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**Early Challenges of Pakistan and Response of Punjab Legislative Assembly and 1947-55: A Reappraisal\*\***

**Abstract**

*The study throws light on the working of the institution of the PLA that despite all issues and Challenges PLA gave a good account to improve social and economic structure. A number of policies and programs were introduced to improve education status, providing health facilities. Special attention was paid to improve the economic structure of the province by establishing industries on large and small scales in different cities. In spite of various flaws in the working of the institutions and administration, but the Province progressed economically, socially, and agriculturally.*

**Key Words:** Challenges, Acts, legislation, education, refugees

Today five primary institutions of Pakistan namely legislature, bureaucracy, judiciary, military, and media are playing important role in the smooth running of the Government machinery. The legislature is one of the indispensable pillars of the State to supervise the smooth functioning of the State matters. The working of the Punjab Legislative Assembly is analyzed by focusing on the province of Punjab which seems to have dominated the political fabric of Pakistan. Exploring and analyzing the history of the Punjab legislature one can understand what will be the dynamics of Pakistani politics in the future. After independence Punjab Assembly made many important contributions including settlement of refugees with little resources, allotment of evacuee property, peace maintenance, health and education issues, promoting industry and means of earning were main issues of that time. It also succeeded to reorganize the life of the Province and develop the field of education, health, road communication, and other public works and economy of the Province to some extent. It legislates on the subjects that come in the provincial list or come under the jurisdiction of PA but sometimes PA took up issues that did not come under the direct control of PA but related to public importance. Sometimes Central Government ignored matters of public importance consciously and unconsciously that happened in the province. To depict the political, social, economic picture of Punjab after partition and to

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examine the measures taken by Punjab Legislative Assembly is the objective of the study. Books, articles are used as secondary sources and Assembly debates and Government annual reports are used as primary sources. This study will make in-depth analysis of the working of the institution of Punjab legislative assembly as it faces a burden of refugees with little resources and diminishing machinery when the central government and Sind government were not cooperating with Punjab on refugee issues. Working of the assembly is discussed under these points.

### **Industrial Development**

The area which forms present Punjab made very little industrial progress under British rule. At the time of partition it had, all told not more than 800 registered factories, mostly seasonally operating units of cotton ginning, rice husks; flour grinding, ice manufacturing, and so forth, employing in all about 75,000 persons. About 90 percent of even this small number closed down in August 1947 when their Sikh and Hindu owners migrated to India the immigration of non-Muslim bankers and financiers, the sudden deterioration in the supply of electricity, and the loss of markets in India also dealt a heavy blow to the flourishing small scale and cottage industries which had established themselves in towns of Lahore, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Wazirabad, Nizamabad, Gujrat, etc.

### **Thal Development**

Punjab Legislative Assembly enacted a law in July 1949, The Thal Development Act<sup>1</sup> for the constitution of a public corporation to start on its own development of Thal and carry the process to the point at which settlers would feel attracted to take it up. The Public corporation named the Thal development Authority was constituted on August 29, 1949, and given powers not only of operating on Government land but also of acquiring privately owned lands in Thal to develop the area as a whole.

### **Five Year Plan**

The pace of industrial progress in Punjab could have been more rapid than it has been during the six years under review. But for several initial difficulties like the shyness of private capital, shortage of power, and paucity of experienced and technical personnel. A considerable amount of investigation, planning, and preparation has, however, been done during recent years and the ground has been prepared for quicker and concrete results in the future, a "Five Year Plan<sup>2</sup>" was prepared in 1951 to inaugurate an intergraded program of industrial development. The plan provides the setting up of over 70 factories at an estimated cost of Rs. 40 crores.

### **Cotton Textile Industry**

The textile industry occupies a key position in the economy of this province since 1947<sup>3</sup>. During the initial six years, the industry has made remarkable progress. Out of 2.5 million spindles as the total target for the whole of the country during the first ten years, the share of Punjab at present stands at 650,000 spindles.

### **New Mills**

Three large cotton textile mills have already been set up since partition by private enterprises at Lyallpur, Multan, and Rawalpindi.<sup>4</sup> Another seven mills are now

being set up under public or semipublic control. Plants for these have already arrived and are being installed. Construction work for the factory building, staff quarters, road, railway siding, etc., is proceeding in a brisk space. Lyallpur was declared an industrial zone in the 1950s by the Government of Pakistan and the province started development and expansion in the industry particularly in textiles and textile-related industries. By the blessing of time, the province got a noteworthy heighten since tax holiday was declared by the Government for new factories. Nearly all eminent and most significant textile industries Crescent Mills, Kohinoor Textiles, Nishat Mills, Zeenat textile industry, Premier cloth industry, and Rehmannia textile mills were also founded flourished at the same time.

#### **Handloom Small-scale industry**

In Punjab, handloom weavers increased significantly after independence. 150,000 numbers of handlooms were approximately installed. In the session of the assembly, Syed Ali Hussain Shah Gerdizi Minister of Industries mentions about the annual expenditure of wool by handloom workers was 472,800,000 lbs.<sup>5</sup>In 1952 by the Punjab industries Department to ensure and regular cheap supply of wool to these weavers' plan of the Central Government was all set and through the industrial Co-operative Bank was now being implemented. Through the medium of co-operatives, the step was also taken to arrange cottage industry.

#### **Woolen textile industry**

Punjab produces 16,400,000lbs of wool per year but hardly any woolen mill existed in this part of undivided Punjab. Between 1947 and 1953 seven new medium and standard-sized woolen spinning and weaving mills have been set up in Punjab.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Iron and steel**

The following schemes for the development of the iron and steel industry are under consideration of the Central Government; -Setting up of two steel furnaces with billet mills 50 Lakhs. Setting up of two sheets rolling and wire drawing mill 50 Lakhs

#### **Surgical instruments**

As a result of the various measures adopted by Legislative Assembly, the output of surgical instruments manufactured at Sialkot has risen to above Rs. 15 lakhs a year as against 7 lakhs at the time of partition. Measures have also been taken to encourage the use of indigenous surgical instruments in the public health institutions

#### **Tanning and Leather Goods Industries**

About two dozen new tanneries have been established in the province through private enterprise. Schemes are under consideration of the government for the establishment of two up-to-date tanneries with food wear factories attached to them as state-owned enterprises at an estimated cost of Rs. 2,800,000. The Punjab government has also established an institute of leather technology at Gujranwala.

### **Sports Goods Industry**

The sports goods industry of Sialkot exported sports goods valued at over Rs. 4.8 million during 1952. The sterling area accounting for nearly 80 % of the exports in terms of value was the largest buyer. A representative of this industry was sent to Japan in 1951 for training in silk gut manufacture. The industries department has a scheme for the registration of sports goods exporters in order to ensure the supply of standard goods to foreign customers. The department has also made arrangements for the continued supply of essential raw materials to sports goods manufacturers.

### **Rehabilitation of Refugees:**

The most gigantic of the problems which across for Punjab from partition one which really threatened to destroy all organize life in this province was the problem of the vast numbers of uprooted Muslim refugees from India seeking resettlement here. Women politicians and Members of the Punjab Legislative Assembly and higher middle-class people of the society of Lahore especially supported put the program activities for the integration, rehabilitation, and settlement of Refugees. <sup>7</sup> Governor Mudie, on 11th September 1948 West Punjab Government enacted the West Punjab Refugees (Registration of Land Claims) Ordinance 1948.<sup>8</sup>

### **Health Reforms**

Starting with a skeleton staff of doctors who made history by saving Punjab from cholera and smallpox during the fateful autumn of 1947 and nursing thousands of sick and wounded refugees back to life, the province has rapidly reconstructed an efficient organization of Health Services and laid sure foundations for future expansion.<sup>9</sup>

### **Labor Reforms**

Punjab Legislative Assembly in September constituted a Board, with the object of advising the Assembly's general on labor problems with particular emphasis on labor welfare, labor legislation, and the establishment of healthy industrial Relations between the Employees and employers. Among the progressive measures adopted by The Legislative assembly were promulgated of rules for the compulsory establishment of a canteen for workers in all industrial concerns employing more than 250 workers and establishment of labor welfare centers in a different industrial area of the province.

### **Trade Unions**

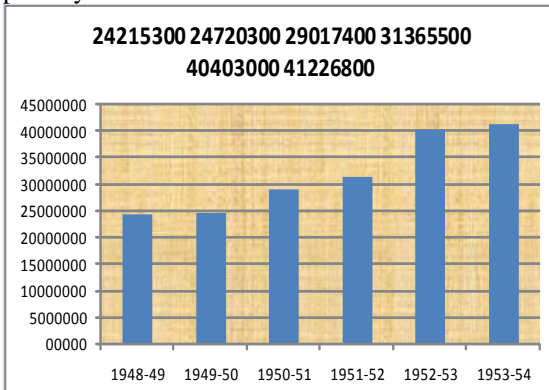
The right of association by the workers and forming trade unions is the keynote labor organization and Assembly encourages the formation and functioning of healthy trade unions. An increase in the membership and number and of trade unions as noticeable as a result of that policy Figure collected for the first five years bear this down out as shown below

Year	No of Unions	Membership
1948-49	72	100,802
1949-50	88	117,568

1950-51	109	126,599
1951-52	123	267,903
1951-53	128	271,930 <sup>10</sup>

### Education

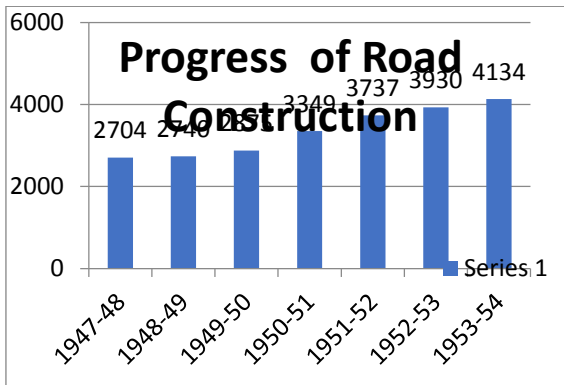
Before Partition the Budget of the Education Department during the year 1946-1947,<sup>11</sup> for 29 districts of undivided Punjab was a little less than 260 lacs. But in the period under study figure had risen by 412 lacs for the 16 districts of Punjab. This amounts to nearly one-fifth of total revenues of the province. Punjab legislative assembly undertook a scheme for the expansion of vernacular education and during 1949-54 1,800 new primary school was opened and 200 lower middle schools were raised to the middle standard. Their enrolment stands at 577,472 and 92,386 respectively. Assembly intends to continue this program of expansion at the rate of 300 primary school every year. Punjab Legislative assembly was considering ways and means of financing an accelerated program of expansion. It was decided in assembly that with effect from April 1, 1953 fees which were being levied in those areas where compulsion had been enforced have been abolished and primary education was free throughout the province.<sup>12</sup>



The Punjab A review *The First six years*, The Director Public relation Punjab, 1953. P. 19

### Building Roads and Transport

The Punjab Board transport was constituted by the Government under the Motor vehicle (Amendments) Act, 1951. It was decided that if any dispute arose between central and provincial Government in respect of any matter concerning fares and freights, no settlement is arrived by negotiation. The dispute shall be referred to the arbitration of the chief justice of the Federal court.<sup>13</sup> The operation of road transport has been a fruitful source of revenue for the province as with an approximate capital expenditure of Rs. 1 crore 93 lakhs the income was announced to more than Rs. 1 crore 40 lakhs up to the end of 1953-95.



The Punjab A review The First six years, The Director Public relation Punjab, 1954. P. 44

### Evacuee Property

For the maintenance of evacuee property, PLA time to time introduced bills, acts, and ordinances. On 23 September 1947 by the West Punjab government Act was issued the “Administration of Evacuee Property Act”. This was followed by the “West Punjab Protection of Evacuee Property Ordinance” which defined 'Evacuee Property' as property of any kind in West Punjab, owing to the turmoil, the owner in person cannot take delivery or manage, or inhabit from the place of leave, or in the case of a conglomerate property which forms the possessions of any undertaking or business which has ceased partially or wholly to activate due to the said turbulence.<sup>14</sup>Whereas notification the legal title to the possessions 'evacuees', published in the Punjab Gazette by the West Punjab government.

Appointment of Custodian, Additional Custodian, Deputy, and Assistant Custodian was discussed in the Act. The powers of vesting of evacuee property and to assume possession were given to the Custodians in that Act. In cases of allotment, the rehabilitation authorities were supposed to ask for the Custodians and at the same time, the Custodian had the powers to treat unauthorized persons in possession of evacuee property as an intruder and hand out them with expulsion orders to vacate the property. The said Act also assisted the subject of the claims, recovery of rents, jurisdiction of the civil courts, transfer of evacuee property, restoration of property, etc.<sup>15</sup> provincial authorities were really helped by this Act to adjudicate speedily in cases about the protection of the evacuee property in West Punjab. The provincial government enacted the West Punjab Social and Economic Rehabilitation Act of 1948 to provide better facilities to the riot incapacitated refugees.<sup>16</sup> Under this Act, the provincial government was empowered to appoint Rehabilitation Commissioners, Deputy, and Assistant Rehabilitation Commissioners.<sup>17</sup>The Act also increased the duties and powers of the Rehabilitation Commissioners such as to reconstruct the disarticulation in the province.<sup>18</sup>

In the Assembly rival of the League, members were extremely critical about settlement and handling of refugees. C. E. Gibbon, a Christian Assembly Member, was remained honest in his condemnation. During 1954 about ruling

Punjab Muslim League leaders, Gibbon suspected that when the refugees claiming of their evacuee property, how some politicians he claimed were “taking the refugee rehabilitation and settlement for their benefit in their power politics. Every refugee was a vote for the ML. There were a big number of bogus claims who were not claiming genuinely as they had and they submitted false affidavit to prove their claims.”<sup>19</sup> Fazal Ilahi Paracha Minister of refugees and Rehabilitation shared the detail of evacuee property with the members of PLA.

### Legal Reforms

A bill for the amendment of the Goondas Act <sup>20</sup> was introduced in the Budget session of 1954 proposing the elimination of the representatives of the police from district tribunals that declared Goondas and impose restrictions on their movements.<sup>21</sup> The has been circulated for eliciting public opinion at the suggestion of the opposition. In order to guard against mala fida detention and undue curtailment of civil liberty, a bill was introduced to amend the Punjab public safety Act 1949<sup>22</sup> to give detents the right of representation to the Chief justice of Lahore High Court against the order of detention. In order to eradicate the habit of Opium smoking in Punjab, Punjab Assembly passed the Opium smoking Act 1953.<sup>23</sup>

### Agriculture Sector

Punjab Legislative Assembly took adequate steps for the development of Agricultural schemes. Agriculture provides the main occupation to the people of Punjab About 80 percent of the population consists of peasants. Of the total 37 miles acres over 20 miles acres in the province consist of cultivated land. As a result of these measures about 66,000 acres of virgin land were brought under cultivation during 1953-54. The total irrigation of the Punjab canal during Kharif 1953 rose to 7,51,629 acres against during Kharif 1952, while that for Rabi 1953-54 rose to 6,186, 145 acres against 5, 584,778 acres in Rabi 1952-53. The following table will show the comparative increase in area under Kharif and Rabi crops during the period under review.

Name of the crop	Acreege during Kharif 1952 Rabi 1952-53	Acreege during Kharif 1953 Rabi 1953-54	e	Inci
Jawar and Chari	Acres 1,188,70	Acres 1,220,13	7	31,60,124
Maize	348,506	409,276	8	124
Rice	687,599	812,194	5	394
Whea	3,349,43	3,743.73	4	9
t Gram	275,485	361,036	3	85,182
Miscellaneous	1,161,33	1,344,10	3	6

Source: The Punjab A Review of the First seven years 1954. P. 24  
Punjab Legislative Assembly passed Punjab conservation of useful cattle Act in 1952.<sup>24</sup> In the Assembly Punjab conservation (Restricted on exports) of cattle Bill.<sup>25</sup> Another Act was passed by the Assembly The Punjab conservation (Restricted on the slaughter of useful Animal (Amendments) Act, 1954<sup>26</sup> A ordinance for establishing a milk control Board of the province with special reference to Lahore city.

### **Hydro Electric Project**

Punjab faced a shortage of electricity in its early years but after some years Punjab was succeeded in increasing its output of electrical power from 10,000 kilowatts of partition to nearly 40,000 kilowatts. The Punjab Electricity (Emergency powers) Act, 1947<sup>27</sup> was passed by Punjab Legislative Assembly. Punjab has to prepare definite plans for progress. The Punjab electricity (emergency power) (control of supply) Act, passed by the Punjab Legislative Assembly in 1949. The most important source of supply which was in prospects was the proposed Hydropower station at Mianwali.<sup>28</sup> installation of a new boiler.

### **Jail Reforms**

The committee after thoroughly examining the prevalent conditions and administration of jails and considering suggestions advanced by persons representing different departments of administration as well as the general public submitted an exhaustive report containing 118 important recommendations most of which have subsequently been approved by the Punjab Legislative Assembly. After the introduction of jail reforms, the prisoners are treated as men who have been temporarily led astray by the force of circumstance, citizens of a sovereign state. The rules that were derogatory to human dignity have also been repealed.

### **Legislation for the cleaning the body (Anti-Corruption)**

The Anti-Corruption Department has been strengthened with a view to making its work more effective, since its inception in 1949 the department dealt with 588 cases against corrupts public servants including 226 against gazette officers. One hundred and six cases were sent up for trial in courts including 29 against gazette officers. Of these, 48 including 2 gazetted officers were convicted, the punishments awarded ranged from three years to three months rigorous imprisonment as well as fines ranging from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 100. Thirty –four cases including 15 against gazette officers are still pending in courts. Punjab examined the draft of new anti-corruption legislation. Punjab Legislative Assembly passed “The Punjab youthful Offender (Amendment) Act, 1952”<sup>29</sup>

### **The Cooperative societies**

Whereas it was expedient further to facilitate the formation and working of cooperating societies for the promotion of prudence mutual aid and self-help among peasants, artisans, laborers and other people with desires and interests in common so as to bring along better business, improved livelihood, and better method of production and for that purpose to consolidate and amend the law The



Cooperative societies (Punjab Amendments) Act, 1954<sup>30</sup> These societies based on sound principal did useful work as it can be seen in its inquiry report<sup>31</sup> relating to the cooperative societies in the province of Punjab. PLA was a pioneer in Pakistan to the level of other advanced countries of the world in its humanistic and scientific treatment of the wasted Human material.

### **Conclusion**

The Punjab bore maximum burden after independence because not only the province divided but its resources were also distributed which caused economic damage to the province. Another challenging issue was the large number of refugees and the allocation of evacuee property. In these circumstances, there was not only the need for good planning and plenty of resources but sincere and committed leadership with great vision was required for the smooth running of the institution of the Punjab Legislative Assembly. But leadership who worked hard for the freedom of the country failed to remove the legacy of conflicts which weakened the performance of the institution of PLA. Elimination of the corruption, refugees' rehabilitation, allocation of the evacuee property, land reforms, and recovery of abducted women were major issues discussed in the Sessions of the PLA. Motions in PLA were moved from time to time to draw the attention of the Government by demanding immediate solutions to the problems. Political instability and dissolutions of the Ministries affected the social and economic process and planned programs and policies. Many schemes were introduced in the agriculture sector" Grow more food" campaign was launched. But these planned programs were not implemented efficiently due to personal jealousies and clashes so in 1953 province faced a food shortage. There is no doubt that PLA in spite of little resources with the burden of refugees, succeeded to recognize the life of the province and developed the field of health communication, roads, education, and other public works. The economy of the province gradually became better not so much but to some extent although its speed was so slow. Assembly made its best effort to accelerate the social and economic structure of the province although their efforts were not proved fruitful enough due to the dissolution of Ministries one after the other. However, it gives a stark to broken structure and led it towards restoration and tried to develop it.

There is no doubt that West Punjab faced initial troubles and problems daringly. In spite of various flaws in the working of the institutions and administration, but the Province progressed economically, socially, and agriculturally. Because of its strong industrial economy and agrarian reforms, Pakistan started to depend on Punjab Even later. The major issue of refugee rehabilitation and settlement was settled despite, less and weak administration fewer resources, and financial crisis augmenting the commotion of the problem caused by partition. Additionally, all agricultural, educational, industrial, electric power health, and economic crisis were related to the rehabilitation issues. Punjab and Punjabis sacrificed and progressively went through the crisis putting up all their efforts because they had realized what a country meant to them.

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### References

<sup>1</sup> This Act was promulgated and assented to by the Governor of the Punjab on 28th July, 1949, and published in the Punjab Gazette, (Extraordinary), dated: 29th July, 1949, pages: 127-152. "The Thal

Development Authority”, hereinafter referred to as “The Authority” and the Board shall be a body corporate, and shall have perpetual succession and a common seal, and shall by the said name sue and be sued. The Authority shall consist of not more than seven members. The Thal Development Act, 1949 appointed by the Provincial Government by notification

<sup>2</sup>Five year plans Planning Commission of Pakistan.

<sup>3</sup> Aftab A. Khan, Mahreen Khan. Pakistan Textile Industry Facing New Challenges. *Research Journal of International Studies* - Issue 14 (May, 2010) p.21

<sup>4</sup> Hamid Iqbal Dr. Abdul Qadir Mushtaq, Cotton Processing and Spinning Industry in Pakistan: A Case Study of Lyallpur City *Lyallpur Historical & Cultural Research Journal*. June 2017, Vol. 3, No. 1 [27-46]p,1-5

<sup>5</sup> Punjab Legislative assembly Debates 1947 Vol. XXVIII. P.317

<sup>6</sup> Hamid Iqbal Dr. Abdul Qadir Mushtaq, Cotton Processing and Spinning Industry in Pakistan: A Case Study of Lyallpur City *Lyallpur Historical & Cultural Research Journal*. June 2017, Vol. 3, No. 1 [27-46]p,31

<sup>7</sup>*Pakistan Times* (Lahore), 10 December 1947.

<sup>8</sup>M.A.Hassan, ed., *Inter-Dominion Agreements*, ibid, pp.64-66. The Resettlement Department(Land) notified the said Ordinance on 26th April 1949, under Notification No. 2469-R(L) through Secretary to Government, West Punjab, Resettlement & Colonies Department, see Hassan, *Inter-Dominion Agreements*, ibid, p.65. Copies were sent to all Settlement Officers and Extra-Assistant Settlement Officers; In-charge Settlement in West Punjab; Deputy Commissioners Gujrat, Jhelum, Rawalpindi and Attock; Colonization Officer Nili Bar Colony, Pakpattan; Thal Development Officer Mianwali; Extra-Assistant Colonization Officer, Haveli Project Multan; Rehabilitation Commissioner (General) Old Residency, Lahore; and Officer on Special Duty, Pakistan-West Punjab Refugee Council, Lahore by the orders of the Deputy Secretary Resettlement & Colonies.

<sup>9</sup> Punjab A Review of the First seven years The Director, public Relations, Punjab 1953.p.75-77

<sup>10</sup> *The Punjab A review The First six years*, The Director Public relation Punjab, 1953. P. 19

<sup>11</sup>The Punjab Assembly Debates. 17 December 1951

<sup>12</sup>The Punjab Assembly Debates. Vol VI P. 53

<sup>13</sup> The Gazette of Pakistan Extraordinary , Registered No. S. 1033. 1955.P.203

<sup>14</sup> The West Punjab Protection of Evacuee Property Ordinance (VII of 1947), in All Pakistan Legal Decisions, XII Lahore, 1960

<sup>15</sup> M.A.Hassan, ed., *Inter-Dominion Agreements*, ibid, 47-55; Kazi Mohammad Ashraf, ed., *Evacuee and Rehabilitation Laws*, ibid, pp.82-92.

<sup>16</sup> M.A.Hassan, ed., *Inter-Dominion Agreements*, ibid, pp. 57-61.

<sup>17</sup> M.A.Hassan, ed., *Inter-Dominion Agreements*, ibid, pp. 57-61.

<sup>18</sup> Proceedings of the Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates (PPLAD), 6 January 1948, File no. D- 50 (4) 104

<sup>19</sup> PSA, Land Settlement, January to June 1955, E 33, Part XIV, p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> The Act was passed by Punjab Assembly on 22 December 1952 and assented to the Governor of the Punjab by March 1953, published in the Punjab Gazette (Extraordinary), dated 20<sup>th</sup> March 1953.

<sup>21</sup>The Punjab legislative Assembly session. Vol. IX

<sup>22</sup>The Punjab Gazette (Extraordinary) 13 August 1949.

<sup>23</sup> Punjab Gazette (Extraordinary) 5<sup>th</sup> June 1950.P. 109-112

<sup>24</sup> Act was passed by Punjab Legislative Assembly on 19 December 1952; Published in the Punjab Gazette (Extraordinary) February, 1952.

<sup>25</sup> Punjab Assembly passed on 1953, Published in Punjab Gazette (Extraordinary) 24 January, 1954.

<sup>26</sup> Punjab Assembly passed on 27 October 1954, Published in Punjab Gazette (Extraordinary) 10 January, 1955.

<sup>28</sup>West Pakistan Legislative Assembly Debate. Vol.X .p.179

<sup>29</sup> Punjab Gazette (Extraordinary) 23 March 1953 P.103-113

<sup>30</sup> This Act was passed by the Assembly on 11 November 1954 assented to by the Governor of the Punjab on 20 December 1954: published in the Gezette (Extraordinary) dated 31 January 1955.

<sup>31</sup> The cooperative inquiry committee report.Lahore west Pakistan.1955