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Empire, Saints and Landed Power: Political Transformation of Multan under British Rule (1849–1947)

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ABSTRACT

The annexation of Multan in 1849 was a significant change in the political, social and economic scenario of south Punjab. This paper investigates political landscape of Multan during British rule and explores relationship between colonial systems of administration, agrarian reorganization and indigenous authority structures. It claims that British administration in Multan was not one-hundred-percent coercive or transformative, but practiced a negotiated indirect rule that involved integration of pirs, sajjada nashins and landed elites into colonial system. Using district gazetteers, records of canal colonies and modern historiography, study points to formation of a loyal agrarian oligarchy through irrigation schemes, land settlements and electoral reform, as well as rise of political mobilization and a sense of nationalism. The analysis reveals, by contrast, that Multan was an important place where religious authority, land power and colonial bureaucracy converged to create a hybrid political structure that influenced colonial administration and the development of postcolonial political culture.

Key words: Pirs, Sajjada Nashins, Elites, Land, Settlement, Canal, Administration, Multan, Political

1. Introduction:

Political history under British emerges as a fascinating case study on way colonial regimes have changed the local power pattern and also supported it for governance. The city of Multan, or “City of Saints,” had a very strong socio-religious hierarchy, with shrine networks, hereditary elites and tribal affiliations dominating. British annexation in 1849 did not dismantle these structures; rather, it reconfigured them into a system of controlled collaboration. Much as Gazetteer of Rawalpindi District, Gazetteer of Multan District describes social organization of the area, including the fact that leading families of the district” were *Syeds, Qureshis, Bosans* and *Gardezis*, who held significant land holdings and positions of authority in the governance of district. This paper attempts to answer the central question: How were the political authority and participation in Multan transformed by the British colonial policies from 1849 till 1947?

2. Literature Review:

The study of colonial Punjab is the basis for understanding the political transformation of Multan. Colonial agrarian policies, says Imran Ali, “established a class of loyal landholders who were pillars of imperial authority.”¹ This is especially true for Multan, where land grants and irrigation brought about changes in power dynamics. *David Gilmartin* reminds us that religion was integral to politics, as he puts it, “*pirs* became mediators of political legitimacy under

¹ Imran Ali, *The Punjab under Imperialism*. Michigan: Oxford University Press. 1988, p. 45.

colonial rule.”² In Multan, this relationship was especially pronounced due to dominance of shrine-based authority. Agri-based elites have emerged and stated that; “Punjab politics got molded by partnership between colonial masters and rural big wigs,”³ said by Ian Talbot. In theory, colonial institutions were created to keep control over people in order to prevent the democratization of governance; this is Hamza Alavi's theory of “overdeveloped state.” Studies specifically on Multan have revealed that major socio-economic changes took place in the area after 1849, especially because of canal irrigation and administrative changes.

3. Multan before British Rule: Political and Religious Structure:

Multan is one of oldest city of South Asia, which is still inhabited. Historically called the “City of Saints”, it had a tremendous spiritual status due to size of Sufi shrines there. Meanwhile, its fertile soil and its geographical position was of political importance to all ruling powers in the region. Satish Chandra writes: “Multan was on the strategic frontier and a gateway to northwest of India.”⁴ The region was dominated by various dynasties such as Ghaznavids, Delhi Sultanate, Mughals, Afghans, Sikhs and finally British. Due to political control of this region, every regime tried to control Multan as it was home of trade, military roads and agricultural revenue. The political system of Multan prior to British annexation was a mix of central authority and feudal power. Local chiefs, jagirdars, zamindars and religious leaders played an important role in the maintenance of order and collection of revenue for the rulers. There was a high level of political decentralisation in the countryside, and power was frequently held by powerful families.

Multan was a significant subah (province) of Mughal empire during its time. The Mughals established a formal structure of administration with governors (subahdars), revenue officers, military officers and qazis. Within the centralized system, however, local elites had significant power over rural politics. According to Abul Fazl in *Ain-i-Akbari* Multan was; “A fertile province, abundant in agriculture and revenue, and having influential chiefs who exercised control of large tracts.” Mughal’s ensured better irrigation systems and encouraged trade so that agricultural productivity in the region improved. However, political power stayed tied to tribal and landed classes in Multan's rural areas. Prior to British rule, political control of Multan was centered around strong families of tribes and landlords. Tribes that were influential were *Gillanis, Qureshis, Khakwani, Bosans, Langahs, Daulatanas* and other local tribes that had huge agricultural lands. These elites had semi-autonomous rule over their areas. They had their own militias, settled arguments and levied agricultural taxes. In exchange, they accepted supremacy of ruling state and giving military support in times of conflict. Imran Ali noted; “The ownership of land was not the only form of political power for rural Punjabis, but also kinship networks and patron-client relationships.⁵ This was rural aristocracy in Multan was in charge of administration of countryside. Later, their role in politics of colonies became an important factor in relation to the peasants and tenants.

In eighteenth century, with the fall of Mughal empire Multan was brought under control of Afghan rulers especially Durrani empire. Local chiefs and religious elites were instrumental in helping the governors of Afghanistan secure power. Decentralization of Mughal regime allowed local rulers and tribes to become more autonomous. Revenue was irregular and there were many places where local conflict arose. Hari Ram Gupta writes, “With the fall of Mughal rule,

² Gilmartin, D. (1988). *Empire & Islam: Punjab & making of Pakistan*. University of California Press, p. 23.

³ Talbot, I. (1988). *Punjab and the Raj, 1849–1947*. Manohar Publications, p.78.

⁴ Gupta, H. R. (1944). *Studies in later Mughal history of the Punjab*. Minerva Book Shop

⁵ Imran Ali, *The Punjab under Imperialism*. Michigan: Oxford University Press.

the Punjab became a land of competing local powers.”⁶ This division of authority gave greater political status to *pirs* and *sajjada nashins* who frequently served as intermediaries between rulers and local people. Multan was religiously a prominent centre of South Asian Islam. The city grew to be one of the most significant Sufi centres in the region. There were many saints who took up residence in Multan between 13th and 17th centuries, making it a spiritual heartland. Famous Sufi saints' shrines had pilgrims coming from all over Punjab, Sindh and even from faraway places. These shrines were used not only for religious purposes but also for social, economic and political functions. Historian Richard Eaton argued: “Sufi shrines in Punjab became centres of social integration and political legitimacy.”⁷ The sanctity of Multani saints added a lot to the authority of their sons and guardians. There were several important Sufi silsilas (orders) that developed in Multan like Suhrawardi silsila, Qadiri Order and Chishti Order. Suhrawardi order among these gained a great influence. The shrine of Bahauddin Zakariya renowned saint of Suhrawardi was one of the most important religious centres of Multan. His shrine came to be a great place of spiritual and political power. Bahauddin Zakariya was one of the most important contributors to propagation of Islam in southern part of Punjab. His descendants acquired great social standing and was frequently consulted by rulers about political matters. Richard Eaton: *Suhrawardi* saints of Multan were spiritual leaders with political influence. Over centuries, rulers gave custodians of shrine land, gifts and privileges. These economic resources gave them a greater power over masses. The shrine of *Shah Rukn-e-Alam*, grandson of *Bahauddin Zakariya*, was another important spiritual centre. His shrine was one of the most sacred places in Punjab. *Sajjada nashins* of shrine were held in high esteem by peasants and tribesmen. They frequently played a crucial role for rulers who wanted to legitimise themselves in region. David Gilmartin observed; “Religious authority in Punjab frequently translated into political mobilization.”⁸ This link between spiritual and political was to become a theme in the politics of colonies. *Pirs* and *sajjada nashins* were not just religious but also socio-political intermediaries prior to British rule. They used charisma, inheritance, land ownership and patronage networks as their authority. Rural population frequently turned to *pirs* for religious guidance, conflict resolution, social protection, economic support and mediation with rulers. This gave *pirs* a tremendous impact on public opinion and political allegiance. Sarah Ansari has said that, in social fabric of the rural context in Punjab and Sindh, *Pirs* came in between. Large endowments (*waqf* lands), agricultural estates and donations from devotees were present in many shrines.⁹ The resources allowed *sajjada nashins* to have been able to establish large patronage networks. Landowners and spiritual leaders were closely intertwined and religious elite formed an influential political elite. In some villages of Multan, peasants farmed on land owned by shrines and gave some of crop to landlords of shrines. This economic dependency reinforced social authority of shrine families.

Sikhs were the next to conquer Multan in 1818 when they defeated *Nawab Muzaffar Khan Sadozai*. This conquest was a significant change in political structure in this part of world. The administration of Sikhs in Multan was very much a tax and martial rule. Sikh rulers, however, had to deal with religious elites in pragmatic manner owing to religious prestige of local shrines and influence of *pirs*. Historian, Lepel Griffin, has stated that Sikh Governors relied upon

⁶ Hari Ram Gupta. (1999). *History of Sikhs* (Vol. 5). Munshiram Manoharlal. Sufi Saints and State Power

⁷ Richard Eaton. (1993). *Rise of Islam and Bengal frontier, 1204–1760*. University of California Press.

⁸ Gilmartin, D. (1988). *Empire & Islam: Punjab & making of Pakistan*, p. 56.

⁹ Sarah Ansari. (1992). *Sufi saints and state power: pirs of Sind, 1843–1947*. Cambridge University Press.

influential families and religious leaders of area for order.¹⁰ Sikh government was more centralised and they also began to appoint governors to oversee the region. However, the chiefs in rural areas remained influential in politics. Sikh rulers also understood the importance of shrine custodians for stability of public. As a result, many religious families held on to their privileges and land holdings. Sikh elites started to feel pinch of religious discrimination and high taxes among Muslim elites. This resentment was to aid British post-annexation alliances with elites. Before British rule, agriculture was the main economic activity of Multan. Riverine irrigation, wells, inundation canals and seasonal floods were all important in cultivation. However, agriculture was not as productive as it might have been due to the fact that canal systems were not developed to the level attained in subsequent colonial canals in spite of fertile land. Multan District Gazetteer states that; "Cultivation was primarily based on rain water and uncertain inundation canals." Before the British rule, the society of Multan was hierarchical and was greatly affected by land ownership, tribal affiliation and religious status. The major social groups included landed aristocracy, religious elites, Tribal chiefs, Merchants, Peasants and tenants and artisans and labourers. The majority of the rural population was economically dependent on landlords and pirs, and was socially protected by them. Patron-client networks were the means by which elites and peasants related to each other. The security and access to land was provided by the landlords, and peasants were willing to provide labour services and political allegiance. David Gilmartin said, "The very foundations of Punjab politics were based upon networks of patronage from rural society."¹¹ These buildings remained until the colonial era and influenced elections during that time. Before the British rule, Multan's religious setting was a one of cultural pluralism and syncretism. Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs engaged in common cultural activities and visited shrines together. Sufi shrines encouraged tolerance and co-existence of various communities. Richard Eaton states that; "Shrines served as common religious centres, bridging communal lines."¹² Devotees of various faiths came to the annual urs festivals to build social unity. Political instability in Punjab was caused by the reduction in Sikh power in 1840s. British government saw Multan as an important strategic and economic area and wanted to establish control over the region. British annexation was brought about by the Multan Revolt in 1848. British left a system in place of political power that was already entrenched in hands of landed elites, tribe chiefs, religious leaders, and shrine custodians. Later colonial administration did not destroy these structures but rather integrated them into its system of administration. David Gilmartin observed that; "British rule in Punjab was supported by existing rural structures and influential intermediaries."¹³ It is this continuity that has made pirs, sajjada nashins and landed elites continue to be politically powerful during colonial era.

4. Colonial Annexation and the Administrative Reorganization:

A significant turning point in political and administrative history of southern Punjab was the annexation of Multan by British in 1849. The conquest of Multan was not simply a military conquest, but was also a result of a thorough change in political landscape, land system, revenue collection, irrigation system and social hierarchy throughout the area. British won in Second Anglo-Sikh War, brought Multan under British colonial state of Punjab and implemented a very centralized administration that would enhance imperial control and

¹⁰ Lepel Griffin. (1910). *The Panjab chiefs: Historical and biographical notices of the principal families in the Lahore and Rawalpindi divisions of the Punjab*. Civil and Military Gazette Press.

¹¹ Gilmartin, D. (1988). *Empire & Islam: Punjab & making of Pakistan*. University of California Press, p. 56.

¹² Richard Eaton. (1993). *The rise of Islam and Bengal frontier, 1204–1760*.

¹³ Gilmartin, D. (1988). *Empire & Islam: Punjab & making of Pakistan*

optimize economic exploitation. British administration reorganized Multan through district administration, revenue settlements, canal irrigation, policing, judiciary and local governance institutions. Meanwhile, they formed links with landed gentry, *pirs*, *sajjada nashins* and tribal chiefs, who played key roles in functioning of colonial government. The annexation paved the way for the eventual development of Unionist politics and ascendancy of rural elites in colonial Punjab. Finally in January 1849, Multan got subdued by British after fighting hard. Dewan Mulraj was captured and British rule was officially taken over in area. Multan was taken under wing of newly created Punjab Province. Multan was strategically important for British administration as it was a hub between Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan. It had fertile farming lands. It was an important frontier town. It was an important trading and military hub. Colonial state thus focused on reorganising district. Historian David Gilmartin wrote that Punjab was the model province of British India as it was administered efficiently and agrarian control was maintained over it.

The British set up a modern system of administration in Multan after the annexation. The district was made basic administrative unit under colonial government. Deputy Commissioner of each district was the powerful head of revenue administration, Law and order, Judicial affairs, Police supervision and Local governance. Deputy Commissioner became central representative of colonial authority. The Multan District Gazetteer states that the Deputy Commissioner wielded executive, judicial and fiscal powers in district. This was a centralized administration system which allowed British to have a strong control over the rural society.

The first important task of the British administration was to materialise a land revenue system. Colonial officials performed detailed land surveys and settlement patterns to establish ownership patterns, for levels of cultivation and taxation. British wanted to streamline collection of revenue and to put an end to some of arbitrary taxations of the past. The purpose of revenue settlements was to determine ownership of land, to institute a land revenue demand, to boost agricultural productivity and to consolidate loyal landed elites and reinforce state's control over countryside. British acknowledged value of local landlords and thus indigenous families' power over large tracts of land. It is argued by historian Imran Ali that British agrarian policy was responsible for strengthening the rural landed aristocracy in Punjab. This policy helped to create local leaders who cooperated with colonial power. Tribal chiefs, *jagirdars* and *pirs* were important to the British administration for maintaining stability in Multan. The colonial state did not break down indigenous hierarchies, but it did create them. Jagirs, Honorary titles, administrative positions, Canal colony lands and political patronage were given to prominent families. These were privileges that guaranteed the allegiance of the elite to the colonial government. Francis Robinson claims that British rule in Punjab was based on alliances with powerful rural intermediaries.¹⁴ This partnership ultimately led to the emergence of Unionist politics in the south Punjab.

The most revolutionary feature of British rule over Multan was the extension of irrigation by canals and canal colonies. The British realized that they needed to be able to use water to grow food in Multan. As a result, they duly spent a lot of money on the building of the canals. Sidhna Canal, Lower Bari Doab Canal, Sutlej Valley Project and Chenab Canal connections were the major canal projects. Formerly unproductive areas were turned into productive areas of agriculture by canal system. Punjab Gazetteer states: "Canal irrigation was a revolution to farming system in south of Punjab."¹⁵ To boost agricultural output and settlement of new areas being irrigated, British set up canal colonies. Large tracts of land were allotted to Military

¹⁴ Robinson, Francis (1974). *Separatism among Indian Muslims*. Cambridge University Press.

¹⁵ Punjab Government, *Gazetteer of the Multan District* (Lahore: 1902).

veterans, loyal landlord, agricultural tribes, religious elites and influential political families. This policy changed the demographic and political situation of Multan. Historian Imran Ali said, "The canal colonies brought up a new class of prosperous rural elites who were doing agriculture. Later this group of elites dominated politics in colonial Punjab.

In late 19th century, British introduced limited local self-government institutions in Multan. The Municipal Committees, District Boards and Local Boards were responsible for Sanitation, Roads, Public health, Education and Municipal taxation. But only the rich property holders and upper families participated. Through these institutions, colonial state was able to engage local elites in process of governing and maintain ultimate control. British administration realised the tremendous power of *pirs* and *sajjada nashins* in rural areas of Multan. The colonial authorities did not challenge them but instead formed close ties with shrine custodians. The religious elites were given Land, Political patronage, titles, honours and administrative influence. They in turn, rallied the rural community behind colonial policies. British turned *pirs* of Punjab into "political intermediaries of empire"¹⁶, wrote David Gilmartin. This connection was particularly significant during the twentieth century during election periods. British rule made Multan part of the world of colonial economy. With the advancement of irrigation and transportation, cultivation of cash crops increased greatly. Crops such as cotton, wheat and sugarcane were important commercial crops. The railway extended to Multan and made it accessible to Karachi and Lahore which allowed production of export crops. But commercialization introduced a new dimension of rural indebtedness also, and made the peasants to be dependent upon the market and moneylender. British considered Multan as a strategic military and administrative centre in southern Punjab. As a result, colonial administration was heavily involved in the development of infrastructure and communication.

5. Case studies of *Pirs* and *Sajjada Nashins* of Multan:

Multan's political development was characterized by its unique nature of integrating the *pirs* into colonial system. According to Gilmartin, *pirs* were responsible for organizing support and keeping order in countryside and were used by British.¹⁷ Role of *pirs* and *sajjada nashins*, as both spiritual and political intermediaries, cannot be ignored while trying to understand the political transformation of Multan during British period. The Sufi movement that was rooted in shrines was well established in Multan society and authority derived from shrines was intricately woven into fabric of daily life in region. British administrators soon discovered that to dominate Multan, they had to engage religious elites, because they had control of huge rural populations. Colonial state did not destroy their authority but incorporated them into its administrative and political system. According to Gazetteer of Multan District, leading religious families enjoyed significant influence over people and were irreplaceable as regards keeping peace and order.¹⁸ Shrine families like *Gilanis* and *Qureshis* had a significant role in Pakistan's town of Multan in brokering relations between state and population. British chose a strategy of co-opting spiritual elites and making them intermediaries of colonial power.

5.1. Shrine of Bahauddin Zakariya and its political network:

Bahauddin Zakariya, one of the most prominent Sufi saints of Multan was a strong center of influence. The *sajjada nashins* of this shrine had vast networks of disciples (*murids*) spread out in countryside of Multan and beyond. The power of its guardians extended beyond realm of sacristy to include politics, land and patronage. This shrine was a means of organizing rural peoples and served as an intermediary between conflicting groups. During the British rule,

¹⁶ Gilmartin, D. (1988). *Empire & Islam: Punjab & making of Pakistan*, p. 56.

¹⁷ Gilmartin, D. (1988). *Empire and Islam: Punjab & making of Pakistan*. p. 56.

¹⁸ Punjab Government, *Gazetteer of the Multan District* (Lahore: 1902).

custodians of this shrine received land grants (*jagirs*), hereditary rights and were included in administrative networks. The shrine became a political institution that was part of the colonial administration. Shrine networks in Punjab were avenues through which the colonial power infiltrated rural society. As far as their political role was concerned, they acted as mobilization of followers (*murids*) and mediation between state and society. These had a legal legitimacy of power. British officials depended on shrine custodians for stability in rural areas, tax collection and colonial policies. David Gilmartin observes that *Pirs* in Punjab were important intermediaries between colonial state and rural society.¹⁹ Syed families in Multan held spiritual status and economic power. This was especially true in the town of Multan, where shrine custodians served as a buffer between the rural and British communities.

5.2 Gilani Family:

The Gilani family were an illustration of the family that became powerful through religious authority. The Gilani family members were reported for settlement in canal colonies and nominated to district boards in settlement reports and district records. They were also identified as key actors as intermediaries. As recorded in Multan Settlement Report (1868-1873), In Multan, Syed families are wealthy and have a great amount of land and many tenants.²⁰ With a very good position in socio-political world, Gilani family claimed to be descendants of Prophet (Syeds) and were custodians of influential shrines. They were also owners of vast farm lands. British made their place secure by granting land in canal colonies, appointing them to local councils and giving them authority over followers. By early 20th century a part of Gilani family were involved in district boards, influential in elections and had links with provincial politics and enjoyed spiritual legitimacy and economic power. The combination of *piri* (spiritual power) and *zamindari* (land ownership) resulted in a sustained political influence. Gilani Syed was another elite group that Raj favoured and supported. *Gilanis* are descendants of four great caliphs of Islam— Imam Hassan and Hazrat Ali Murtaza—down to the present day. A number of Gilani's descendants continued as companions and next-door neighbours of British. The first example was *Syed Muhammad Sadar-ud-Din Shah* who, after his father *Makhdoom Syed Muhammad Ghous*, selected *Sajjada nashin* in 1878. Syed Muhammad Sadar-ud-Din Shah was included in *Darbari* of province.²¹ He was an honorary guest of Multan District Prison for 4 years and was a member of *Anjuman-e-Raousa* and invited to coronation in Delhi Durbar 1911. His son, *Haji Syed Ghulam Yassin*, eldest son after *Sadar-ud-Din Shah*, became *Sajjada nashin*. *Ghulam Yassin* also held various posts from 1918 to 1922, such as Honorary Magistrate.

5.3. The Gardezi and Qureshi Families:

The other two emerging families were the Gardezi and Qureshi families who also played a key role in political life of Multan. These families are described as leading families whose influence reaches beyond administrative and social fields²² by the Gazetteer of Multan District. Gardezis and Qureshis were among prominent families mentioned in district gazetteer. They owned extensive tracts of land and occupied important seats in local councils and had great influence on election politics. Both families had great participation in district boards, who controlled over rural constituencies having influence in revenue administration. The families were local power brokers and helped run the colonial system.

5.3.1. Gardezi Syed:

¹⁹ David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam* (1988), p. 56.

²⁰ Punjab Settlement Report, Multan District (1868–1873), Punjab Archives.

²¹ Gilani, S. M. (1995). *Muraqqa-i-Multan*. Lahore: Jazib Publishers.

²² Government of Punjab.(1885).Punjab Gazetteer Multan 1883-84. Calcutta: Government Printing Office.

Syed Morad Shah is the chief focal advocate who went to oblige Britain when Multan was encircled in 1848 from *Gardezi Syed*. "He departed Multan and he was on way to his inherent town, *Koran Balouch*, when these white men reached Sardarpur, they needed witty locals who knew the area and its people."²³ Amongst his peers was one of the most esteemed and locals recommended him to them due to his wit and sharp wit. His attention was drawn to the matter by the major with a view to his security and safety, he was required to stay in British camp and make an avenue available to British multitudes. He acknowledged his proposal and started to serve in British Army. *Morad* was hired on 8 June 1849 as *Peshkar of Shorkot*. In 1850, he was promoted to Tehsildary and served in various places for 13 years. His relations were good with Britain and he worked hard as a good manager of area and post office. In 1864, Morad was made a further commissioner while in 1865 he was made deputy to indigenous peoples of Bahawalpur State. *Syed Hassan Bukhsh Gardezi*, son of Morad, was appointed Member Municipal in 1882, Vice President Municipal in 1891 and Honorary Judicial Magistrate in 1899 and entitled as *Khan Bhadur* in 1899 and Provincial Durbar in 1905. "He, like his father, was a man of unquestionable integrity, who contributed 8000 rupees from First World War fund to Britain."²⁴

5.3.2. Qurashi:

Another specimen of indigenous celebrities is Qurashi who were spiritual leaders and whose ancestry was dedicated to *Baha-Ul-Haq Zakaria*. This heredity continued and some of his descendants ascended to rank of *Sajjada nashin* of holy sanctuary at Multan. In Sikh kingdom period, many lands and allied properties of tombs were confiscated. *Ranjit Singh* won Multan in 1818, and obtained sanctuary of Baha-ul-Haq Zakaria at the price of 3500 rupees per annum, while *Divan Sawan Mal* accepted sanctuary from *Sajjada nashin*, for 1600 per annum. *Makhdoom Shah Mahmood*, an inheritor of *Baha-ud-din Zakaria*, strengthened Britain against Sikhs. As an incentive, he had acquired 2000 rupees and half of land of *Mauza* as a gift of land grant. He also served British in 1857 war. *Shah Mehmud* himself took to battlefield with Col. Hamilton. He was in charge of securing British camps, military equipment and artilleries. Markham received *Begi Wala Bagh* and eight *Chahats* in 1860, which were valued at 550 rupees along with an annual Jagir of 1780 rupees as reward for his military service. It was a public holiday in towns of his birth and neighbors, with courts, offices and schools closed, on his day of funeral in 1865 as a mark of admiration and homage. In 1877, his son, Markham Bahamas Banks, was appointed Deputy Director and titular magistrate and elected a member of municipality.²⁵

5.4. Role of Sajjada Nashins in Politics:

Till 19th century Multan was a multi ethnicity city accommodating all the religions of the world. It was also a center of Sufi activities and deliberated city of saints and virtuous people. In Multan there are graves of all the Sufis such as *Muhammad Youssef Gerdezi*, *Sheikh Baha-ud-Din Zakaria*, *Shah Shams Sabzwari*, *Sheikh Sadar-ud-din Arif*, *Syed Musa Pak Shaheed*, *Sheikh Rukn-uddin* and *Hafiz Muhammad Jamal Multani* etc. Muslims, apart from a certain mass, also increased their influence and strength up to 1857 under colonial rule.²⁶ Muslims increased in numbers more than Hindus in proportional. The society was hierarchical and tribal, each having its own customs, traditions and rituals. There were many castes and clans that converted to

²³ Gilani, S. M. (1995). *Muraqqa-i-Multan*. Lahore: Jazib Publishers.

²⁴ Jones, J. (2011). *Shia Islam in Colonial India: Religion, Community and Sectarianism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

²⁵ Gilani, S. M. (1995). *Muraqqa-i-Multan*. Lahore: Jazib Publishers.

²⁶ Abd-ul-Haq, M. (1980). *Multan*. Lahore: Pakistan Punjabi Adabi Board.

both Islam and Hinduism. *Sajjada nashins* became key actors in electoral politics during late colonial period. As Ian Talbot notes, “spiritual authority converted to electoral power in rural constituencies.”²⁷ *Pirs* were an important figure in mobilizing support for colonial policies. In this war, British cultivated alliances with *pirs* to ensure rural loyalty. For both this was a mutually beneficial relationship, and British became legitimate while *Pirs* obtained political and economic benefits.

6. Canal Colonies and Agrarian Political Transformation:

Canal irrigation brought a change in agrarian, economic and political system of Multan. The canal colonies were an ‘agricultural revolution’ in Punjab. They transformed deserts to productive farmlands. It was previously reliant on rainfall and traditional irrigation methods and is now part of a highly productive agricultural system. This metamorphosis raised the value of land through promoting commercialization. It also established new social classes in Multan. Imran Ali states that; “colonization of canals was not just an economic initiative, it was a political policy to establish a loyal agrarian class.”²⁸ In Multan, development of agriculture had opened new avenues for commercial development of native public and zones. British colonial period in India can be broadly divided into three distinct phases that are interconnected. The first stage was from 1757 to 1813 which was known as a colonial merchant, second phase covered era from 1813 to 1860 as a regulator of national power and revenue collection and after 1860 was the third stage as they spent capital on several segments such as railways, irrigation and afforestation, and various others to contest in the worldwide market.²⁹

6.1. Case Study: Sidhnai Canal Colony:

Sidhnai Colony was one of the biggest projects of colonial era in Multan. It was designed to establish a “self-supporting peasantry” and to guarantee political stability. It was regarded as one of the oldest irrigation schemes that had an impact on Multan. As far as the settlement Policy of British is concerned, British did prioritize military pensioner, agricultural castes and influential families and number of settlers was around 176,000 acres and land was distributed based on Loyalty and agricultural skill.³⁰ It came down to making “a stable and self-supporting rural population loyal to Government.”³¹ Britain widened an effective agrarian plan to create nine canal settlements³² between 1885 and 1926. The terrestrial site of Multan is located at center and was covered by three major schemes of colonization in Punjab. The land of Multan was a part of Sidhnai Colony that was settled between 1886 and 1888 giving a total allocation of what is roughly about 0.25 million acres. People were interested to know, so lowest subsidy was 50 acres. In 1914, Lower Bari Doab Colony was started. The land initially allocated for this scheme was 1.19 million acres but, later on, it was condensed to 0.9 million acres in 1916. It is noteworthy that in lower Bari Doab, dominant clans of the prominent religious elite like *Gardezi*, *Qurashi* and *Gilani* were given 0.19 million and 262 acres of land. Its inhabitants grew between 1881 and 1921, but this was due to colonial plans of Lower Bari Doab and Sidhnai. Multan is surrounded by three different channels i.e. Sidhnai Canal, Delinquent Canal and Sutlej Canal. Ravi was the chief source of water for *Sidhnai Canal*. *Abdul Hakim* and *Fazl Shah Canals*³³

²⁷ Ian Talbot, (1999, p.102)

²⁸ Imran Ali, *Punjab under Imperialism* (1988), p. 67.

²⁹ Kumar, S. (2012). Colonialism & Rural Society in Punjab, 1901-1947. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation. Kurukshetra: Kurukshetra University Press.

³⁰ Canal Colony Records, Punjab Irrigation Department (1890s).

³¹ Government of Punjab, Irrigation Proceedings (1898).

³² Imran Ali, 2003)

³³ Emerson, H. (1912). Final Settlement Report of Multan District. Lahore: Superintendent, Government Printing Punjab.

are part of Sidhna Canal Structure. Out of four flow channels of Chenab, Sikandarabad was the best one. Its other canal scheme was *Doorana Lantana* and *Wali Mohammad* on Boson regulators. Matithal was the third aqueduct serving *Kabir Wala* and Multan whilst Balochan Wah was fourth and last waterway that flows through *Shujabad* and serves about 20 villages. The department of Irrigation had control on all canals and it irrigated Multan land directly and indirectly and strengthened the economy.

6.3. Colonial Co-option in Local Governance:

Local bodies like District boards and municipal committees were introduced by the British. Limited political participation in these institutions, but still dominated by elites. Although there were reformations, Deputy Commissioner still had control and it was still of a centralized decision-making. British brought in local institutions to enhance administration and engage with local elites. However, these bodies had a restricted mandate, and were dominated by elites. Municipal committees took care of urban governance. These bodies consisted of elite representatives and were supervised by colonists. The establishments were intended to offer some representation and to bolster administrative power. "Colonial reforms result in participation without democracy not without, as Metcalf says, "controlled participation."³⁴ Participation was restricted that only wealthy individuals could participate. Representation was indirect. This was the appearance of participation rather than actual power sharing in colonial institution. The British integrated *pirs* and *sajjada nashins* in many ways of institutions. With annexation of Punjab, British government tried to enlist help of local rural partners to re-establish its authority over districts like Multan. The local elites proved to be key during War of Independence (1857) and British rulers consolidated their control over them. British have always been looking for allies amongst the rural population of each locality from 1860s onwards. To gain their support, colonial state offered them land grants, titles and patronage and the most, those who had supported them in 1857. The administrative ideology of Henry Lawrence which emphasized the use of rural intermediaries was supported by loyalty of Muslim and Sikh landowners. British rewarded, of course, those who aided them in their darkest days with higher pay. To remedy this, Punjab Government adopted a policy of appointing local aristocrats instead of local notables in administrative positions, called a title and *zaildars*, *tehsildars*, *lambardars* and *sufedposh*. The war veterans were richly rewarded with titles, swords of honour, recruiting badges and jagirs.³⁵ British was a free agent and could have formed a covenant of agriculturalists' tribe chiefs and their war chiefs in this policy. Imran Ali states that in Lower Bari Doab Colony, which was created in 1914, religious leaders from two dominant families, namely *Gardezi*, *Qurashi* and *Gilani* were given 0.19 million and 262 acres of land respectively³⁶, which would be considered a significant step.

One of the key institutions was that of the *zaildar*, who was a semi-official intermediary, but who had some authority over groups of villages and was responsible for implementation of government policy and also for protection of colonial interests. The role of mediator was highly valued...as an expression of loyalty to Ottoman Empire and a recognition of the power of local community... After 1857, British officials extended it by entrusting the administration and politics of Multan to loyal rural elites.³⁷ These agents turned into custodians of colonial

³⁴ Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (1995), p. 78.

³⁵ Tan Tai Yang, *Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947 & Garrison State* (sage publication, India, 2005), p.133

³⁶ Imran Ali (2003)

³⁷ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj 1849-1947* (Manohar publications, New Delhi, 1988), p.49

interests and were included in a three-layered structure; (i) local administrative officers (Zaildars, Lambardars, Tehsildars), (ii) Darbaris, Divisional Darbaris and (iii) Provincial darbaris. An example of collaboration is the following high profile individuals who were in British administration and councils named as *Syed Zain-al-Abid Din Shah Gilani, Syed Makhdum Raza Shah Gilani, Sir Nawab Riaz Hussain Qureshi, Nawab & Khan Bahadur Makhdum Murid Hussain Qureshi, Syed Ghulam Yasin Shah Gilani, Syed Muhammad Hussain Gardezi, Sheikh Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Syed Hassan Bakhsh Gardezi, Syed Muhammad Sadr-ud-Din Shah, Mian Mahboob Ahmad Gurmani, Mian Mohammad Ahmad Gurmani Khan Bahl, an Laghari Nawab, Khan Bahadur, Sub-Judge, Honorary Magistrate Rana Ahmad Yar Noon—Zaildar Malihammad Ameer Khan Bosan—Khan Sahib, Khan Bahadur Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani Khan Bahadur Ahmad Yar Khan Khakwani – Nawab, Khan Bahadur*. At regional level, second level of colonial interaction was through divisional darbaris, who acted as strong intermediaries. They were not only admitted according to social status but also based on political allegiance. Possession of power and influence, alone did not ensure local elite patronage as they proved during Sikh Wars and uprising of 1857, when idea of political loyalty was required. There were also remarkable divisional *Darbaris* like *Syed Makhdum Raza Shah Gilani, Pir Shah Qureshi, Mian Mohammad Ahmad Gurmani, Mian Mohammad Zaman Gurmani, Khan Ziarat Khan Dahaa, Khan Farid Khan Dahaa Divisional Darbari Khan Haibat Khan Dahaa, Khan Gul Mohammad Khan Dahaa and Syed Ameer Shah*. Third level consisted of cooperation between colonies and natives on a provincial level, called provincial darbaris. They were also represented in provincial councils and *darbars*, in a limited representation. But it was a figurehead, since they were expected to help colonial policies and not to advocate independence. As mentioned, chiefs and landowners entered into the administrative system as honorary magistrates and members of darbar. Following were members of British council where there were some provincial Darbaris and members of Council such as *Syed Muhammad Sadr-ud-Din Shah, Murid Hussain Qureshi, Nawabzada Major Ashiq Hussain Qureshi, Pir Shah Qureshi Syed Sadr-ud-Din Gilani*. British in Multan built a multi-layer model of political cooperation that involved rural elites in administrative and council system. Titles, land grants and official positions cemented loyalty and strengthened dominance of elites. This type of order provided stability and good governance, but at the same time provided stability in terms of hierarchy because political powers were still in hands of a small group of loyal intermediaries.

6.4. Political Implications of Canal Colonies:

Canal colonies helped to consolidate British government with loyal elites, and they were tools for building up loyal elites at Multan. In this way, agriculturist class dependence was enhanced in relation to colonial administration. As David Gilmartin says: "Irrigation networks turned to networks of political influence."³⁸ Canal colonies were not just economic enterprises, but instruments of political control. Canal colonies, Imran Ali says, were "tools of political engineering."³⁹ They established loyal landowners who followed the rule of colonists. The growth of agriculture and settlement of *Abadkar* and allocation of land under canal colonial settlements created Multan's popularity. Farming products require an adequate supply of water. The largest area of Punjab has been irrigated with riverbeds, wells, canals, water tanks, etc.⁴⁰ In Punjab, natural resources of irrigation were rain and rivers. Artificial irrigation was an essential resource: wells and canals. There are two types of wells i.e. *Pakka* and *Kachcha*. "Kachcha wells had dug into earth without brickwork. In certain areas, they operated with

³⁸ Gilmartin (1988), p. 89.

³⁹ Ali, Imran. *Punjab under imperialism, 1885–1947*. Princeton University Press. (1988, p. 67).

⁴⁰ Mufakhar-ul-Islam, M. (1997). *Irrigation, Agriculture and Raj: Punjab, 1887-1947*. New Delhi: Manohar.

Persian wheel. The utilization of wells was the exclusive resource of irrigation restrained to non-canal settlements. The assessment of irrigation through wells was exaggerated for a diversity of reasons i.e. area, nature of soil, charisma of canal irrigation, competence of leaseholders and several wells."⁴¹ It was also confessed that economic development and agrarian growth of Multan made it third strongest agrarian area after Delhi and Amritsar. Till 19th century, entire indigenous and religious elite and common people who had sequences of power and were the key beneficiaries of both land grantor and symbolic engagements, were helping British in their efforts to implement its tactics and schemes. These pious rich persons were the same who reinforced instituting of *Khair-Ul-Madares*. This institution was welcomed by those supporters and they were known as *Gilani, Bukhari, Qurashi* and *Gardezi*. Britain left blessings in form of management, which was not inadequate to law and order, canals, bridges, schools, irrigation, telegraph, railways, roads.

The political situation in Multan, described as a decent example of an old political system would be the local elites. The inhabitants can be categorized into three classes i.e. religion, caste, profession and tribe. Self-discrimination was observed in occupations and tribes as culture and religion had an insightful impact on occupation of residents.⁴² Britain's key intentions were to stable economic variations and uphold political constancy. The colonial management utilized native elites as a barrier between Britain and public. These indigenous elites, after British, grew their power to rule masses by dividing India into two new states. These elites transitioned from a role of mediator to guardian of sacred shrines to master and mentor. They additionally enlisted British in reference to influential powers and appointments. Some of notable clans who had been helping in various offices and received honours from British were; *Gardezi Syed, Qurashi, Gilani Syed, Saddozai, Badozai, Khakvani and Mullazai* etc. All of colonial policies including Court of Wards, free *Jagir*, revenue, *tirnitax* (grazing) and land Alienation Acts were in favour of native elites, which comprised *Jagirdars, Pirs* and *Sajjada nashin*.⁴³

8. Development of Unionist elites in Multan:

In early 20th century, Punjab politics was in control of Unionist Party. Talbot describes it as "a coalition of rural elites across religious lines. In Multan, Unionist politics was dominated by large landowners, *Pirs* and *sajjada nashins* and influential families (*Bosan, Gilani, Khakwani*). These elites controlled electoral constituencies, local institutions and rural populations. The success of Unionist Party in provincial elections of 1936–37 in Multan district was largely dependent upon support of powerful landed elites, *pirs, sajjada nashins* and tribal chiefs. The political structure of colonial Punjab, particularly in southern Punjab, was dominated by influential rural families who controlled vast agricultural lands, canal colony estates and local administrative institutions. These elites played a decisive role in mobilizing rural voters and ensuring electoral victory for Unionist Party. The Government of India Act of 1935 introduced provincial autonomy and expanded electoral politics in British India. However, political participation in Punjab remained heavily influenced by agrarian power structures. In Multan, Unionist Party successfully utilized the support of large landlords and spiritual leaders who had longstanding ties with colonial administration. Ian Talbot observes that: "Unionist Party rested upon an alliance of rural magnates whose authority over tenants and cultivators guaranteed

⁴¹ Emerson, H. (1912). Final Settlement Report of Multan District. Lahore.

⁴² Shafiq, M. (2013). Religious Locale and Inter religious Demographic Structure of Colonial Multan. Pakistan Journal of Islamic Research, 11(2),

⁴³ (Government of Punjab, Report for Year 1865-66, 1867)

electoral success.”⁴⁴ The landed class of Multan had gained political leverage with the British patronage in late nineteenth and early twentieth century. British through canal colonization, land settlements and honorary titles, reinforced economic/political control of loyal rural families. The elites were recruited for colonial government as zaildars, lambardars, honorary magistrates, district board members and provincial councilors. Consequently, they established close ties with the colonial bureaucracy and were natural supporters of Unionist Party, representing interests of agrarian and landed interests. The *Gilani, Qureshi, Khakwani, Gardezi* and *Bosan* families were the most influential families of Multan. These families had great influence in rural society based on land ownership, kinship ties, and spiritual power.

Pirs and *sajjada nashins* played a special role in Multan politics. Due to its past as “City of Saints”, guardians of shrines had thousands of followers (*murids*) and were revered. These religious organisations were effectively used by Unionist Party to mobilize electoral support. David Gilmartin makes case that: “Unionist system relied on intermediation of pirs and rural mediators between state and village society.”⁴⁵ Local administrative institutions like district boards and municipal committees were also under control of landed elites. Via their other institutions, they dispensed patronage, they determined local issues and they consolidated their political power. They also wielded significant economic power over tenants and peasants, which allowed them to influence the outcome of elections. Canal colonies in Multan paved the way for these elites. Moneyed landlords were given large tracts of land where they became economically dependent upon the colonial state. As a result, they were very critical of those who advocated for a harmonious relationship between Unionist Party and British government, which had an interest in safeguarding rights of farmers. Another facet of Unionist party ideology which resonated with Multan's landed aristocracy was its concept of cross-communal unity based on agrarian ethos. Unionists did not talk about communal politics, unlike Congress or Muslim League did in early 1930s, but they did talk about rural and agricultural issues. Party was supported by Muslim, Hindu and Sikh landlords as it protected their economic and political privileges. Unionism was a national unity of “agrarian elite power under colonial patronage,”⁴⁶ writes Ian Talbot.

Political actors emerged among families like *Gardezis, Bosans and Syeds*. These are referred to in gazetteer as “leading families” who have large tracts of land and social influence. In Multan, Unionist leadership was a monopoly of the families of *Syeds, Bosans* and *Khakwani* elites. Both land and political institutions were dominated by these groups. Petty rich classes were also at the crest of society as *Syed, Qurashi, Gilani* etc. *Pathan* and *Balouch* were from category of fighters and *Syed* and *Qurashi* were spiritual leaders. The land held by these groups was bulky constituting 1.375 million acres of land given and gifted by British due to their loyal association and support, while *Pathan, Balouch* held 0.124 million acres.⁴⁷ Multan's indigenous supremacy was shaped by British, which consisted of loyal servants to help them govern efficiently. In whole era, spiritual pirs became landowners, who were made to be devoted by the British and were the dominant class. In early 20th century, *Gilani* family had become prominent in the governance of area and had become a major player in electoral politics. They were powerful because of spiritual charisma coupled with economic wealth, which can be called a fusion of power. Elections were introduced which facilitated the strengthening of elites and led to maintenance of elite domination. Mechanisms involved control of votes by patronage,

⁴⁴ Talbot, I. (1988). *Punjab and the Raj, 1849–1947*. Manohar Publications

⁴⁵ Gilmartin,

⁴⁶ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj* (1999), p. 134.

⁴⁷ Banerjee, H. (1982). *Agrarian Society of Punjab, 1849-1901*. New Delhi: Manohar.

influence over tenants and religious authority. The impetus for the elections did not bring democracy to politics. Rather: "Electoral institutions strengthened the powers of traditional elites."⁴⁸ Prominent Multani elites who were related to Unionist politics were *Mian Mohammad Ahmad Gurmani, Mian Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani, Sardar Jamal Khan Laghari, Ahmad Yar Khan Khakwani and Malik Mohammad Ameer Khan Bosan*. These leaders gained Unionist victories within rural constituencies by utilizing their social standing, administrative power and economic means. With the success of Unionist Party in election in 1936-37, therefore, political clearly of precolonial politics of Punjab was illustrated. The elections were not ideologically mobilized and were not primarily mobilizing masses in a democratic way; rather, they were determined by patronage networks, landed influence and colonial alliances. Unionists Party enjoyed the backing of landed elite of Multan and this provided stability to political life in southern Punjab, where landed elite dominated the politics of area. But dominance started to diminish in 1940s when the All-India Muslim League began to grow in popularity. As demand for Pakistan started picking up, many landed elites who were earlier on-board Unionists started changing their allegiance to the Muslim league. Yet Unionist Party's electoral victory in election of 1936-37 is a salient illustration of need for cooperation of powerful rural elites and spiritual intermediaries for colonial governance in Multan. Ian Talbot writes that; "Unionist politics represented the interests of rural elites aligned with colonial state."⁴⁹

8. Movement towards Muslim League Politics:

Prior to elections of 1936-37, the landed elites, *pirs* and *gaddi nashins* of Multan and Punjab got converted from Unionist Party to All-India Muslim League for various political, religious, economic and constitutional reasons. Even though during late 1930s and 1940s, position of Unionist Party in Punjab politics weakened due to changing political reasons, it was still Unionist Party that was initially dominant with support of rural landlords, tribal chiefs and spiritual elites. The spread of Muslim nationalism in India was one of the chief reasons for this change. Congress ministries were established in some of provinces of British India after the elections of 1937. Many Muslim political leaders spread notion that Congress rule meant Hindu political domination and was a threat to political and cultural interests of Muslims. This fear helped to boost support for Muslim League among Muslim elites of Punjab, including Multan. The Unionist Party was rooted in the concept of cross communal agrarian cooperation, uniting Muslim, Hindu and Sikh landlords on one political platform. By late 1930's, communal politics had grown more acute in India. Muslim League took a progressive turn towards claiming to represent political interests of Muslims. This made it too risky to continue to associate with Unionists for many Muslim landlords and *pirs*. Political strategy of Muhammad Ali Jinnah was another factor which yielded a successful reorganization of Muslim League after 1937. Jinnah had understood that if League was to be successful in Punjab it would have to have the backing of influential leaders of rural communities namely *pirs* and *sajjada nashins*. He thus tried to be conciliatory towards landed aristocracy of Punjab and invited them to join League, but he did not touch their social and economic statuses. David Gilmartin notes that; "Muslim League's success in Punjab depended heavily upon support of rural intermediaries and spiritual leaders."⁵⁰ In southern Punjab and Multan, *pirs* and *gaddi nashins* played a particular part, as shrine culture was rooted in these areas. The spiritual masters enjoyed tremendous authority over their *murids* (disciples) and political advice of spiritual masters was frequently followed by

⁴⁸ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj* (1999), p. 178.

⁴⁹ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj* (1999), p.134.

⁵⁰ David Gilmartin

murids. With backing of major political parties, Muslim League, many sections of rural Muslim population pledged their allegiance to it. *Gilani, Qureshi, Gardezi* and a number of landlords of *Khakwani* and *Bosan* families were influential families and spiritual elites during this transition. These elites realized that Muslim League was soon to be a political powerhouse among Indian Muslims.

Weakening of Unionist Party after the death of *Sir Fazl-i-Hussain* and *Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan* also contributed to the diminishing influence of Unionist Party. Under his leadership and political influence, *Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan* had ensured unity among landed sections of Punjab. Following his death in 1942, Unionist Party grew weaker, because of internal division. Cooperation between Unionists and Muslim League was further promoted by *Sikandar-Jinnah Pact* in 1937. This pact allowed Muslim Unionists to switch from Unionist Party to the Muslim League, but not from Unionist party. This way, many of Punjab's Muslim politicians were able to slowly grow closer to League without losing their grip on Unionists. Economic and social factors also helped to drive shift. The landed elites feared constitutional changes and democratic politics could pose a threat to them in future. From early association with Muslim League, they sought to protect their influence in any future political dealings. The League guaranteed these elites that their social status and land holdings would be safe in a future Muslim state. Another watershed was the *Lahore Resolution* of 1940. Separate Muslim states were demanded from Muslims and there was a tremendous excitement among Muslims of Punjab in Multan. As a result of Pakistan's growing reputation as a holy war, *pirs* and *gaddi nashins* also made a religious appeal for support, making mobilization of Muslim League more effective in the countryside. "When *pirs, sajjada nashins* and major landlords shifted their allegiance from Unionists to Pakistan movement, it was the League which made breakthrough in Punjab,"⁵¹ says Ian Talbot. British policies must also be taken into account. In last ten years of colonial rule. British administrations started acknowledging that Muslim league was emerging as main representative body of Indian Muslims. Hence, many landed elites made pragmatic adjustments of their loyalties anticipating changing political realities. In addition, Unionist Party never became a particularly influential party, as it never gained a solid foothold among non-agricultural interests. It was able to stand for landlord politics but it failed to stand up to emotional and religious rhetoric of Pakistan movement. The demand for Muslim unity and separation, expressed in slogan of Muslim League, was very appealing to elites as well as common Muslims. *Pirs* and *sajjada nashins* were instrumental in elections of 1945-46 in Multan district where they openly supported Muslim League candidates. They brought a change in rural society making League more than an urban political organisation, a mass movement in Punjab. Networks of shrines, platforms of mosques and patron networks in rural areas emerged as significant mobilization tools for League. This led to transformation of landed elites, *pirs* and *gaddis nashins* from Unionist Party to Muslim League following elections of 1936-37, which was based on a number of factors: rise of Muslim nationalism, fear of Congress dominance, Jinnah's political strategy, decline of Unionist leadership, religious mobilization, constitutional changes and desire of elites to protect their future political clout. This shift was very crucial in transforming Muslim League of Punjab and eventually helped in success of Pakistan Movement in 1947. *Pirs* transferred his loyalty from Congress to Muslim League. As David Gilmartin notes; "Religious authority was a means for nationalist mobilization."⁵²

11. Conclusion:

⁵¹ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj* (1999),

⁵² David Gilmartin (1988), p. 201.

The political development of Multan under British rule was influenced by interaction between colonial policies, local elites and socio-economic changes. The political metamorphosis of Multan during British rule was a complex phenomenon that involved interaction between colonial policies and power apparatuses at local level. British managed to establish an indirect system of rule by co-opting *pirs* and landowners. British appropriation of *pirs* and elites led to administrative changes, changed agrarian economy, created resistance and enabled nationalism mobilization, with limited mass participation. But this system also helped to create political consciousness and resistance. The example of Multan shows that colonial rule was not imposed but negotiated. These, however, are only some of preliminary stages of the political story of Multan and colonial rule was not a mere imposition but a negotiation between structures of power already in place. This system had been institutionalized and became legacy of post-colonial era in Pakistan, where elite maintained supremacy in the society. Religious power was still present and agrarian politics still had an impact on government. Therefore, Multan provides a vital example to the study of wider aspects of colonial and post-colonial politics in South Asia. In this way, Multan is the image of colonial governance's way of functioning, which left behind a legacy of collaboration, adaptation and transformation in the political structure of Pakistan.