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Political Dynamics of Pakpattan Tehsil in Late Colonial Punjab (1900–1947): Colonial Governance, Religious Authority and Rural Political Mobilization

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ABSTRACT

The article is concerned with politics of Pakpattan Tehsil in Montgomery District in late colonial period (1900-1947). The paper will review how colonial administrative reforms, agrarian systems, religious power and new political parties changed political environment of rural Punjab. The role of shrine of Baba Farid and role of political organizations, such as Unionist Party and All-India Muslim League, is given special attention. Based on colonial administrative documents, district gazetteers, settlement reports and electoral records, the article posits that politics in Pakpattan was an intricate blend of colonial rule, religious power and rural elite connections. The custodians of the shrine agrarian elites and colonial rulers designed a triangular power system which shaped political participation and mobilization in area and particularly in final ten years of British dominance. Work contributes to history of the region politics by demonstrating how the politics of local Pakpattan are the reflections of the changes in the broader Punjab of the late colonial era.

Keywords: Political Dynamic, Pakpattan, Colonial, Governance, Religious Authority, Rural Political Mobilization

Introduction

The late colonial Punjab politics can be helpful in terms of its insights into interaction of colonial rule, local elites and nationalist trends. These dynamics can be studied using the case of Pakpattan Tehsil, located in Montgomery District (today in Sahiwal region). Pakpattan was a political and religious center of British rule, whose politics was also affected by both colonial and traditional social institutions. Punjab became part of British as a result of Second Anglo-Sikh War in 1849 and its administration was reshaped, with Pakpattan becoming part of Montgomery District. Original Pakistan Firstly, Pakpattan was the seat of a district, which was subsequently moved to other towns. Economic and political landscape of the region changed due to presence of municipal institutions, canal irrigation systems and transportation systems which were introduced by colonial state in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A municipal council was formed and irrigation systems developed to encourage agricultural growth and centralization of government. Only under the influence of colonial institutions, political processes of Pakpattan did not take place. This contributed towards a high religious status of town since it had a renowned shrine of Baba Farid and also influenced the local political organization. By 1940s Pakpattan was a major center of Muslim League politics with religious networks playing a role in mobilization of rural populations in Pakistan Movement. In this paper, the interaction between colonial rule and religion, agrarian elites and political parties is going to be discussed as a means of influencing political power and politics in Pakpattan Tehsil during late colonial era.

2. Review of Literature and History:

The late colonial period of political history of rural Punjab has been an area of a lot of academic interest. Correlation between colonial rule, agrarian reform, religious rule and political mobilization have been considered by historians. However, the majority of this literature is about large districts such as Lyallpur, Multan and Lahore, whereas smaller, yet historically significant regions such as Pakpattan are largely under-researched.

Early colonial historiography was primarily concerned with the administrative reforms and economic modernization under the British rule. Changes in region by canal irrigation, settlement policy and development of infrastructure were recorded in authoritative sources such as Punjab District Gazetteer: Montgomery District and Imperial Gazetteer of India. These were colonial accounts which saw the British policies as a form of development and modernisation of agriculture. Later scholarship adopted a more critical perspective. Historians such as Ian Talbot and David Gilmartin argued that colonial domination in Punjab was highly reliant on the connections with the rural elite and religious leaders. Colonial state did not destroy traditional structures of power but adjusted them in its system. Through patronage networks and granting of land to powerful landlords and custodians of shrines, British gained the political loyalty of influential landlords and custodians of shrines.

The second notable literature is that the agrarian society in Punjab evolved as a result of the input of irrigation and canal colonies. The agricultural settlements and relations of new land tenure formed as a result of irrigation projects can be discussed through the example of the study of the agrarian policy of the colonial period by Imran Ali. The economic and political situation in Montgomery District changed significantly because of the construction of canal colonies and, in particular, the works of Lower Bari Doab and Nili Bar. The history of the world has shown, that Lower Bari Doab Canal Colony alone brought to the plough-share more than 2600 square miles of hitherto uncultivated land in Montgomery and the neighboring districts. The settlement of people began taking place in the region, and land distributions began in the early twentieth century continuing to 1930s, creating new farming settlements. Studies about canal colonies also focus on the contribution of irrigation projects in the formation of colonial states. Increased agricultural production and revenues were the result of massive irrigation programs and simultaneously state was able to reorganize rural society on new settlement patterns. Subaltern Studies has inspired later scholarship, which studies the agency of the peasants and the local communities. These scholars suggest that besides the elite networks, it was the daily activities of peasantry in negotiation with landlords and imperialists that shaped politics in Punjab. The contributions have made political history of Pakpattan a relatively unexplored field. The existing literature is largely general on Montgomery District without an analysis of the special position of the religious institutions and canal irrigation systems of Pakpattan. The article demonstrates the intersection of colonial rule, canal colonies and religious power to the study of knowledge to literature in order to create political relationships in Pakpattan during the late colonial rule.

3. Pakpattan History during Colonialism:

The history of Ajodhan and the town of Pakpattan have a long history that is traced back to centuries ago. Its strategic position on the banks of Sutlej River and in the trade, routes led to its emergence as a commercial and religious center. In the early colonial times, British saw the administrative significance of Pakpattan. When Punjab has been annexed, the town temporarily became the headquarters of the district, but then the headquarters was moved to other places. The colonial rulers came with municipal institutions and infrastructure development to enhance administration and growth. The establishment of a municipal council in nineteenth century enabled British to control the administration and taxation of the towns

and assimilate local elites in the colonial government. Economic change was also experienced with the building of irrigation canals in central Punjab in the late nineteenth-early twentieth centuries. These irrigation schemes promoted land development and population growth in the adjacent countryside, thus changing land ownership and political control. Therefore, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Pakpattan had turned into a significant administrative and agrarian center of the Montgomery District.

4. Canal Colonies and Agrarian Reconstruction in Montgomery District:

One of the bigger changes that came about as a consequence of construction of canals by British in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was irrigation of tehsil Pakpattan, colonial district of Montgomery (Sahiwal). Before this intervention, the region was largely dependent on rainfall and minimal inundation channels that could only allow farming to riverine lands. The appearance of a system of perennial and non-perennial canals radically changed this landscape, allowing organized agriculture and permanent settlement. One of the most important canals irrigations Pakpattan with is the Lower Bari Doab Canal (LBDC) which was constructed as part of Triple Canal Project, started in 1906. Although its primary command lay across Montgomery and Multan, its distributary system indirectly supported Pakpattan by feeding subsidiary canals and branches. The Ravi fed LBDC, and had link canals on Chenab and Jhelum such that water flow was continuous. Its widely dispersed distributary system in form of Gugera and other branch canals--prepared the way to the irrigation of adjacent tehsils, including Pakpattan part. Still closer was the Depalpur Canal system that began in the Lahore district and ended in Depalpur and Pakpattan. This canal branched into Upper and Lower Sohag and eventually drained into distributaries such as Para, Malka Hans and Nurpur channels. These rivers inundated northeast and central acreage of Pakpattan, and turned formerly unproductive land into plough. The irrigation ratio and design ensured that there was a regulated flow of water, which was utilized in subsistence and commercial crops. Of particular significance to tehsil was Pakpattan Canal whose source was Suleimanke headworks on Sutlej River. Although initially it circumvented unirrigated Depalpur, it began to drain to Pakpattan. It made distributaries in shape of Bhatti (non-perennial), and Khadir Branch, which flowed along southern side of tehsil and entered Mailsi. The irrigation by single-crop irrigation was carried out by Khadir Branch, other distribution channels such as Qabula (2-L) and Fatna (3-L) channels ensured perennial irrigation in north. It is a measure of technical precision of colonial water management. There was also Lower Sohag Para Canal, a derivation of natural Sohag Nala, which seasonally fed Sohag Nala and Pakpattan. It was not as reliable as perennial canals; however, it fitted into larger canal systems by supplementing irrigation of particular parcels of land. The overall effect of these canals was that Pakpattan which was a semi-arid region was converted to a farmable land. This direct factor was hydraulic growth that made settlements along canals possible and these settlements changed tenure and settlement patterns. With colonization of canals, there were large-scale plans of land settlement in whole of Montgomery district, including Pakpattan. British systematically allocated land according to economic interests and political aspects in a systematic policy. The resettlement of peasant owners of crowded villages of central Punjab, such as cities of Amritsar, Jullundur and Lahore, took place in these newly irrigated lands. Their presence and contribution to intensive cultivation was through these settlers who were mostly of agriculturally skilled communities like Jats, Arains, Kambohs and Sainis. Meanwhile, massive lands were given to military officers especially those who have served in war. This entailed the use of these grants as incentives to enlist in colonial army besides acting as rewards. Other colonies like Lower Bari Doab and Nili Bar were given tens of thousands of acres to soldiers, further connecting agrarian growth and military policy.

British also preferred intermediary elites like large landowners, pirs and local notables who were given large estates. These associations served as administrative and political intermediaries, assisting in keeping order and loyalty to the colonial state in the countryside. Depressed classes, tribes and special groups such as horse-breeders were also assigned smaller assignments but these were often small. The other important element of land settlement was that of auctioning established particularly in later colonies like Nili Bar. This provided an opportunity to the non-agricultural elites such as traders and professionals to own land and this social structure became diversified with regard to owning land. Other terms which were given by the state are the terms of loyalty which ensured that the grantees were not going to be politically undermined against colonial rule. The colonization of these canals had a long-term impact to post-colonial Pakistan. The land system, which during the British rule was founded with its peasantry property and big estates with strong families, was left in place in the rural society. The agricultural life remained strongly dependent on irrigation by canals and on political and economic life the division of the land remained, which was based on the social division of the land. The Pakpattan tehsil canals that were irrigated formed an entire hydraulic system that supported agriculture and settlement. The associated land distribution policies not only increased productivity but also introduced an orderly rural order, which left imprints of inequality and political control, which have remained until Pakistan times.

5. Colonial Administration and Political Control:

The Punjab was ruled by British colonial state in a hierarchical system of administration that depended on district administration and local representatives. Within Montgomery District, role of Deputy Commissioner was that of chief administrative authority in charge of revenue collection, law enforcement and political surveillance. The administration of Pakpattan Tehsil was handled by a system of officials such as Tehsildar, Naib-Tehsildar and revenue officers. These representatives were in close collaboration with village headmen and local landlords who acted as mediators between colonial state and rural society. A number of reforms were brought about by the colonial administration and they were intended to increase political control. These were Revenue settlements, Canal irrigation schemes, Local government institutions and rural policing systems. These reforms were aimed at stabilizing the rural society as well as having an effective collection of revenues by colonial state. Local elites played a crucial role in maintaining colonial authority. In order to be loyal to British government, landowners and powerful families were regularly awarded administrative privileges and honorary titles. This system established a political system whereby colonial authorities were extremely dependent on local elites to ensure order and political stability.

Following annexation of Punjab in 1849, British rule intentionally nurtured native rural allies in District Montgomery in order to cement their grip. The policy of colonization was designed to fulfill several political and economic interests, but the military interest was predominant.¹The War of 1857 also reflected the need to have local allegiance and British began to identify and systematically recruit powerful families and integrated them into colonial system. Since 1860s, they had rewarded loyalists by granting them land and titles, jagirs and state patronage, thus ruling indirectly through rural intermediaries. Nawab, Khan Bahadur and honorary titles were also granted and local gentry were also absorbed into government as zaildars, tehsildars, lambardars and sufedposh. The British came up with a three-level hierarchy of intermediaries to institutionalize this relationship. At the local level, the authorities such as zaildars and lambardars governed villages and introduced state policies in protection of colonial interests. It

¹ Ibid., p.351

was an honorable position, a reward of loyalty and acknowledgment of local authority. Some cases were Murad Shah whose family was rewarded positions lamboardari and Gulab Ali Chishti whose descendants became zaildars and district board members. Second in rank were divisional darbaris whose prominence was based on their loyalty in times of crisis such as Sikh Wars and 1857 rebellion. The third level was provincial darbaris, which consisted of people like Dewan Said Mohammad Chishti, Mian Nur Ahmad Maneka and Mian Khan Mohammad Khan.² The elites became part of colonial rule as honorary magistrates and provincial darbar members. Therefore, the British established a stable system of administration, collecting revenue, maintaining stability and controlling politics through titles, land grants and administrative positions to establish a loyal network of rural elites in Montgomery.

British policy to provide land in Pakpattan tehsil of Montgomery (Sahiwal) district was a calculated policy of producing a loyal group of intermediary elites, who could maintain colonial rule at local level. These grants of land were not just economic gratuity but political tools that were meant to tie individuals of influence, pirs, sajjada nashins, tribal chiefs and local notables, to the colonial state. British guarantee that control over land and water resulted into control over people by giving out fertile canal colony lands particularly upon introduction of irrigation via canals such as Lower Bari Doab and Sutlej Valley systems. In Pakpattan where religious power was especially high because of the existence of such shrines like Baba Farid, British had to depend on *sajjada nashins* (hereditary custodians of shrines) as intermediary. These were figures who wielded great spiritual power over rural folk. Many of Zaildars, honorary magistrates and members of the district boards were also appointed by British as local representatives in rural administration as Sajjada Nishins. As Diwan of Pakpattan, was a principal of provincial Darbar. By doing so, British reinforced their patronage relationships with religious leaders of the district. Not only were those sajjada nishins to the benefit of the British, but also did they enlist religious forces to their elevation in their localities. Religious prominence in their respective districts saw Sajjada Nishins emerge as important and top players in smooth administration of state. Similarly, Pakpattan, Dewan Said Mohammad was highly influential in vicinity as all major Muslim zamindars were his Murids (followers), with Manika family being most prominent Muslim zamindar.³ In like manner, Baba Khem Singh Bedi⁴ became one of the biggest beneficiaries. In the year 1857 he was given a khilat of Rs. as a sign of his loyalty that year-this time to supply troops and intelligence. 3,000, a jagir, and 125 acres of prime land, and subsequently more than 14,000 acres in Lower Bari Doab Canal Colony. He was an honorary magistrate (1877-1904), as well. His heirs, such as Baba Kartar Singh Bedi and Baba Harbans Singh, remained allies, occupying most municipal and district offices. Recognizing their influence, colonial administration granted them large tracts of irrigated land under category of "gentry grants." These grants raised their material position and strengthened their traditional power, enabling them to become political intermediaries between state and peasantry. These elites in turn were expected to guarantee loyalty, help in collection of revenues, and to get rural support of the colonial policies. Equally, land was a major reward avenue through military service. Those who served in British Indian Army, especially in World War I, who lived in Pakpattan and its environs acquired land in canal colonies such as Lower Bari Doab and Nili Bar. The war veterans took precedence over pensioners and in most instances, tens of thousands of acres were allocated to them. The land

² Saeed Ahmed Butt, *British colonial Montgomery 1857-1947*

³ Mahinder Singh Bedi, *Yadon ka Jashan* (Educational Publishing House, 1986),p.43

⁴ *Babas Khem Singh and Sampuran Singh, Bedis* played notable and prominent role for British in Province.

holders in Sohag Para canal colony were the military grantees. Only war veterans were to receive these grants. Thus, a strip of 75,000 acres was set aside and another strip at least of 25000 acres were set aside to ex-soldiers under civilian allotment. An oath of loyalty was added in 1919 to any subsequent grants of land. This policy did not only reward loyalty but also promoted recruitment as well as linked agrarian prosperity to military service. British also gave land to the loyal landed elites and local administrators such as zaildars, lambardars, influential families among others who helped in keeping law and order. As an example, those who assisted in crushing political movements like Khilafat or Akali agitations, or those who assisted in recruitments, were granted with land. These might be as small as a few acres, or as big as estates. In other instances, people received conditional grants such as land on condition that they develop agriculture, introduce new farming methods or build irrigation systems such as tube wells. These grants formed a group of progressive landlords who were well in tune with colonial economic goals. In general, land grants in Pakpattan tehsil were a portion of a greater colonial pattern to reform rural society. British rewarded influential people by giving them fertile land along the canal colonies, thus establishing a system of middlemen, who took control of economy, coupled with social and religious influence. These elites were critical in the operation of colonial rule, where they brought stability, revenue harvesting and political loyalty. The remnants of this system continued even after the end of colonial rule and patterns of land ownership, rural hierarchy, as well as political influence, in the area continued even after the post-independence era.

6. Religious Authority and Political Role of Baba Farid Shrine:

The impact of religious institutions, especially shrine of Baba Farid, one of most peculiar aspects of Pakpattan political life. The shrine was a seat of spiritual power over centuries and it had thousands of followers throughout Punjab region. The custodians of shrine (Sajjada Nashins) had significant social status and economic assets in past. They also had a greater effect on local politics and their influence was not limited to religious issues. The power of shrine was based on its past patronage by rulers and its links to Chishti Sufi school of thought. With time, heirs of Baba Farid developed their own category of society, possessing land and dominating neighboring villages. British administrators believed in political significance of shrine during colonial period and tended to have a working relationship with custodians of shrine. Religion leaders served as mediators who were capable of organizing the masses and ensuring that there was social stability. Shrine was also involved in nationalism politics in 1940s. Muslim League was allowed to speak in front of crowds at annual Urs festival, where there were huge numbers of worshippers. This assisted League in increasing its political power in rural Punjab. In such a way, religious power continued playing a significant role in political influence in Pakpattan during colonial times. British attempted to connect with rural religious power via nexus. British condemned any religion in early part of their time in implementation of their official state system though during later period they used religion as a means to connect power of state with their rural supporters. British developed relationships with shrines in order to relieve native rural pressure. In Punjab, there were numerous sajjada nishins with very strong power at local level at time of annexation. This local authority was still strong in period of collapses of Mughals and Sikhs. One such local authority may be given as an example of shrine of Baba Farid of Pakpattan. British had discovered that they needed the support of such sajjada nishins in order to run the administration and had engaged in war against other local tribal and Sikh chieftains and had gained political control of a large territory. Had a man a political interest and was it well, O, Dwyer said, the fact that he has had an interest in some

religious institution, and that he has drawn his influence in some measure, in my judgment, out of connection, should not be a bar to obtaining a grant.⁵

To attain social stability, a state control mechanism was created by strengthening the forces of religion. Grant on holy shrines in district was provided so that they could protect themselves in relation to their economic well-being. Custodians of eminent shrines were also given meanwhile personal grants. They also received grants of the landed gentry such as increased landlords at district. British also made a significant number of Sajjada Nishins as local representatives in rural administration as Zaildars, honorary magistrate and members of provincial Darbar.⁶ As was the case with Diwan of Pakpattan. By doing so, British tightened the ties of religion patronage towards the heads of district. The sajjada nishins were not only applicable to British interests, but also applied religious forces in uplifting them in their own localities. With religious prominence in their respective districts, Sajjada Nishins became front runners and major actors in smooth running of state administration. Like in Pakpattan, Dewan Said Mohammad was highly influential in the nearby area. Manika family was the most prominent of Muslim zamindars and all other leading Muslim zamindars were his Murids (followers).⁷ British made a decision to establish relationship ties with Sikh religious leaders. Even these were provided with separate grants as they were holy in their respective locations. Similar to Sohag Para scheme was the large grant of 7800 acres to Baba Khem Singh Bedi, head of an eminent Sikh family, in Montgomery and Muzaffargarh and Multan districts, south-western Punjab, which comprised one third of all locally influential families receiving grants of landed gentry. These grants of landed gentry were given to Pirs in canal colonies, where small groups of Pirs dominated as Zaildars and progressive landlords, who put their land to good use and increased its productivity. In 20th century, a scheme to enhance famous breed of Montgomery Cattle in Lower Bari Doab canal colony featured Sajjada Nishin of shrine of *Hazrat Daud Karmani* at Shergarh in Montgomery district who was a direct beneficiary of Alienation Land Act. This Act, under pretext of protecting estates of a political nature, gazetted sajjada nishins such as Saiyids and Querishies etc. who were to be spared at times of economic difficulty. Court of Wards was a means of protection of families, who were owners of larger estates and held very influential and important positions in political life of district. Their estates, in case of their becoming in debt or being illmanaged, or because of family feuds or infancy of proprietor, would be administered by the Court of Wards.⁸ An example of how the estate of Baba Hardit Singh Bedi of Montgomery was managed was under Court of Wards. In 1930, British also confiscated shrine of Baba Farid in Pakpattan. British included combined control of estate and shrine due to dispute of succession and inheritance among family members. This government action reduced family internal strife, however, it also put strain on the government to oversee shrine urs, an annual religious festival of shrines. One of its annual reports stated in one of its annual reports about state, "Great management of this estate poses some peculiar challenges, and great tact is required on part of manager, as older ward, *Diwan Qutab-ud-din* is Gaddi nishin of an important shrine at Pakpattan."⁹ Estates of sajjada nishins were facing severe economic crunch, and were brought under court of wards.

7. Agrarian Structure and Elite Power:

⁵ David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, p.51, 1988.

⁶ *Ibid*,

⁷ Bedi, 1986

⁸ Imran Ali I., p.78,1988

⁹ Saeed Ahmed Butt, *British Colonial Montgomery 1857-1947*

The economy of Pakpattan was based on agriculture and formed a social and political hierarchy of the country. Big landowners and agricultural elites were the rulers of the rural society and were very influential in local governance. The British land revenue system strengthened the power of such elites by accepting them as proprietors and representatives to collect taxes. This led to the economic power and political influence of landlords. The connections between elite families and tenants and villagers became patron-client relationships and resulted in creation of networks of loyalty that were subsequently mobilized in electoral politics. Through these patronage networks, landlords were able to affect the voting behaviors and control local institutions. Another group that established alliances with colonial leaders and political parties was agrarian elites. These alliances were significant in determining political competition at the end of the colonial era.

8. Party Politics and Electoral Mobilization:

Organized political parties in Punjab began to appear in early twentieth century. Unionist Party had ruled rural politics over a number of decades. The interests of large landowners were Unionists and they had policies that sought to safeguard the agricultural communities. To secure political support, unionist leaders depended on the rural elites and local notables. They were able to influence most of districts of Punjab, including Montgomery. There were some personalities who were considered “godfathers of district Montgomery politics”,¹⁰ belonging to tehsil Pakpattan. *Hukam Singh, Datar Singh, Machi Singh, Hardit Singh and Sardar Mabla Singh, Bedi Singh Sardar, Main Noor Ahmad Khan Manika, Main Khuda Yar Khan Manika, Mohammad Usman Khan Farid Pur* were the leading personalities of district but “Dewan Sayyid Muhammad kept Muslim identity in politics alive because of his hard work.”¹¹ After Lahore Resolution in 1940, Muslim families Sayyid, Pathan and Rajput jewelers became the friends and supporters of All India Muslim League in Pakpattan.

During 1945-46 elections, the politics in tehsil of Pakpattan was very complex and complicated in selecting Unionist candidate. Sultan Mehmmod Hotiana wished to retain his seat in his constituency. He was a member of parliament for the Unionist government, and also a private parliamentary secretary in the ministry of education. The Muslim League was gaining momentum in the tehsil (sub-district) and therefore the unionist Chief minister decided to give such a strong and powerful candidate who would win the election compulsively. He wanted to nominate a member of the family of Diwan of Pakpattan because the reverence and respect of the masses would ensure victory for the Unionist Party. Diwan of Pakpattan's lands were under the management of Court of Wards. So, he gave ticket to Mian Mohammad Masood, cousin of Diwan of Pakpattan. The government of province allocated a grant of around twenty-five thousand (25000) rupees from the Court of Wards. Diwan Sahib used his religious clout in area to get votes of voters for his cousin, Mian Mohammad Masood.

Rana Abdul Hamid, a settler, was nominated as a Muslim League candidate from Pakpattan tehsil. He was not a local, and had no chance to win the election as compared to local candidate, who was believed to be a holy and sacred. The election was held after a reshuffle by the provincial government. According to Abdul Hamid, “Ch. Abdul Rehman Tehsildar, Pakpattan was a conscientious person and he was replaced by Syed Ghazanfar Ali Shah. Chief Minister had to make a long struggle for rejection of Ch. Abdul Hamid. He was a capable official, but Financial Commissioner refused to accept his transfer, therefore, he was given compulsory leave.”¹² Superintendent of police of district Montgomery convened a meeting of police

¹⁰ Allah Bakhsh Tariq, *Tehrik-i-Pakpattan* (Sahiwal,1990), p.119

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Noraiz Shakoor, *History of Muslim Politics in Montgomery District 1907-1947*, p.75

officers and asked them to help Unionist candidate. The police began to lodge cases against Pro-League people. The sub-Divisional Magistrate of Pakpattan also directed his officers especially Naib-Tehsildars, Naib-Zaildars and incharge of different *thanas* to accompany Unionist candidate, wherever he would go to his constituency. He also ordered Numberdars and Patidars to remain in the vicinity so that they could persuade voters to vote for Mian Masood. "On 24th Jan, 1946 a sub-inspector visited Mian Noor Mohammad Lalika, the prominent leader of the Pakpattan tehsil. He was arrested, where his arms were confiscated and he himself was put behind the bars, for refusing to succumb to Unionists. But he was released after an hour of his detention."¹³ Deputy Superintendent, of Police, Pakpattan, took away five pistols from Mr. Lal¹⁴ of tehsil Pakpattan for his refusal to follow orders of Deputy Superintendent of Police, Pakpattan. The Superintendent of Police, Mian Mohammad Yaqub and Syed Ghazanfar Ali Shah, thesildar visited Pir Syed Asghar Ali Jilani at his Basti Sakhi Ghulam Qadir. Pir Sahab and his son Haidar Imam Shah alias Chan Pir were in favour of Muslim League with all their heart and soul. The two visitors demanded Pir Sahab to support Unionist. Not only he refused but also cautioned that the Muslim officials would remain neutral in electoral process. They would also remain impersonal and disinterested in support of enemies of Allah and His dearest religion, Islam. The tehsil administration also punished local administrators, who were in favour of Muslim League. "They removed Rana Noor Allah and Syed Karar Hasan Numberdars from their posts. Rana Noor Allah was a cousin of Rana Abdul Hamid. Khan Zaman Khan Rais Pakpattan was made to surrender his arms to police because of his strong support to League."¹⁵ League leaders had a meeting with P.M. Ismail, Deputy Commissioner and complained against official interference, bias and arrogant attitude of police officials. Deputy Commissioner was indifferent to their all complaints. The leaguers lodged complaints against Assistant Sub-Inspector, Pir Ghulam Ali and others. The students played an important role during the election campaign in 1945-46. "A group of Montgomery Students Federation visited tehsil Pakpattan and covered 30 Chaks like Khoblanwala, Siadanwala, Pattanwala, Kentarpur, Gharhi, Rekhiyan, Nishirkot, Bahawalnagar, Khokhranwala, Alwardi, Jafarka etc."¹⁶ Their propaganda inspired people of tehsil to cast their vote in favour of League candidate. In 1945-46, students of Islamia College travelled 40 miles in tehsil. They also formed rallies in which they delivered their speeches about League manifesto for the sake of Pakistan. By 1940s, politics started to evolve. Muslim league progressively gained power in rural Punjab mobilizing religious networks and making an appeal to Muslim identity. In Pakpattan, League got a boost of religious leaders and custodians of shrines. Muslim league was in a position to secure support of *Diwan of Chisti Pakpattan* in 1946 elections because Unionist party had a Gaddi Nashins of Pakpattan support elections of 1936-37. The move to enable League leaders to speak in front of large crowds during religious festivals made shrine stronger politically. The fall of Unionist power and emergence of Muslim League signified greater political shifts in Punjab in last ten years of British rule. Last ten years to independence saw high political mobilization in British India. In Punjab, Pakistan Movement, slow but surely began to gain momentum as leaders of Muslim League began campaigning to establish a separate Muslim state. Pakpattan was a significant location of political mobilization since it had a religious relevance and a high rural population. The nationalistic ideas were spread through political

¹³ Ibid., p.77

¹⁴ Mr. Lal was a Numberdar of Moza Noor Puth in tehsil Pakpattan, who was a staunch supporter of the Muslim League in the elections of 1945-46.

¹⁵ Noraiz Shakoor, *The History of Muslim Politics in Montgomery District 1907-1947*, p.85

¹⁶ Sarfaraz Hussain Mirza, *The Punjab Muslim Students Federation 1937-1947 (NIHCRResearch)*, p.410

meetings, religious gatherings and election campaigns. Religious leaders and local elites were at center of mobilizing support to Pakistan movement. Through their influence, they managed to change rural political awareness and bring local politics into wider nationalist movement. By 1947, Pakpattan had a great change in political landscape. The traditional forms of authority did not lose their significance but they were more and more integrated into system of the modern political institutions.

9. Conclusion:

These interactions of various factors in late colonial period affected the politics of Pakpattan Tehsil: colonial government, agricultural system, church and political parties that emerged. British colonial rule brought new political institutions and economic reforms, which changed political landscape of the region. However, traditional sources of authority particularly religious institutions and agrarian elites continued to play an important role in local politics. The shrine of Baba Farid served as a strong source of social and political influence and rural elites controlled the agrarian society by patronage networks. In last decades of British rule, political mobilization in Pakpattan changed as organized political parties, nationalist movements appeared. The shift in Unionist domination to that of Muslim League was an extension of the overall political changes that were in process across Punjab. Finally, the political history of Pakpattan explains the dynamics of interaction between local dynamics and colonial institutions and nationalist movements that shaped the direction of political change in rural Punjab. Inter-relationships between colonial governance, canal irrigation, agrarian elites, and religious institutions are inseparable in grasping political dynamics of Pakpattan Tehsil towards end of colonial rule. The canal colony system changed economic and social environment in Montgomery District, establishing new agricultural settlements and empowering rural elites. Meanwhile, political mobilization and social power were still impacted by religious institutions like shrine of Baba Farid. At the end of British rule, Pakpattan found itself in an intricate politics of colonial administration, agrarian interests and nationalist movements. These forces were vital in influencing political mobilization in rural Punjab in Pakistan Movement.