local traders and middle man and bought by agents of European exporters and sent out in European countries via seaports of Karachi and Bombay (Government of the Punjab, Gazetteer, Lower Jhelum Canal).

The significance of market town in the emergence of urban areas also left its evidence through the example of the canal colonies that didn't have any market town. There were many others market town that was established due to the construction of roads and railways lines along with canal colonies in Punjab (Table 1).

Table 1. Market Towns in Punjab Canal Conies

Year	Canal Colony	Market Town/Mandis
1896-1900	Chenab Colony	Sangla, Chiniot, Gojira & Toba Tek Singh
1900-1910	Upper-Jhelum	Mandi Bahauddin
1900-1920	Upper- Chenab	Hafizabad, Sangla Hill, Nankana Sahib & Warburton
1920-1930	Lower Bari Doab	Arifwala, Okara, Pkapattn and Depalpur in Montgomery district, Burewala, Vihari, Dunyapur, Lodhran, Shujabad, Talamba and Khanewal in Multan District

These emerging town diverted the traffic route from westwards from the rivers to eastwards to the railways (Punjab, 1904, p. 10). The formation of various new mandis in different districts of the canal colonies of Punjab became the cause of increased in production of crops and related goods and left positive impacts on the living standards of peasants of canal colonies as well as fulfilled the imperial agenda of increase in trade via these canal colonies.

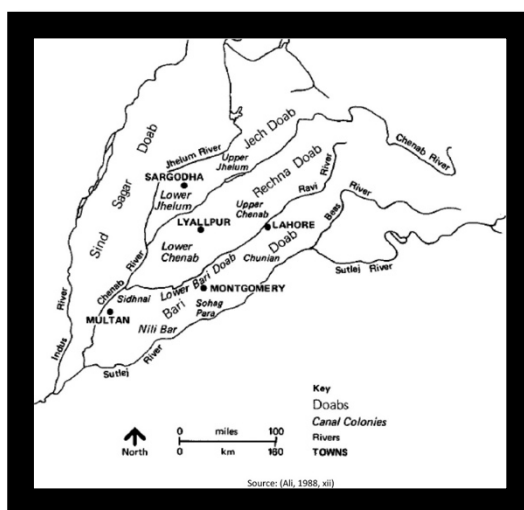


Figure 5: Map of Emerging new towns of Montgomery, Lyallpur, and Sargodha respectively in Bari, Rechna and Jech Doabs (Ali, 1988)

Increase in Urban Population

The less rainfall and numbers of epidemics always kept the size of the population very low till the third quarter of the 19th century in different districts of western Punjab. As well as there were no proper means of communication, and transportation of goods also left a negative impact on the growth of the population. However, as the British administration started focusing on the development of canal colonies, especially for irrigational purposes, local peasants get out from the fear of shortage of rainfall, and it had been noticed that the population became denser in the eastern districts of Gujrat, Gujranwala and Lahore in contrast to the western district. The reason for a rapid increase in this district was the construction of roads and railways lines in the region. The perennial canals also led to rapid growth in population. The cumulative effect of in-migration by colonists and the resulting natural increase in population became evident after 1921. "the number of persons, who come from outside and settle in Punjab, or of those who leave the Province, to settle elsewhere, is infinitesimal as compared with the numbers of migrants to canal colonies (Khan, 1931, p. 118)."

It has been noticed that all the canal colonies in Punjab received a huge number of migrants from surrounding areas. The ratio of increase in population and canal irrigated areas were almost much closed and reflecting the same ratio of increase towards upward from 1891 to 1931. The variation in an increase of population in irrigated districts of Punjab can be studied in table 2.

Table 2. Demographic density in different districts of the canal Colonies of Punjab

District	1881-1891	1891-1901	1901-1911	1911-1921	1921-1931	1931-1941	1881-1931
Gujranwala	+14.1	+11.8	-18.1	+3.0	+18.1	+23.9	+27.1
Gujrat	+10.9	-1.8	-0.5	+4.6	+11.9	+19.8	+26.9
Jhang	+3.0	+5.9	+23.1	+22.5	+14.0	+23.6	+70.2
Lahore	+17.1	+11.7	-0.4	+13.0	+22.0	+22.9	+79.5
Lyallpur	-12.8	+1,129.5	+42.9	+16.2	+20.2	+19.7	+2,038.9
Montgomery	+19.6	+3.1	+12.2	+42.3	+45.8	+32.9	+187.0
Multan	+14.2	+11.8	+14.7	+9.3	+32.1	+298.0	+111.5
Shahpur	+23.7	+2.1	+32.1	+11.6	+14.1	+21.6	+114.1
Sheikhupura	+14.6	+30.4	+3.3	+7.8	+19.5	+22.4	+98.9

Source: Ahmad Hassan Khan, *Census of India, Punjab, part 2, tables Vol. 17, Civil and Military Gazette Press, Lahore, 1931* & Khan

Bahadur Sheikh, *Census of India, Punjab, tables Vol.6, Manager of Publications, Delhi, 1941*.

It can be easily observed that the Chenab Canal colony received highest numbers of migrants to the colony (in district Lyallpur) as the colony had been expanded too quickly in 1901-1931 to meet the needs and requirements of settlers. On the other hand district Lahore got highest number of migrants during same period.(Fig. 1.6) The Sidhnaï and Lower Bari Doabs canal colonies' districts Multan also gained migration in their irrigated areas.

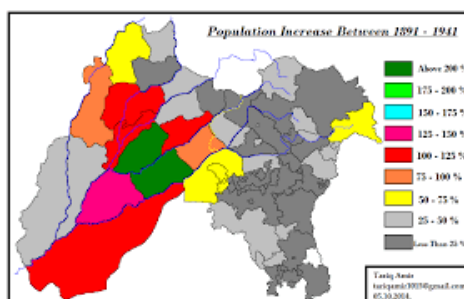


Figure 6: Population Increase 1891-1941

The increase in migrants to the canal colonies and the increase in irrigated land through canals became the driving force of the development of urban centers (Lahore, Lyallpur, Montgomery, Multan, Sargodha, Sheikhupura, and Jhang) in Punjab.

Migration and increase in population in different canal colonies had two folded momentous. At first agrarian classes emerged in large groups, and secondly, the colonialist showed new patterns of relations among different classes in their migrants' towns and districts.

Conclusion

The British administration targeted their imperial policy and established canal colonies between doabs in Punjab. An increase in irrigated land, agricultural products, better ways for communication and transportation are attracted people from surrounding areas, and many new urban towns came into being, such as Lahore, Lyallpur, Montgomery, Multan, Sargodha, Sheikhupura, Shahpur, Gujrat and Jhang. These emerging towns began to work as main districts and also became the medium of connection among small town and big cities as well as this urban town became the center of power and economy and served as administrative and economic centers of the British government. The British policies in Punjab left deep impacts by everlastingly shifting in its geography and rapid increase in urbanization of the region.

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