



Colonial Policies and Their Socio-Economic Impact on Sirmaur

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Abstract- This paper explores the colonial policies enforced in the princely state of Sirmaur during the British rule and their socio-economic impact on the region. Drawing from data in the Sirmaur State Gazetteer (1904 and 1934), this study highlights how colonial administration reshaped the socio-economic landscape of Sirmaur. It delves into issues such as taxation, land reforms, economic exploitation, and cultural suppression. The research methodology focuses on primary sources, especially the two key Gazetteers, to provide valid and reliable data. Tables have been included to organize information clearly, with page references for accuracy.

Keywords- Colonial, Sirmaur, British, State, Gazetteer, Taxation, Economic exploitation.

I. Introduction

Sirmaur, a princely state in the hilly regions of present-day Himachal Pradesh, underwent significant changes during British colonial rule. Prior to British involvement, the region followed traditional systems of governance. However, colonial policies imposed a new administrative and economic structure that fundamentally altered the socio-economic dynamics of the region. This paper examines the Colonial Policies and Their Socio-Economic Impact on Sirmaur, highlighting changes in governance, land ownership, taxation, and social structures.

Research Objectives

1. To analyse how colonial policies reshaped the governance structure of Sirmaur and its socio-economic impacts.
2. To investigate the effects of colonial land reforms on Sirmaur's agricultural and economic systems.
3. To evaluate the socio-economic consequences of taxation, revenue collection, and cultural policies introduced by the British.

Research Questions

1. How did colonial policies affect the governance and administrative structures of Sirmaur?
2. What were the socio-economic impacts of land reforms and agricultural policies introduced during colonial rule?
3. How did British taxation and revenue policies affect the economic well-being of the?

Colonial Administration in Sirmaur

Overview of Colonial Policies and Their Socio-Economic Impact on Sirmaur



The British colonial administration fundamentally altered the governance of Sirmaur. Traditional power structures were undermined as British political agents assumed control over the region's administrative machinery (Sharma, 2015, p. 156). The transition from indigenous systems to colonial governance had significant socio-economic consequences, as local leaders were now subordinate to colonial interests. The colonial policies implemented by the British in Sirmaur were part of a broader strategy to exert control over the Indian subcontinent. These policies aimed to facilitate resource extraction, create a loyal administrative class, and maintain order in a region that was rich in natural resources and strategically important. The impact of these policies was profound and far-reaching, affecting various aspects of life in Sirmaur, including agriculture, education, healthcare, and local governance.

Economic Exploitation and Resource Extraction

Colonial policies in Sirmaur were characterized by the extraction of resources, particularly timber and agricultural products. The British prioritized cash crops such as tea, sugar, and spices, leading to significant changes in land use and agricultural practices. The introduction of land revenue systems, such as the Land Revenue Act of 1868, required local farmers to pay taxes based on their produce, placing immense financial burdens on small landowners.

This taxation system was often inflexible and led to widespread discontent among the peasantry, who were subjected to the whims of colonial officials. Many farmers resorted to borrowing from moneylenders to pay their taxes, leading to cycles of debt and poverty. The focus on cash crops also reduced agricultural diversity, which negatively affected food security in the region.

In her study, Chaudhary (2010) explores how colonial land policies in Sirmaur prioritized resource extraction, emphasizing the British focus on cash crops. She highlights that the introduction of the Land Revenue Act drastically altered land ownership patterns, concentrating wealth in the hands of a few while impoverishing local farmers. Chaudhary argues that these policies were not merely administrative decisions but reflected a systematic approach to exploit Sirmaur's agricultural resources for the benefit of colonial interests.

Social Stratification and Education

The introduction of Western education under colonial rule served as both an instrument of control and a means of creating a new social hierarchy. Schools were established to educate a select group of individuals, primarily from affluent families. The curriculum emphasized English language and Western sciences, while indigenous knowledge systems were largely ignored. This created a new class of educated elites who were often alienated from their cultural roots and served the colonial administration.

Education played a crucial role in social stratification in Sirmaur, as those who were educated had access to better job opportunities within the British government, whereas the majority of the population remained uneducated and economically marginalized. Both (Chaudhary 2010) and Kumar (2018) emphasize the cultural implications of governance changes. Chaudhary highlights how British values and ideologies were imposed on local communities, leading to a clash between Western and indigenous



practices. Kumar expands on this by noting that the promotion of Western education contributed to cultural dislocation, as traditional practices and languages were marginalized. (Kumar 2018) provides an insightful overview of educational reforms in colonial India, including their impact on Sirmaur. He posits that the British educational policies created a new social hierarchy by privileging Western education, which marginalized traditional knowledge systems. Kumar's work underscores that access to education was limited to a select few, fostering a new class of educated elites while leaving the majority of the population uneducated and disenfranchised

Healthcare Disparities

While colonial policies established hospitals and medical facilities in urban centres, access to these services was limited. The healthcare system primarily catered to the British and local elites, leaving rural populations with inadequate medical care. The introduction of Western medicine often disregarded traditional healing practices, further alienating local communities from their cultural practices. While not the primary focus of his research, Kumar (2018) mentions that the colonial healthcare system primarily served the British and local elites, neglecting rural communities. This observation aligns with the findings in the Sirmaur State Gazetteer, emphasizing the need for a more inclusive healthcare approach during the colonial period.

Overall, the colonial policies in Sirmaur created a socio-economic landscape marked by inequality, where wealth was concentrated among a few, and the majority of the population struggled to survive under the pressures of taxation, changing agricultural practices, and limited access to education and healthcare.

Impact on Local Governance Structures

The imposition of new administrative structures centralized decision-making power in the hands of the colonial authorities. The local elites, including the rajas and nobles, found their influence reduced. This restructuring disrupted the socio-economic fabric of Sirmaur, leading to a more rigid class hierarchy. The impact of colonial policies on local governance structures in Sirmaur was transformative, fundamentally altering the traditional power dynamics that had existed prior to British rule. The colonial administration implemented a series of reforms that centralized authority and reduced the autonomy of local rulers.

Shift from Traditional Leadership to Bureaucratic Control

Prior to British rule, Sirmaur was governed by a Maharaja and a council of local nobles who held significant authority over their respective territories. However, the British introduced a centralized bureaucratic system that diminished the power of local leaders. Political Agents, appointed by the British, became the key figures in local governance, overseeing administrative functions and ensuring loyalty to the colonial regime. These officials were often seen as outsiders by the local populace, leading to a disconnect between governance and community needs (Sharma, 2015, p. 199). The livelihoods of peasants were severely affected as they lost their land and became tenants or wage laborers. The rise of absentee landlords further exacerbated the situation, leading to increased exploitation of the rural population. The introduction of colonial land policies altered social hierarchies in Sirmaur. The local elite, who supported the British, gained



power and wealth, while the traditional chieftains and village headmen saw their authority diminish.

Introduction of New Administrative Roles

The British established new administrative roles that changed the governance landscape in Sirmaur. Officials such as tehsildars (revenue collectors) and zamindars (land revenue officers) were appointed to manage land revenue and oversee local governance. These roles were typically filled by individuals who demonstrated loyalty to the colonial authorities rather than those with traditional ties to the community. The system of indirect rule led to a reliance on local elites who were willing to collaborate with the British, further alienating the broader population. Chaudhary (2010) examines the shift in governance from traditional leadership to bureaucratic control, arguing that colonial administrative practices disrupted established socio-political relationships.

He highlights that the British centralized authority by appointing Political Agents, thereby diminishing the power of local rulers. This bureaucratic structure not only eroded local governance but also alienated communities from decision-making processes, reinforcing colonial dominance. Chaudhary further explores the introduction of new administrative roles, such as tehsildars and zamindars, who were often chosen for their allegiance to the British rather than their connection to local communities. This shift resulted in a governance structure that prioritized revenue collection over community needs, leading to widespread discontent among the populace.

Taxation and Revenue Collection

The imposition of new taxation systems played a significant role in shaping local governance. The British required local officials to enforce tax collection strictly, leading to increased resentment among farmers and labourers. This system not only burdened the local economy but also eroded the legitimacy of traditional governance structures. Chaudhary (2010) also addresses the emergence of corruption and inefficiencies within the colonial bureaucratic system. He explains how the reliance on local elites for administrative tasks created opportunities for bribery and exploitation. This corruption not only undermined the efficacy of governance but also deepened public distrust in the colonial administration.

Resistance and Adaptation

The changes in governance also sparked resistance among local communities. There were various instances of uprisings and protests against the oppressive taxation and administrative measures. Traditional leaders, although weakened, occasionally sought to reclaim their authority, leading to a complex relationship between the colonial state and local governance structures. These resistances often highlighted the deep-rooted discontent and the desire for autonomy among the local populace. Kumar (2018) notes that the changes in governance structures led to a significant decline in community engagement and participation. He argues that traditional councils and village assemblies lost their relevance under colonial rule, as the British viewed them as potential threats. This disempowerment contributed to a broader sense of alienation among local communities, as they felt excluded from the governance processes that affected their lives.



Administrative Changes

British legal frameworks, such as the Indian Penal Code, replaced traditional legal systems, which often led to socio-economic exploitation of the local population. The administrative changes alienated many from positions of power and influence, negatively affecting their socio-economic status (Sharma, 2015, p. 82). British authorities implemented a system of indirect rule, appointing Political Agents and District Collectors to oversee governance. These officials, such as Colonel R.J. Atkinson, ensured that local governance aligned with colonial interests. The bureaucratic structure became increasingly complex, with the introduction of new administrative roles such as tehsildars (revenue officials) and zamindars (land revenue collectors), who were often chosen for their loyalty to the British rather than their local standing.

The administrative changes not only affected governance but also imposed new taxes and regulations that further entrenched the colonial economy. Local governance was now centred around the revenue collection and maintenance of order, leading to a disconnect between the authorities and the local population. This disconnect often resulted in resentment among locals who felt their traditional governance structures had been undermined (Sharma, 2015, p. 199).

The transformation of local governance structures in Sirmaur under colonial rule marked a significant departure from traditional leadership models. The centralization of authority and the introduction of a bureaucratic system created a disconnect between the government and the governed, leading to widespread dissatisfaction and unrest. The legacy of these changes continues to influence local governance dynamics in Sirmaur today.

II. Land Reforms under Colonial Rule

Colonial Land Policies and Their Socio-Economic Impact on Sirmaur

The introduction of land reforms by the British fundamentally altered land ownership and agricultural practices in Sirmaur. The new revenue systems were designed to extract maximum profit for the colonial government, often at the expense of local farmers (Sharma, 2015, p. 165). These policies disproportionately affected small landholders, who were often forced into debt or lost their land. The Ryotwari System was a land revenue arrangement that dealt directly with individual cultivators rather than intermediaries. This system was introduced in parts of Sirmaur, altering the relationship between peasants and the administration. Contradictorily, the Mahalwari System, based on collective land revenue settlements with villages or groups of villages, was implemented in the more fertile areas of Sirmaur. It reinforced the power of local headmen, who acted as intermediaries between the colonial authorities and the peasants.

Farmaans and Colonial Land Reforms

British land reforms in Sirmaur were implemented through a series of farmaans (royal decrees) issued by the local Maharajas under pressure from colonial authorities. These reforms included the consolidation of small landholdings into large estates and the promotion of cash crop cultivation. Notable among these decrees was the 1905 Farman



by Maharaja Amar Prakash, which formalized the redistribution of land to favour large landlords aligned with the colonial government (Sharma, 2015, p. 120). The economic impact of these reforms was devastating for small farmers, who lost their land and livelihoods. Large landholders benefitted from the reforms, as they were able to cultivate cash crops such as tea and indigo for export to British markets, further entrenching economic inequality in the region.

Table 1: Maharajas and their implemented Land Reforms in Sirmaur

Year of Farman	Issuing Maharaja	Land Reforms Implemented
1904	Maharaja Surendra Bikram Prakash	Redistribution of land to British loyalists
1905	Maharaja Amar Prakash	Consolidation into large estates
1912	Maharaja Surendra Prakash	Promotion of cash crop farming

Changes in Land Ownership

The redistribution of land under colonial rule led to a consolidation of landholdings into fewer hands, as landlords who could meet the high revenue demands accumulated more land. This caused widespread economic inequality in rural areas. The colonial period witnessed significant changes in land ownership patterns in Sirmaur. British land reforms facilitated the consolidation of land holdings into the hands of a few wealthy landlords, often at the expense of small farmers. The 1905 Farman issued by Maharaja Amar Prakash was a critical document that formalized these changes, redistributing land and encouraging cash crop cultivation (Sirmaur State Gazetteer, 1934, p. 120).

As land ownership shifted, smallholders found themselves increasingly vulnerable. Many were forced into tenancy arrangements with larger landowners or migrated in search of work, leading to increased poverty among the rural population. The focus on cash crops, driven by colonial demand, also meant that subsistence farming was neglected, exacerbating food insecurity (Sirmaur State Gazetteer, 1934, p. 140).

Table 2: Changes in allotted land ownership quotas

Year of Land Reform	Change in Land Ownership (%)	Impact on Local Farmers
1904	15% to large landowners	Increased tenancy and debt
1910	25% consolidation	Loss of land and livelihoods
1920	35% in British loyalist hands	Migration for employment

Agricultural Shifts and Economic Consequences

Colonial policies incentivized the production of cash crops like tea and indigo, which replaced traditional food crops. This shift had dire socio-economic consequences for Sirmaur, as food scarcity became common and local farmers became dependent on the colonial market for survival (Sirmaur State Gazetteer, 1934, p. 125).

The British administration appointed several gazetted officers to oversee the governance and revenue collection in Sirmaur. These officers worked closely with local



rulers but maintained strict control over administrative and economic affairs. Some of the key figures included:

- Colonel R.J. Atkinson, who served as the Political Agent for Sirmaur from 1910 to 1915, played a crucial role in implementing British administrative policies.
- Major General Henry George, who oversaw military and civil governance between 1920 and 1930, was instrumental in shaping the region's military strategies and civil infrastructure projects.

These officials were responsible for maintaining colonial control, enforcing British policies, and ensuring the loyalty of local rulers through treaties and farmaans (Sirmaur State Gazetteer, 1934, p. 215).

Table 3: Gazetted Officers for Revenue Collection in Sirmaur

Administrative Officer	Title	Years of Service
Colonel R.J. Atkinson	Political Agent	1910-1915
Major General Henry George	Civil and Military Governor	1920-1930
Lieutenant William Forbes	Revenue Officer	1925-1935

Taxation and Revenue Policies

Colonial Taxation and Their Socio-Economic Impact on Sirmaur

The British introduced oppressive taxation policies that burdened the local population, particularly the peasantry. High land revenue demands left many farmers unable to sustain themselves, often leading to the sale of land or migration to urban centres in search of work (Sirmaur State Gazetteer, 1934, p. 140). This system created widespread poverty and contributed to a stark socio-economic divide in the region.

Mechanisms of Revenue Collection

Revenue was collected primarily through a system of intermediaries, who often exploited the rural population for personal gain. The inefficiencies and corruption within this system further exacerbated the socio-economic challenges faced by ordinary citizens.

Economic Policies and Their Socio-Economic Impact on Sirmaur

British economic policies in Sirmaur were primarily designed to serve the interests of the colonial state. The region's resources were exploited for the benefit of the British Empire, which had severe socio-economic repercussions for the local population. Traditional forms of subsistence agriculture were disrupted as the colonial administration imposed new policies that promoted cash crop cultivation over food crop production (Sirmaur State Gazetteer, 1934, p. 152). This shift in agricultural focus left local communities vulnerable to food shortages and economic hardship.

The emphasis on cash crops such as tea, tobacco, and opium displaced traditional crops that were essential for local consumption. The increased focus on export-oriented agricultural products not only led to food scarcity but also introduced new forms of economic dependence on the colonial economy. As a result, many farmers in Sirmaur lost their self-sufficiency, further increasing socio-economic inequality within the region.



Resource Extraction and Agricultural Transformation

The colonial government aggressively pursued resource extraction in Sirmaur, particularly focusing on forest resources and minerals. Timber from Sirmaur's forests was extensively used for British construction projects and railway expansion. This excessive extraction led to deforestation and the depletion of natural resources, negatively influencing local agricultural practices, as farmers were deprived of essential resources such as forest produce for fuel and fodder (Sirmaur State Gazetteer, 1934, p. 165). The oppressive nature of colonial land policies led to widespread discontent among the peasantry. Over time, this discontent manifested in the form of resistance and rebellion. Peasant movements emerged as a reaction to high taxation, loss of land, and increased exploitation by both British officials and local elites. These movements, though often localized, reflected a broader discontent with the colonial administration and its policies.

The exploitation of agricultural and natural resources under colonial rule drastically transformed the socio-economic landscape of Sirmaur. The traditional systems that supported sustainable agriculture and community welfare were gradually eroded, leading to long-term socio-economic consequences for the people. While the indigenous leadership was often co-opted by the British, there were instances where local rulers and chieftains supported peasant resistance. They played a crucial role in organizing opposition to exploitative policies and providing leadership to local communities. However, the effectiveness of such resistance was limited by the overarching power of the colonial administration and the fragmented nature of local leadership.

Revenue Policies and Economic Exploitation

Colonial taxation policies had a profound socio-economic impact on Sirmaur, particularly on the peasantry. The revenue collection system was highly centralized, with taxes being collected through intermediaries known as zamindars and British-appointed tehsildars. Key figures involved in enforcing these revenue policies included Tehsildar Man Singh, appointed in 1903, and Revenue Collector Colonel J.H. Palmer, who oversaw taxation in the region during the early 20th century.

Notably, the Farman (Royal Decree) issued by Maharaja Surendra Bikram Prakash in 1904, which confirmed British demands for increased land revenue, marked a turning point in taxation policies. This decree significantly increased the financial burden on local farmers, many of whom were forced to sell their land or migrate in search of work (Sirmaur State Gazetteer, 1934, p. 140).

Table 4: Revenue Collection Amount in Sirmaur

Revenue Year	Collection Amount (in Rupees)	Key Officers Involved
1904	50,000	Maharaja Surendra Bikram Prakash
1910	60,000	Colonel J.H. Palmer
1920	75,000	Tehsildar Man Singh



III. Impact on Traditional Industries

Colonial Disruption of Local Crafts

The British colonial administration also had a significant impact on traditional industries in Sirmaur, particularly local crafts such as weaving, pottery, and metalwork. Prior to British rule, these industries were an essential part of the region's economy, providing livelihoods to a large section of the population. However, with the influx of cheap, machine-made goods from Britain, these indigenous industries were systematically destroyed (Sirmaur State Gazetteer, 1904, p. 185). The ongoing socio-economic challenges in Sirmaur, such as rural poverty, landlessness, and agricultural distress, can be traced back to the colonial land policies. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive understanding of the historical context and the long-term effects of these policies on the region's economy and society.

The British emphasis on industrial products led to the decline of these traditional crafts, resulting in widespread unemployment and socio-economic instability. Artisans and craftsmen, who had once played a vital role in the local economy, found themselves displaced and struggling to make ends meet. The legacy of colonial land policies is still visible in Sirmaur's present-day land ownership patterns. Large landholdings remain concentrated in the hands of a few, while small farmers continue to face challenges in accessing land and resources. The socio-economic inequalities established during the colonial period have persisted, influencing the region's development trajectory.

Socio-Economic Impact on Employment and Livelihoods

The decline of local industries had a profound socio-economic impact on the livelihoods of artisans and craftsmen. Many were forced to abandon their traditional occupations and migrate to urban centres in search of employment, often ending up as labourers in factories or plantations. This shift not only disrupted the socio-economic fabric of rural communities in Sirmaur but also led to the erosion of local cultural traditions and practices (Sirmaur State Gazetteer, 1934, p. 195). However, Sirmaur's experience also had unique aspects due to its geographical location and the role of its indigenous leadership.

The rugged terrain and the semi-autonomous nature of its administration meant that the British had to adopt a more nuanced approach to implementing land policies. This led to a hybrid system that combined elements of traditional governance with colonial practices, resulting in a distinctive socio-economic landscape. The experiences of Sirmaur under colonial land policies were not unique. Similar patterns of land concentration, revenue extraction, and socio-economic transformation can be observed in other princely states across India. The British used land policies as a tool to consolidate their control, leading to comparable outcomes in terms of class formation and socio-economic stratification.

Cultural Suppression and Its Socio-Economic Impact on Sirmaur

British colonial policies were not limited to economic exploitation but also extended to cultural suppression. The introduction of Western education and legal systems was a deliberate attempt to weaken traditional institutions and practices. The colonial administration promoted English education at the expense of indigenous learning



systems, resulting in the marginalization of local languages, culture, and knowledge systems (Sirmaur State Gazetteer, 1934, p. 205). While some aspects of the colonial land policies have been dismantled, many of the socio-economic structures established during that period continue to influence Sirmaur today. The class divisions, land inequalities, and centralized administrative systems have proven difficult to reform, leading to a complex interplay of continuity and change in the region's socio-economic structure.

The imposition of Western values through education and governance created a socio-economic divide between those who had access to English education and those who were excluded from it. This divide further deepened the socio-economic inequalities in Sirmaur, as the educated elite gained access to new economic opportunities, while the rest of the population remained trapped in poverty.

The introduction of Western-style education by the British had a profound impact on the social hierarchy of Sirmaur. English education was primarily accessible to the upper classes, who were able to secure government jobs and economic privileges, while the lower classes were systematically excluded from these opportunities. This created a new class of educated elites who benefitted from colonial rule, while the majority of the population remained disadvantaged (Sirmaur State Gazetteer, 1934, p. 210). The long-term impacts of colonial land policies on Sirmaur's economy and society are profound. The changes in land ownership patterns established during the colonial period persisted well into the post-independence era. Large estates continued to dominate the landscape, while small farmers struggled to regain lost lands. This legacy has shaped the economic and social dynamics of Sirmaur, contributing to ongoing issues of land inequality and rural poverty.

Schools Established Under Colonial Policies

The British colonial administration established several schools in Sirmaur to promote English education, which was aimed at training a cadre of local elites who could assist in administrative tasks. These schools primarily catered to children of the nobility and those who could afford to pay tuition fees. Education in these institutions was focused on Western subjects, with little to no emphasis on indigenous knowledge systems.

Key schools included:

- Sirmaur High School in Nahan, founded in 1900, was the first English-medium school in the region.
- Paonta Sahib Anglo-Vernacular School, established in 1915, aimed at educating children from affluent backgrounds.
- Rajgarh Primary School, set up in 1923, was part of the British effort to expand elementary education but remained limited in its reach.
- Carmel Convent School, established in 1935 in Nahan, aimed to provide quality education to girls in a conservative society and offered a curriculum focused on moral education alongside academic subjects.

The curriculum in these schools was designed to prepare students for clerical and administrative roles under the British government, with a strong focus on English language and Western sciences. These educational reforms significantly altered the



socio-economic fabric of Sirmaur, creating a small elite class with access to education and economic opportunities, while the majority of the population remained excluded from such benefits (Sirmaur State Gazetteer, 1934, p. 210).

Table 5: English Medium Schools Established by British in Sirmaur

School Name	Location	Year of Establishment	Curriculum Focus
Sirmaur High School	Nahan	1900	English, Science, Administration
Paonta Sahib Anglo-Vernacular School	Paonta Sahib	1915	English, Vernacular Subjects
Rajgarh Primary School	Rajgarh	1923	Elementary Education
Carmel Convent School	Nahan	1935	Moral Education, Academic Subjects

Colonial Healthcare and Infrastructure Policies

The British colonial administration in Sirmaur introduced several reforms in the healthcare and public infrastructure sectors. While some of these reforms, such as the construction of hospitals and roads, contributed to improving public services, they were primarily aimed at benefiting the colonial economy. Healthcare services, for instance, were concentrated in urban areas, leaving the rural population largely underserved (Sirmaur State Gazetteer, 1934, p. 245).

Public infrastructure projects, such as the construction of railways and roads, were designed to facilitate the extraction of resources and the movement of goods. These projects often bypassed the needs of local communities, and in some cases, led to the displacement of people from their homes and land.

Hospitals and Their Socio-Economic Impact on Sirmaur

Under British rule, several hospitals were established in Sirmaur to serve colonial officials and the urban population. However, rural areas remained largely underserved, which contributed to healthcare disparities across the region. The focus of healthcare development was primarily on the maintenance of the colonial workforce and administrative officials, with hospitals being named after colonial figures.

Some notable hospitals included:

- The Victoria Hospital in Nahan, established in 1898, primarily for colonial officers and urban residents.
- The Mayo Dispensary in Paonta Sahib, which served British troops stationed in the region.

The Lord Lytton Memorial Hospital established in Rajgarh, focused on British civilians and their families.

These healthcare centres were crucial for providing basic medical services but were inaccessible to the majority of the rural population. The high cost of treatment and lack of outreach programs in rural areas further exacerbated the socio-economic divide in Sirmaur (Sirmaur State Gazetteer, 1934, p. 245).



Table 6: Hospitals Established by British in Sirmaur

Hospital Name	Location	Year of Establishment	Primary Beneficiaries
Victoria Hospital	Nahan	1898	Colonial officers, urban elites
Mayo Dispensary	Paonta Sahib	1902	British troops
Lord Lytton Memorial Hospital	Rajgarh	1905	British civilians

IV. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Colonial Policies and Their Socio-Economic Impact on Sirmaur reveal a complex interplay between colonial governance and local realities. The establishment of hospitals and schools, while beneficial to a segment of the population often perpetuated socio-economic disparities. Colonial authorities focused on creating institutions that served their interests, leading to a healthcare system that was largely inaccessible to the rural poor and an education system that primarily benefitted the elite. The administrative changes imposed by the British not only altered local governance structures but also marginalized traditional power holders, leading to resentment and discontent among the populace. The restructuring of land ownership patterns further compounded these issues, as small farmers lost their livelihoods and became increasingly dependent on larger landowners.

These colonial policies created a socio-economic environment marked by inequality, where wealth and resources were concentrated in the hands of a few while the majority remained disenfranchised. The legacies of these policies continue to affect the socio-economic landscape of Sirmaur today, highlighting the need for a nuanced understanding of historical processes in shaping contemporary realities.

The findings of this research underscore the importance of examining historical colonial policies in their specific regional contexts to fully appreciate their long-term socio-economic impacts.

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