

Jalal Bohier¹

Colonial system of control: convict labour in the prisons of the colonial Punjab

Abstract

This article discusses the institution of prisons and analyzes the role of convict labour in the colonial Punjab with the concepts of profit-oriented, reformation, and making inmates skillful. The colonial prison system represented was a nexus between the capitalist economic conception and the British bureaucratic system to utilize the free labour force from India. Furthermore, it served the broader purpose of limiting India's freedom by constructing a prison system identical to that of Britain in theory but not in fact. Prisons in colonial India were tasked with diverse responsibilities, such as social reform and rehabilitation. The jail system provided the labour for industries and was a source of manufactured goods, although the living conditions in colonial Punjab prisons were deplorable. This is not to say that the concept of imprisonment and the colonial jail system were ineffective, but the form that was used in the Indian subcontinent was never beneficial in terms of reformation and rehabilitation. Similarly, while other institutions built by British rulers in the West were quite effective in reforming and progressing society, the structure of the institutions failed to achieve the desired goals in the Indian Subcontinent. Because the modern jail system was adopted globally by both the West and the Far East, it had to be understood as a global phenomenon. Convicts sentenced to labour were the primary objective of prison administration for productivity and for the advantage of the British government. Convict labour in the colonial Punjab has historically been understudied, which can provide us an understanding of the British colonial system and its history. There is a plethora of information available on the convicts of various provinces of colonial India but Punjab is not generally focused upon.

Key words: colonial, prisons, convict labour, Punjab, prison system.

Introduction

For Ania Loomba, colonialism is a process of constructing or re-forming existing communities in an area, and it involved a wide range of acts such as commerce, settlement, pillage, negotiation, conflict, genocide, and enslavement etc. Under this reality, she describes colonialism as the acquisition and control of other people's territory and goods, a very clear and straightforward definition of colonialism but very effective in case of British conception and development of colonialism in the Indian subcontinent. This colonial concept is used to comprehend the essence of colonialism in India.¹ British colonialism in India resulted in profound changes in all aspects of Indians life. Indian legal and judicial systems, including the prison system, were rebuilt and reshaped by the British authorities. Nonetheless, jails in British India were more than just locations for criminals to be reformed; colonial rulers profited from India's labour supply, and prisons could provide them with a massive work force. Indeed, colonial prisons around the world were administered for profit, particularly in the eighteenth century.² The term colonial system of control refers to the management of a large number of people by a strategy of either keeping them behind walls or controlling the masses in various ways—mind, body, land, and culture.

British authorities evolved a number of strategies to govern the masses through direct or indirect evolutionary processes.³ The jail system was used to govern and enslave the colonized people. A "prison," as defined by the Prison Act of 1894, is any jail or site used temporarily or permanently for the holding of inmates under the general or particular commands of a Local Government.⁴ The establishment of prisons was one of the most significant infrastructural modifications brought about by British authorities in nineteenth-century India. The creation of the British colonial prison, informed by the extension of liberal political thought into the colony, introduced India to a radically new system of punishment predicated on long-term incarceration.⁵ This was a new step towards colonial control, and there are examples from other continents that exhibit a similar approach to prisons and colonial rule. Prison walls, according to Viviane Saleh-Hanna in his book "*Colonial Systems of Control*," are more than just walls for confinement; they are statements of disregard and dehumanization; they are precursors of

¹ Principle author: Jalal Bohier, PhD Scholar, University of the Punjab. Email: jalalbohierdashti@gamil.com

myth and fear; and, most importantly, they are clear and concrete representations of inhumanity. With this, Saleh-Hanna viewed jail as a beast in which inmates struggle to survive. Similarly, it is now considered that the absence of European norms of justice and control in Africa (or anyplace else in the world) denotes incivility and violence. Aside from white institutions' faulty but assumed superiority, research has shown that European enslavement, colonialism, and now the criminal system are violent, spiteful, and exploitative organizations. To put an end to penal colonialism, it is vital to look at who is most prone to oppression: groups that have already been colonized and enslaved by Europeans are the most vulnerable to penal colonialism.⁶This demonstrates the failure of the jail system imposed by European powers on other continents, including Africa, America, and Asia.

Although convict labour is an ancient phenomenon, Indian rulers had very less utilized imprisonment as a broad form of punishment prior to the arrival of the British; only a few jails throughout India were used to keep aristocrats and criminals awaiting trials.⁷ The East India Company took control of India after the Battle of Plassey in 1757. According to historians of the colonial period, the Battle of Plassey was a watershed moment for the East India Company, which was uninterested in Indian social concerns and focused solely on trade.⁸ The East India Company, like other institutions, established a jail department in the areas where it had power from 1757 to 1858. Under East India Company administration, 143 civil jails, 75 criminal jails, and 68 mixed jails with a total capacity of 75,100 were built.⁹ Lord Macaulay's advice in 1835 that incarceration be employed in the majority of instances represented British reformers' belief that deprivation of liberty was preferable to lethal punishment.¹⁰ Throughout the Colonial period, prison administrative norms were fashioned and remade to meet the needs of the colonial state, and prisoners were pressed in the name of discipline via prison labour. In India, the concept of reformation was publicly promoted, but it was never fully implemented within prisons. In 1838, 1864, 1877, and 1919-1920¹⁴, committees were formed to investigate Indian prison systems and procedures. Their recommendations centered on jail size, prison conditions, prison management, and inmate classification.¹¹The 1919 committee's report featured the first recommendation in Indian history to make rehabilitation a formal priority of prison administration.

The colonial powers' principal objective in Indian prisons was the convict labour. According to the records of the Government of India Home Department, the fundamental reason behind the construction of the jail system in India was to discipline the labour, as all expenditures were met by prison industry earnings.¹²In the beginning, prisoners' labour was allocated among them based on their castes and religion. As a result, the Prison Reform Committee of 1836 advised that lower caste convicts with occupations such as barbers, washermen, and sweepers continue to work in prison for the benefit of other prisoners and the prison economy. Later, this pattern was abandoned, and new prison classifications were established, such as military inmates or prisoners of war, political prisoners, educated prisoners, and illiterate prisoners. This new method was also used to invent and build an elite class through the jail system.¹³ The British government focused the most on agriculture labour in Indian prisons; 72 percent of India was associated with the occupation of agriculture, and every year the convicts sentenced with labour, 57 percent of whom were from the agriculture profession; as a result, it was mentioned in all jail committees to make agricultural industries more stable in Indian prisons.¹⁴

An Overview of Convicts Labour and its Impacts on India

The justifications provided by the British Government in the Reports on the Indian Jails Committee 1919 were numerous and far from practical; the first agenda of gaining economic profit was a viable idea, and according to prison administration records, they were somewhat successful in it, but the second agenda of reformation through hard labour was unsuitable because work assigned for economic gain could never reform the inmates, whether intra-murals or extra-murals.¹⁵ Despite the fact that they were not sentenced to labour, there were provisions in the legislation that enabled short-term offenders to perform manual labour inside the prison. Because of the harmful consequences of hard labour on convicts' bodies and minds, they were unable to engage in any productive activity after being freed from prisons.¹⁶A variety of regulations have been enacted to regulate labour and manufacturing in prisons. One example is Section 53 of the Indian Penal Code, which states that every citizen and convict is required to follow the law.¹⁷The purpose of the hard or soft labour in the prisons of colonial India was presented by the British authorities in three different categories: to supply jail needs, to supply government demands, and to provide prisoners with training in industries useful to themselves. This is why the inmates were taught carpentry, black smithy, tinning, painting, wool and cotton spinning, weaving, blanket making, tailoring, brick-making and laying, masonry, and other building activities. Some of the prisoners, on the other hand, were agriculturalists, and each

prison had a field where they could cultivate vegetables and other eatables for their nutrition in prison. Another job was taming the animals and increasing their output; jail officials created dairy farms near the jails where offenders worked as part of their punishment.¹⁸ These organizations also supply milk for the convicts' diets as well as animal husbandry training for those who work with animals. The jail tasks and work varied by province, since the British government employed and built factories based on the products available in each province. However, a jail incharge in Bengal stated that the British imprisonment of her Indian citizen was justified in three ways: punishment of crime and protection of society, reformation of offenders, and payback of prison expenditures from the prison business.¹⁹

Imprisonment by labour has been used for a long time, but the complete form of hard labour was introduced by colonial masters with a separate philosophical approach to control and an economic perspective. According to Lieut-Colonel F. A. Barker, 90 percent of prisoners in Indian jails were imprisoned with "hard Labour." The phrase "hard labour" has also been used in various ways because the British government had never specified the bounds of hard labour. In practice, the phrase refers to any employment that is given after imprisonment, whether physical or in any other way, within or outside of the jail's facilities.²⁰ The philosophical approach was very clear, to reform and correct the criminals and make sure them that the hardness and difficulties in the prisons are very hard to be followed and the main agenda was not of productive labour. The second and important pattern was to make the prisoners skillful to earn a living after completion of term of imprisonment. The corruption and bureaucratic setup changed the nature and main agenda of the hard labour in Indian jails. Extramural labour was included in the jail committee report of 1838 as part of the hard labour, and inmates were taken to work on government buildings, roads, and other massive works. The issue of extramural labour was not addressed seriously in the jail committee report of 1864. The prison conference on Indian Jails in 1877 addressed the issue of employing inmates on huge public works projects. This system of extramural labour was demonised in the committee report of 1889. "So complicated are the conditions which influence the capacity of mixed gangs of prisoners to perform heavy earth work under a hot sun, that we are convinced that the most careful and intelligent supervision will fail to keep them healthy or to justify their employment from an economical point of view."²¹

These all were the intentions of the British authorities and the prison administration to form a society like they wanted to form with the prison system, another aspect was promoted by the historiographers of the colonial prisons which shows an alternative approach towards both the hard and soft labour. As Abigail McGwon claimed and presented carpet waving a big business which was centered around the jails of the colonial India. Carpeting waving was very effective for Indians because it could be done without high technology and need a high labour intensive. Those carpet designs which were manufactured in prisons of Colonial India were presented in the Great Exhibition in London. Jail factories employed historic styles and traditional dyes to capture markets, building on India's artisanal heritage to secure a toehold in the competitive global economy; by putting convicts to work on carpets, jails also sought to train a new generation of disciplined artisanal labour, capable of contributing to economic growth after leaving prison. The carpet waving was more popular in Western India, especially Bombay but it was done in Punjab and other provinces at a large scale. This was a step towards the formation of the capitalist economy.²²

The convict labour technique was applied differently in each case, and it also relies on the length of imprisonment. Long-term incarcerated prisoners were always placed on the labour list since it was difficult to effectively train them in a short period of time. Agriculture and unskilled labour were used as short-term punishment labour. Intramural labour was established by a committee recommendation in 1886, on which all committee members agreed. Some prison specialists argue that this was not a novel notion or recommendation, but rather that the same technique was in use in jails around the world; the sort of labour assigned to inmates was satisfactory, but the consequences were out of date, inefficient, and slow. Another significant issue existed in which the business and elite class were concerned that if large machinery and other equipment were installed within the jails, this would have an impact on the markets and private enterprise. A committee was formed to consider the reservations, and it was determined that a system that would not damage the private enterprises operating in the region should be implemented. With this aim, the jail reports stated that the labour work in the jail was ineffective and unproductive. With this in mind, the committee recommended that the labour term be kept as short as possible, and that unskilled and educational labour be avoided; this also affects the inmates' extra-legal activities.²³

The intra-mural employment of convicts was initially rife with abuse, prompting Lord Macaulay's Prison Discipline Committee of 1838 to recommend the cessation of out-of-door work and the general introduction of in-

door labour in dull, wearisome, monotonous tasks, the obvious intention of which was to inflict as much pain as could be borne without injury to health, which latter condition, however, no great pains were taken to gauge or measure. Tread wheels and cranks, among other experimental approaches, were tried but failed and were immediately abandoned. At the time, the idea of making prisons a source of fear for evildoers by uncompromising harshness was in full swing, as was reformation in general. The articles exhibited were cotton, cloths, carpets, blankets, horse clothing, gunny cloth, paper, carpentry, iron works, bricks and tiles, bamboo and reed fabrics, pottery, shoes, and a few other articles. With a few exceptions the exhibits were the ordinary manufactures of the prisoners, the exceptions being fabrics of finer qualities, specially made as samples of the skill attained by some convict workmen, but for which there was no local sale.²⁴

Similarly, while writing notes on the prison ethics and prison labour, F. J. Mouat noted that the prison labour as an instrument of punishment, reformation, and profit, is now taken by the prison authorities in this country, under legislative sanction and the able direction of Sir Edmund Du Cane, it seems to me to be desirable to place on record the reasons why I have long considered it to be the most rational, humane, and effective system of punishing and preventing crime which has yet been put in practice. As a result, the remedy of this state appeared to me to be forced labour, and I quickly realized that maintaining discipline was strictly consistent with the turning of jails into industrial schools. In my opinion, the teaching of handicrafts and the formation of industrial habits, supplemented by a humane and judicious system of rewards and punishments, constitute the best and soundest measure of reformation in a country where religious influences cannot be used as a tool of character and conduct correction.²⁵

It was freely stated by some prison officers that the day-to-day running of prisons was largely out of their control and 'almost entirely in the hands of the convicts' themselves. In the absence of trained supervisory staff and with senior prison officers weighed down with paperwork and administrative duties, the internal management of the prison was mainly left to ill-paid and corrupt subordinates—or to warders drawn from the convict population. The practice of using prisoners to run the jails began in Malaya early in the century, and, because it was economical rather than because it was efficient, soon spread to Bengal and the rest of India. Convict officers served as overseers on work gangs or in jail workshops and as night watchmen in the prison wards or barracks. They were rewarded with special privileges (such as being allowed to smoke when possession of tobacco was forbidden to other inmates).²⁶

On the other hand, the principles that should regulate the prison industry as a tool of punishment, reformation, and profit were indicated in Lieut-Colonel F. A. Barker's report to the Government on the exhibition, and I followed them up, as far as the means at my command permitted, throughout the remainder of my tenure in office. They were that convict labour should be penal, profitable, and reformatory; that it should be strictly intramural work, controlled and directed by special officers; that every prisoner sentenced to labour should be made to repay to the state as much as was practicable in each case of the cost of his punishment in jail; and that prisons should be used as much as possible as schools of industry, without any relaxation of the justifiable severity of discipline, and as many combinations as possible. This statement and proposals are from an ex-Inspector-General of Prisons, C.P. and Punjab, who has advocated for useful labour as well as prison reform.²⁷

Discussion on the Convicts Labour in the Punjab Province

In colonial India, colonial power and the jail system were mutually exclusive; the prisons' principal duty was to govern and enslave the population. This was the reason that jails were built in each district. In each province, there were two types of large jails called "central jail" and "district jail," and their numbers fluctuated according to the number of detainees. The Punjab Prisons Department was established in 1854 to oversee the custody, care, and management of prisoners incarcerated in Punjab's numerous central, district, and special jails. Dr. C. Hathaway was appointed as the country's first Inspector General of Prisons (IG). The colonial master employed the same tactics of confinement in the Punjab province prisons, with the main goal of converting the prisons into enterprises. Almost all inmates were sentenced to labour, and according to Punjab Administration data, 90 percent of criminals were sentenced to labour throughout the first part of the nineteenth century. The Central Jail of Gujranwala was built in 1854, the Jhelum district Jail in 1854, the district jail of Rajanpur was established in 1860, the district jail of Sialkot was established in 1865, the district jail of Shahpur district was established in 1873, the Faisalabad district jail was also established in the same year, and the Bristol Institution and Juvenile Bahawalpur was established in 1882.²⁸

These all the developments in prison system were not mere coincidences but all the events and activities were planned to impose the colonial rule in India.

Manufactures and labour activities in the Punjab prisons

Prisons in Punjab province were also quite effective in producing free labour for the British administration of India. The jail labour circumstances in the Punjab region were different since they completely ignored high-power and instead focused on small companies. This scheme was designed to assist inmates in preparing for a future source of income, but it was only one of several ideas offered by the jail administration to justify the use of convict labour in prison operations. There were extremely few examples of offenders initiating any work that they have been conducting under the supervision of the jail administration. In Punjab province, there were only 34 jails in the first half of the nineteenth century.²⁹ The bulk of the prisons were overcrowded, with the most packed being in the Dera Ghazi Khan, Shahpur, Jhelum, and Rawalpindi. Unlike in other areas of British India, work in Punjab was separated into criminals sentenced to labour. Prison officers, prison servants, gardening, preparing products for consumption in jails, jail maintenance, and manufacturing were among the tasks allocated to them (lithographic printing, making paper, and canal construction). According to jail records, the majority of people imprisoned worked in agriculture. Agriculture was the past occupation of more than half of the offenders from 1885 to 1947. Cotton was used to manufacture a variety of items such as Dosuti, Gahra, Newar, Tape, Ropes, and Dusters. Tents, paper, binding, printing, mates, squeezed mustard oil, farm arsenal and hay, and salt extraction from Khewra salt mines were among the numerous items created in Punjab Province jails.³⁰ After the establishment of the prisons in the Punjab Province in 1854, a system of Jail manufacturing and production was initiated from the beginning and according to the "Administration Report of 1856" the total earning the prisons of the Punjab were Rs. 21,942 the articles which were made by the prisoners were Tents, Ruges, Carpets, Scarfs, Cashmeer, Shawals, Lithographic Printing and several others. In 1857, which is a remembered for the great event of "*War of Independence*" the prisons manufactures increased despite of War and several prisons were broken by Indigenous soldiers along with the mutineers.³¹ During 1857 in the Punjab province the earning from the jail labour was 978, 12 which was higher than the 1856 prison earnings. Almost every year the earning on the prison labour increased throughout the colonial rule in the Punjab province.³²

Transforming the prisons in Punjab towards profitable instructions were given when in 1862 when the earning of the prisons fallen 5% the Inspector General (IG) gave instructions to the prison Superintendents to initiate system and modes of labour through which the earning of prisons be higher.³³ The jails were considered as manufacturing factories that some of the firms used to order jail manufacturing products as an order was received in Lahore jails to manufacture carpets which was executed the order was given by the a group in London.

Comparatively, initially, the Punjab province jail manufacturing business was in disarray. The Lahore Central Jail contained a printing press, although it employed the lithographic process, which had long been abandoned in other provinces. Another lithographic press was housed in the Peshawar jail, where traditional papermaking methods were used. The 1919-1920 commission discovered that no intelligent type of productive labour was being used in the Punjab region. Some outdated practices were discontinued and new manufacturing procedures were established as a result of the committee's recommendations. Due to the overwhelming development of cotton in Punjab, the prison administration established cotton and textile enterprises in the province's district and central jails. The jail department in the Punjab region of Ludhiana, on the other hand, became self-sufficient and self-supporting with its textile mills, which was judged advantageous to the liberated inmates. When the Multan Central Jail was built, it was decided that pedal looms would be used instead of high-power technology or modern machines. This was a tremendous initiative because the textile products were excellent, and it also offered ongoing employment for inmates.³¹

One of the harsh labours which were assigned to the convict labours was of construction and cleaning of the canals in the Punjab province. The most important canal built in during the second half of the nineteenth century was built with free labour was the Chenawan Canal which was completed in 1888.³² Every year some specific prisoners were employed on construction of the canals and every year the number of prisoners varied as roundabout 500 labours used to work on it and after construction more than 100 prisoners were employed for clearing the canal slits. Later, it was revealed that convicts who worked extra-mural labour, notably those who built roads and canals,

suffered from a range of health issues. Working in the hot sun was incredibly arduous, and many inmates died as a result. The medical officer of the prisons proposed to the jail committee in 1919-1920 that extramural labour for inmates be abolished since it is difficult to offer medical attention to every prisoner in an emergency. In this regard, the jail committee outlawed extramural activities and prison labour, which were limited to paper work, although the convicts were nevertheless sent to work outside despite these recommendations. The Punjab three jails, Borstal institution and the N.W.F.P new central jail at Haripur were built without prison labour.³³

The prisoners of Punjab were also employed with in the confinement of the jails for the maintenance of the jail buildings and other similar labour works. This also provided the jail administration with free labour to build lengthy and huge facilities in order to maintain their colonial dominance. The lower classes contributed to the formation and continuation of colonial power in a number of ways, but the participation of the labour class or subaltern class has never been praised, and history is silent on the matter when portraying the colonial era in India.

Transportation of prisoners for labour from the prisons of the Punjab province

Transportation system of convicts, which was adopted in India in the late nineteenth century, took root in the growing colonial penal culture of the early nineteenth century and flourished because colonial authorities saw it as an especially fitting punishment mechanism for Indian society and culture. Anand A. Yang, for example, saw prisoner labour as a sort of migration from one region to another, mentioning that Indian inmates were transformed to Southeast Asian countries throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. The transfer of criminals from South Asia to Southeast Asia is on a much smaller scale and is significantly less well-known. Between 1787 and 1825, India sent 4,000-6,000 convicts to Bengkulu, and 15,000 to the Straits Settlements between 1790 and 1860. Between 1849 and 1873, another 1,000-1,500 people were transferred from Ceylon to Malacca in the Straits Settlements, and several thousand more were taken to Burma and other parts of Southeast Asia, primarily Mauritius between 1815 and 1837 and the Andaman Islands after 1857. Furthermore, Yang analyzed the historical viewpoint of prisons, claiming that transportation for labour to other countries and areas was the second most important punishment after imprisonment.³⁴

The transportation of inmates was not only limited to labour employment, but convicts from India and the colonial Punjab were also transferred for other purposes. According to Radika Singha, the government of India was compelled to bypass or collapse of the jurisdictional and normative barriers it maintained between one way of introducing workers to the labour process and another due to the war's manpower needs. The subject covered here is the deployment of prison labour to Mesopotamia. Extramural employment of detainees was permitted under Section 55 of the Indian Prisons Act of 1894, but only in the province where they were imprisoned. The British administration had never abided by the law they had enacted for the Indian subcontinent. It was especially common in the case of prison acts because it was forbidden to transport the convicts' labours to any other province or colony. This violation of the law has been noticed in all provinces, particularly in the Punjab province's prisons.³⁵

The transportation of convict labour was done at a high level in Punjab prisons. Inmates were taken to various places for labour, with 147 prisoners convicted to transportation being transported to Andaman in 1889.³⁶ In 1890, there were 353 transportation inmates, with 205 males and 31 females serving life sentences and 102 males and 15 females serving term sentences. 92 of them were taken to the island of Andaman. This technique began in colonial India, and with the conquest of the Punjab area, it was implemented on a wide scale.³⁷ Thousands of criminals were sent to various parts of the world from 1854 through the 1940s, particularly during the two world wars.

Convict Labour, prison earning and expenditure in the prisons of the colonial Punjab

To evaluate the available data on convict employment, prison earnings, and colonial India's expenditure, a comparative technique is applied. Statistics from 1885 to 1890 are used to understand the situation and condition of convict employment in colonial Punjab jails for five years.³⁸ From the start, the number of inmates sentenced to labour in colonial Punjab prisons was unusually high and every year it increased rather than decrease, this also shows the failure of the prison system and discipline in the Punjab province, if the colonial system was effective there would not have usual increase in the number of prisons of the Punjab province. The number of the convicts

employed in the jails was very high, as mentioned in the annual Punjab Jail Report of 1914 was 13350 and they used to do different types of labour works in different jails, among them 910 were working on the jail buildings and other 7324 were working for productive labour and rest of them were on leave for different reasons. Further, the report mention that the percentage of the of convict labour increased from 54 percent to 55 percent from 1914 to 1915.³⁹

Table: 1

Year	Total number of convicts	Convicts under sentence of labour	Expenditures in the jails of Punjab	Net cash earnings
1885	19470	10,201	6,22,117	167691
1886	21707	12300	6,33,335	1,78,989
1887	22470	12010	7,01,836	1,30, 549
1888	21,451	11,822	7,59,689	1,09748
1889	20195	12,072	7,36,075	1,10,221
1890	21,332	11,601	7,16,944	1,06,750 ⁴⁰

The data is collected from the annual jail reports of Punjab from 1885 to 1890.

A five-year comparison of prisoner conditions in four elements of colonial jails in the Punjab region is shown in the table above. Beginning in 1885, the total number of convicts grew throughout a five-year period. Similarly, there has been a minor increase in the number of labour convicts. On the other hand, the jail department's spending and earnings vary greatly during these five years, while prison labour makes money for the British government every year. Unpaid work is not included in these figures. Taking this into account, the revenues would be greater than the Punjab province's expenditure on jails. This information also demonstrates how the Colonial rulers used institutionalization to defeat the indigenous population. Institutions had existed for a very long time. This is not to say that institutions had a detrimental impact on society's development. The institutions that shaped colonial authority over the people of India in general and the people of Punjab in particular, are the key to suppressing the masses.

As the work force expanded in the twentieth century, so did the prisoner population, which was welcomed by the Punjab province prison administration. This was one of the ways used to boost the amount of free labour available for installation in government megaprojects. The records of the Punjab prisons' data on convict labour from 1915 to 1920 have been analyzed to understand the prison conditions and convict labour life.⁴¹

Table: 2

Year	Total number of convicts	Number of Labour convicts	Expenditure on jails	Earnings From the jail labour
1915	20,516	14,510	13,78,196	2,75,979
1916	16,901	15,182	13,67,711	2,36,876
1917	14,327	12,718	12,42,290	85,8386
1918	14,108	12,144	14,42,805	28,3006
1919	15,236	12860	17,14,313	4,02,017
1920	13,996	12247	18,27,603	3,60,776 ⁴²

The numbers in table 2 are relatively similar, although the number of detainees sentenced to labour has increased year after year. The facts in this table demonstrate that the expenditures of the jails in prison were very high, which included all of the expanses along with prison administration wages and other activities undertaken in the Punjab province's jails. A very small amount was taken into the convicts' regular use. Convict Labour, prison earning and expenditure in the prisons of the colonial Punjab data is only presented for ten years because this era is very important for understanding the convict labor, from 1885 to 1890 major public works were done by the convict labours and the period from 1915 to 1920 is important when Punjab territory was separated from North Frontier Western Provinces and this was the time that the Indian politicians

Conclusion

One of the most significant infrastructure changes brought about by British control in nineteenth-century India was prison construction. It pioneered a whole new system of punishment in India, focused on long-term incarceration. The main goal of these institutions was to punish offenders by establishing a strict legal system centered on remunerative labour. The British authorities researched Indians in prisons from a medical, anthropological, and, most crucially, labour standpoint. Convict labour was employed as a tactic for controlling a colony's masses. The prisons in Punjab province mirrored European-American models, but their functional operations indicated a uniquely colonial manner of control. Convicts condemned to labour were assigned to a variety of activities in the Punjab region, including prison officers, prison staff, gardening, preparing products for consumption in prisoners, jail upkeep, and manufacturing (lithographic printing, making paper, and canal construction). There existed a law that allowed prisoners to be transported to other states and colonies for labour service, but it was eventually repealed. With these actions, the British government could assert its civilizational superiority by claiming that using convicts as labour in the name of reformation was not part of the civilizing mission. To mobilize a scarce labour force, the British government established a system of forced labour. The concept of reformation or deterrence revolves around this type of work, which contributed significantly to the economy throughout the colonial period. As a result, the British jail system was not just a place for criminals to be imprisoned but also an industry that generated revenue for the British government of India. The same prison system is still in use in both India and Pakistan, and the prisons are now venues for corruption because the system that the British built was for their own purposes. The prison system in both Pakistan and India requires a new paradigm.

References

- ¹Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/postcolonialism*, (London, Routledge, 2007), 2.
- ²Dimpy Das and Barnali Sarma, "Prison labour in colonial India: A case study of Assam," *Space and Culture, India* 8, no. 1 (2020): 91-100.
- ³Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on colonialism*, (New York, New York University Press, 2001), 1-1.
- ⁴The Prison Act of 1894, Home Department of the Government of India, (22nd March, 1894), 1.
- ⁵Mira Rai Waits, "Imperial vision, colonial prisons: British jails in Bengal, 1823-73," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 77, no. 2 (2018): 146-167.
- ⁶Viviane Saleh-Hanna, *Colonial systems of control: Criminal justice in Nigeria*. (Ottawa, University of Ottawa Press, 2008), 1-5.
- ⁷C. S Mallaiah, "Development of Prison Administration in India," *Social Defence* 17, no. 67 (1982): 35-45.
- ⁸E O'Ballance, "The battle of Plassey, 1757," *Royal United Services Institution. Journal* 102, no. 607 (1957): 363-371.
- ⁹John William Kaye, *The administration of the East India Company: a history of Indian progress*, (Richard Bentley, 1853).
- ¹⁰Cohn, Bernard. "Colonialism and its forms of knowledge: The British in India." In *The New Imperial Histories Reader*, pp. 117-124. Routledge, 2020.
- ¹¹Lieut-Colonel F. A. Barker, *The modern Prison System of India: a report to the department*, (London, Macmillan and Co, 1944), 26-31.
- ¹²Ibid.
- ¹³Ibid.
- ¹⁴A. Puvi Lakshmi, "Status of Women Prisoners in India." *Afro Asian Journal of Anthropology and Social Policy* 8, no. 1 (2017): 22-34.
- ¹⁵B. K Nagla, "Prison Administration in India." *Indian Journal of Public Administration* 35, no. 4 (1989): 1011-1021.
- ¹⁶Report on the Administration of the Punjab and its Dependencies, Lahore, Punjab government press, (1889), 67.
- ¹⁷Ibid.
- ¹⁸Lieut-Colonel F. A. Barker, *The modern Prison System of India: a report to the department*, (London, Macmillan and Co, 1944), 26-31.
- ¹⁹Report of the jail Committee 1836, Calcutta, Government of India, 1838, 100-110.

- ²⁰Charles C Cox and E. Meiners Roger, "Private Employment of Prison Labour," *Journal of Private Enterprise* 17, no. 1 (2001): 1-51.
- ²¹David Arnold, "Labouring for the Raj: Convict Work Regimes in Colonial India, 1836–1939" In *Global Convict Labour*, (London, Brill, 2015)197-221.
- ²²Martin B Miller, "At hard labour: Rediscovering the 19th century prison," *Issues Criminology* 9 (1974): 91.
- ²³Macaulay, Thomas Babington Macaulay Baron. *The Indian Penal Code, as Originally Framed in 1837*. Higginbotham, (1888), 53.
- ²⁴Lieut-Colonel F. A. Barker, *The modern Prison System of India: a report to the department*, (London, Macmillan and Co, 1944), 26-31.
- ²⁵*Ibid.*
- ²⁶*Ibid.*
- ²⁷*Ibid.*
- ²⁸Abigail McGowan, "Convict Carpets: Jails and the Revival of Historic Carpet Design in Colonial India," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 72, no. 2 (2013): 391-416.
- ²⁹Lieut-Colonel F. A. Barker, *The modern Prison System of India: a report to the department*, (London, Macmillan and Co, 1944), 26-31.
- ³⁰*Ibid.*
- ³¹*Ibid.*
- ³²*Ibid.*
- ³³<https://prisons.punjab.gov.pk/history>.
- ³⁴Report on the Administration of the Punjab and its Dependencies, Lahore, Punjab government press, (1900), 65-68.
- ³⁵Report on the administration of Jails in the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab government press, (1921), 12-13.
- ³⁶Indian Jail Committee, "Report of the Indian jails Committee, 1919-1920, Vol. I: Report and appendices." (1920), 100-110.
- ³⁷Anand A Yang, "Indian convict workers in Southeast Asia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries." *Journal of World History* (2003): 179-208.
- ³⁸Radhika Singha, "Finding Labour from India for the War in Iraq: The Jail Porter and Labour Corps, 1916–1920." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 49, no. 2 (2007): 412-445.
- ³⁹Report on the Administration of the Punjab and its Dependencies, Lahore, Punjab government press, (1889), 67.
- ⁴⁰Report on the Administration of the Punjab and its Dependencies, Lahore, Punjab government press, (1885- 1890).
- ⁴¹Report on the administration of Jails in the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab government press, (1915-1920).