

# Economic Development in Jammu and Kashmir: New Initiatives and Technological Innovations with Special Reference to Agriculture (1947-2000)

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**Abstract:** *With the end of the British rule in India, the state of Jammu and Kashmir also became free. The state was least developed regions in the sub-continent. The economy of the state was mainly based on agriculture and rural in character. The 90% of people living mostly in villages derived their livelihood from agriculture characterized by low productivity and traditional methods of cultivation. The economic backwardness was visible by poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy. It was because the state had gone through extreme exploitation during the Dogra rule and the people of Kashmir lived in miserable conditions. After the independence and accession of the state to the union of India the exploitative and discriminatory rule of Dogras came to an end and a new era of socio-economic development was ushered with new initiatives in different sectors of the state. The first and foremost step towards development was taken for the enhancement of agriculture because it was main occupation of a large portion of the population. The present work is an endeavor to evaluate the whole process of development particularly in the agricultural sector in post Independence period in the state.*

**Keywords:** agriculture, land reforms, cultivation, crops, technology, fertilizer, irrigation

## 1. Introduction

Economic development is a process whereby an economy's real national income increases over a long period of time and if the rate of development is greater than rate of population growth, then per capita real income will increase. After the independence, the state of Jammu and Kashmir with its population of four million people was least developed regions in the sub-continent. The economy of the state was mainly based on agriculture and rural in character. Using low productive and traditional methods, nearly 90% of people lived in villages and derived their livelihood from agriculture. The state inherited nothing but an impoverished economy from the Dogras. During the Dogra rule, an overwhelming majority of the population of the state was dependent on agriculture. But in view of the archaic agrarian structure, the agriculturalists and the agricultural workers in Kashmir were in most abject conditions as they had to carry on their shoulders the burden of absentee landlordism.

The economic system established by Dogra rulers was designed to protect and promote the interests of the rulers and their collaborators neglecting the welfare of the general mass. Their main pre-occupation was to maintain law and order, streamline the taxes collection and ensure defense. The economic system therefore, represented the framework for economic stagnation, exploitation and social backwardness.

Disgusted with the discriminatory attitude of Dogra rulers the people of Kashmir launched a popular movement under the leadership of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to establish a democratic system leading towards the socio-economic reforms. The movement had the main objective of putting an end to the century old religious discrimination and economic exploitation. Influenced by the ideas of socialism, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah later advocated the abolition of landlordism and the distribution of the land to tiller. Lowest per capita income and consumption levels among the

states of India were the main characteristic of the economy of the state of Jammu and Kashmir before independence resulting in low levels of savings and capital formation consequently leading to the mass poverty in the state.

After the independence and accession of the state to the union of India the exploitative and discriminatory rule of Dogras came to an end but the newly formed government had to face various problems and challenges. These included division of the state as a consequence of partition of India into two nations, blocking of natural routes, communal disturbances and refugee problem exerted a great pressure on the economic and administrative resources. However, the newly formed Government took measures for the reconstruction of the economy of the state and tried to liberate it from the dominance of colonial exploitative structures. National Conference, the major political party of the state under Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah advocated to emancipate the people from the century's exploitation, oppression, backwardness and poverty. The programmes envisaged institutional and agrarian restructuring to liberate and unleash the productive forces from the shackles of parasitic landlordism and also to clear decks for rapid modernization and industrial growth.

### Development of agricultural and Land Reforms:

The main stay of the people of Jammu and Kashmir is agriculture. It is the main source of livelihood for the majority of population in the state. According to 1971 Census the total working force of the state engaged in the sector was 64.78%. Agriculture contributed 33.32% of the State Domestic Product in 2001. Before the independence there was no development in the state. The farmer was not provided the facilities to enable his easy access to market. The peasants were exploited who were levied with *Mujwaza* in order to feed the rationed areas of the state.

One of the most significant aspects of agricultural development in the state of Jammu and Kashmir after independence was land reforms. The first phase of land reforms started in 1948 when the government resumed all the assignments of the Government revenue and abolished Jagirs, Muafs and Mukararies except those granted to religious institutions. With the abolition of hereditary character of Lambardari institution, the abatement of 12<sup>1/2</sup> % in land revenue allowed to the Chakdars was also discontinued. The newly formed Government under the leadership of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah emphasized on the need of transferring the land to the actual tiller. The main postulates of the Naya Kashmir Plan were: (a) Abolition of absentee landlordism (b) Distribution of all kinds of land to peasantry (c) Farming and marketing of agricultural produce through cooperatives (d) Prohibition of export of food grains (e) Control of forests by panchayats (f) Introducing the most modern methods of agriculture, cattle, sheep, poultry and dairy farming.

The implementation of Land Reforms brought an end to the system of *Jagirdari* in the state. With the resumption of all these assignments 396 of *Jagirdars* and the *Maufidars* and 2347 *Mukararies* were liquidated. A land of 4250 acres granted for residential and other purposes as a privilege to the *Jagirdars* was also released and transferred to cultivators. It saved seven lakhs to the state treasury annually. The distressed Debtor's Relief Act 2006 Samvat (1948) was enacted with an objective to alleviate the distress of the poverty stricken peasants of the state. By this act the peasants, the artisans and the village menials were relieved of their accumulated debts. Debt conciliation boards were established and debt claims up to nearly Rs. 175 Lakhs were conciliated by them and scaled down to Rs.85 lakhs. The mortgaged debts of the value of Rs. 14.59 were liquidated. The Big Landed Estates Abolition Act was passed on 17th October, 1950 in order to bring welfare of the cultivators and development of the agriculture in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The act brought significant changes in land relationship. It was a big experiment in molding the whole structure of village life on new formations of society and economy. The main feature of the act was transfer of excess land to the cultivator, without any compensation, 19 rationalization untenanted land, recognition of right of selection and restrictions on transfer of partition of land. The act proved beneficial for the peasants in many ways. About 9000 proprietors were expropriated from 4.50 lakh acres of land held in excess of ceiling. Out of this, 2.3 lakh acres of land were transferred in ownership right to the tillers free of any compensation while the remaining part of the land was taken over by the state.

Despite the progressive nature of reforms the Act suffered from certain inherent defects. For example no weightage was given to the fertility of soil, geographical contiguity in fixing the ceiling limits for owners and tenants Secondly the ceiling limit was fixed on individual rather than on family holding. The landless agricultural laborers were not benefited by the Act because they did not get ownership of land. However, The Act brought an end to the system of landlord-tenant relationship wherever it existed.

Tenancy (Amendment) Acts were passed in 1955,1962 and 1965 were passed in order to remove the defects of the land reforms which create dissatisfaction among the landlords and other sections of people and also to give more and more rights to tenants. The state Government came up with another legislation in 1972 in order to bring the tiller into direct contact with the state by abolition of all intermediary interest in the land. it was adopted in October 1972 and the new legislation came to be known as "The Jammu and Kashmir Agrarian Reforms Act-1972. The main provisions of the Act were: i. Provision for resumption of land by any intermediary or absentee landlord on certain specific conditions; ii. Imposition of ceiling (excluding orchards) of 100 standard Kanals (12.5 standard acres) and vesting of all land in excess of this ceiling in the state; iii. Vesting of ownership rights of land (excluding orchards) held by owners and intermediaries who are not in its personal cultivation to those who held such land in personal cultivation on 1-9-1971. iv. Compensation in lieu of all land vested in the state as a result of (a) and (b) above at rates specified conditions. v. Full compensation for evacuee. However, the Act had some inherent defects. Many lacunae, shortcomings and difficulties were found in the operation of the act. As a result the government was compelled to make certain amendments in the Act to facilitate its implementation. A revision form of bill was introduced in the state legislative assembly on March 1st, 1976. The bill was passed by the two houses of the legislature and came to be called as Jammu and Kashmir Agrarian Reforms Act-1976. The act removed the removed the major defects of the earlier laws and made provisions to bring the orchards squarely under the preview of ceiling law. Transfer of land to the tiller.

#### **Development in technology and irrigation:**

Technological evolution is necessary for the pace of development in any society. Agriculture being the predominant sector of the economy of the state was characterized by subsistence farming, primitive techniques, and low yields. On the eve of independence in 1947, the agriculture of Kashmir was entirely traditional in nature. Subsistence farming was still in practice and the cultivators were ignorant about the scientific methods of cultivation. The chemical fertilizers were not used and inferior quality of seeds continued to be used on large scale.

However, after 1947, drastic changes were witnessed in the agricultural sector of the state. The newly established Government started taking measures to release the agriculture from the shackles of stagnation. In 1948 government launched *Grow More-Food scheme* in order to release the agriculture from the shackles of stagnation. The measures taken by the government assisted in the extension of the land under cultivation and helped in increase in the production.

Along with institutional changes, the Government also initiated the technological changes in order to increase the production. Efforts were made to provide the cultivators with improved seeds and fertilizers. Seed plant nurseries were established to improve the quality of seeds and were distributed to farmers. Fertilizers were also distributed among farmers on subsidy basis. The New Agricultural

Strategy adopted a three dimensional approach. The approach consisted the use of high yielding varieties of seeds (HYV), adaptation of modern chemical technology and food grain support policy.

Dung from the animals like sheep, goat, horse and cattle was used as manure in agricultural fields from earliest times in the valley. During the First Five Year Plan the use of inorganic fertilizers was introduced in Kashmir which increased the production manifold. After 1962 the Government started financing the agricultural operations in the state with a view to increase the production. The cultivators were provided with loans for the purchase of seeds, fertilizers and pesticides etc. Besides seeds, fertilizers, chemical pesticides and weedicides the initiatives were taken for the improved agricultural implements. In Kashmir the agricultural operations had been labor intensive and mostly performed manually. The agricultural implements were few and simple. Therefore, from the very beginning the policy of the newly formed Government was to promote the use of agricultural implements. Agricultural implements were imported from outside by the government. Realizing the importance of tractors, the Government of the state started a tractor hiring organization which was latter on brought under the preview of the Agro Industries Development Organization. The use of tractor not only replaced wooden plough driven by oxen, leveling and tilling but also performed a number of activities. It played a crucial rule in ploughing the heavy soils, working in difficult and uneven terrains and bringing previously unutilized land under cultivation. The following table shows a complete picture of mechanization of the agriculture of the state.

**Table 1:** Number of implements used

Items	1972	1977	1982	1987	1992	1997
Ploughs	638942	652592	809773	987311	1075454	760457
Chaff cutters	19418	28961	NA	65644	83890	103963
Pruning scissors	12696	23477	NA	NA	NA	NA
Orchard ladders	1871	4163	NA	NA	NA	NA
Diesel and electric pumps	451	881	NA	2894	3678	7915
Paddy Thrashers	196	179	104	200	156	664
Wheat Thrashers	129	699	1062	2506	987	1061
Maize Shellers	32	NA	159	33	35	149
Others	-	-	-	3020	597665	1417974

Source: Javeed-ul-Aziz (2010), Economy of Modern Kashmir with Special Reference to Agriculture (1947-1989).

It is evident from the above table that there was appreciable increase in the number of modern agricultural implements like electric and diesel driven pumps, paddy and wheat thrashers since 1970 thereby increasing the production manifold.

Irrigation had been one of the main pre-occupations of the state since very early times as it played a key role in the agriculture of Kashmir. During the Dogra period the irrigation remained a neglected affair but for the Maharaja Ranbir Singh during whose rule the irrigation received due attention. It was after 1950's that the Government of the state embarked upon a series of measures in order to provide necessary infrastructure for agricultural development. The state took necessary steps to extend irrigation by tapping the natural resources. An important step taken in this direction

was separation of irrigation department from Public Works Development organization for independent and smooth functioning. The irrigation got high priority under different five year plans and a sufficient fund was allocated for different irrigation schemes. The development of the irrigational infrastructure was the most significant contribution of the state during different Five Year Plans. During this particular phase a number of new canals were constructed and efforts were made for setting up of lift irrigation stations to irrigate lands lying with an appreciable height, and storage tanks were also constructed at different places of the valley.<sup>49</sup> The effect of these efforts was that an irrigation potential of about 53000 hectares was created during the first three Five Year Plans. In the net irrigated area the estimated increase during the plan period was 27,000 out of which about 23,000 hectares were brought under cultivation by the Government canals. By extending the irrigational facilities to the uncultivated lands and assuring irrigation to already under cultivation there was an appreciable increase in the production at an average of 9.6% during first three Five year Plans. The productivity of paddy, wheat and maize was significantly increased as compared to 1951-52. Between 1951-52 and 1964-65, the food production in the state increased from 82.56 lakh to 166.10 lakh mounds and the annual growth rate of 8.8% registered during the first Five Year Plans was than the all India average of 5.13% per annum.

#### Horticulture, Sericulture and Livestock:

Horticulture is an old economic activity in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It is a type of agriculture in which generally garden crops e.g. fruits and vegetables are grown. During Dogra period in 1902 A.D a separate department for Horticulture was established by the state Government. The range of Horticulture work was widen by this measure which included cultivation of fruit trees, establishment of nurseries and plantation of mulberry trees.

After 1947 with the introduction of planned economic development in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, the Horticulture received due attention by the Government because it provides tremendous potentials for economic development. The area under orchards increased from 31,000 hectares in 1945-50 to 2, 35,000 hectares in 1977-78 which touched the tune of 180.31 thousand hectares for the year 1991-92. The following table shows area under fruits and vegetables as the percentage as gross area sown.

**Table 2:** As percentage of gross area sown from 1991-92

S. No.	Region	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92
1.	Kashmir	13.70	13.80	16.13
2.	Jammu	1.16	1.38	1.36
3.	Ladakh	1.09	1.33	1.22

Source: Dr. Bashir Ahmad Sheikh, An Economic Study of Jammu and Kashmir State

The above table shows cooperative high percentage of the Kashmir division of gross area shown is under fruit and vegetables. The percentage in the valley is increasing at an increasing rate.

The diversification of agriculture has resulted in the conversion of large tracts of non-irrigated lands into fruit

orchards. During the year 1975-76 the fruit production rose to 2.75 lakh tones out of which about 2 lakh ones were exported to the other parts of the country and abroad as well. In 1982-83 there were 2.5 crore fruit trees in the state. Area of fruits like apples, walnut Litchi, Pear, cherries and apricot have increased since 1980 while the area of almond, Loquat and peaches is shrinking. During the year 1991-92 about 4.83 lakh M. tones of fresh fruit got exported to other parts of the country. Despite the increase in production and export, the fruit industry of Kashmir suffers from the main problems of marketing. One of the main hindrances in the development and expansion of orchards is favorable marketing of the fruit. Besides, the packing and transportation costs are very high. The orchard farming is also facing a tough competition from other states. However, the state government is very concerned about the development of this industry. A corporation known as the Jammu and Kashmir Horticulture Produce Marketing Processing Corporation Ltd. (JKHPMC) has been set up to develop the industry on scientific lines.

Along with cultivation of fruit crops, a wide variety of vegetables have been cultivated in Kashmir which have got a considerable increase after 1947. The vegetables include cabbage, brinjals, cauliflower, turnips, carrots, capsicum, chilies, tomatoes, spinach etc. With the establishment of SKUAST-K varieties in capsicum, turnip, chilies have been developed. Although the area under vegetables and the production has improved over the years, the requirements could not be fulfilled and the state imports a large quantity of vegetables from other parts of the country. A comprehensive planning for the development of the vegetable cultivation is needed to be initiated.

Sericulture is another allied sector of agriculture in Kashmir. It is an oldest industry in the Jammu and Kashmir state. The state Government has declared Sericulture as a thrust area to promote it in the state. The state intends to propagate sericulture as an important economic activity and hence thrust is on commercial exploitation of the sericulture. Sericulture provides gainful employment, ensures economic development and improvement in the quality of life to the people in rural areas and therefore it plays an important role in anti-poverty programme. It is playing an eminent role in the rural economy of the state. After, independence, the industry is flourishing as an agro-industry giving employment to millions of people in the country. The number of mulberry trees for 1989-90 and 1991-92 had touched the figure of 14, 16.7 and 23.7 lakh respectively. During the year 1989-90 the rearers produced the raw silk worth Rs. 1.77 corers, against Rs. 1.55 corers in 1990-91 and have touched the tune of Rs. 2.27 cores in 1991-92. The following table shows the position of sericulture in Jammu and Kashmir state.

Damage caused by insects and pests and inadequacy of mulberry leaves which is the main food of silkworms are the major problems in the development of the sector. A stress is lying on raising dwarf mulberry trees to supplement and replenish the traditional tall mulberry trees. As a result of these efforts the dwarf varieties have increased substantially in the state.

Sericulture continues to be a subsidiary occupation for about 27000 rural families in the state. Annually about 900 M. Tons of cocoons are produced generating an income of about 1100.00 for silkworm rearers. The department of Sericulture has 173 Mulberry Nurseries and a well-established seed organization meeting about 60% of local annual seed demand.

Another sector of agriculture in the state of Jammu and Kashmir is live stock or animal husbandry. The role of livestock is significant in the economy of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The animals like cattle, sheep, goat, horse and poultry forming the livestock of the state have a great utility and is an important part of the economy. The Dogra rulers took certain measure for an organized cattle farming in the state. Farms were setup for the use of Maharaja. A cattle farm was established at Srinagar which maintained Sindhi and some local cows and bulls. Another farm with imported cows and bulls with Ayrshire breed was established at Cheshmashahi Srinagar. A Civil Veterinary Department with two livestock inspectors was established primarily to provide veterinary care for mules and horses of the Maharaja's cavalry. In 1930's the Government established two breeding farms one at Srinagar and another at Jammu. It resulted in the qualitative improvement in the cattle rearing in the state.

Livestock received ample impetus after 1947 in the state. For the development of the livestock sector, The Government of the state transformed the Civil Veterinary Department into Animal Husbandry Department. Two breeding farms were setup one each at Srinagar and the other at Jammu. In these farms for the up-gradation of cattle Hariana and Sindhi breeds of cattle were selected for the mating purpose giving up the breeding through local breeds. Animal husbandry contributed an income of Rs. 797 lakhs in 1961-62 which amounted 8.5% of net income of the state. With engaging a sizable portion of the population in animal rearing, the livestock sector also involved them in processing, transportation and sale of the animal products. The following table shows livestock population for 1977 to 1992 in Jammu and Kashmir state.

**Table 3:** Livestock population for 1977 to 1992 (Population in lakhs)

S. No.	Years	Cattle	Buffalows	Sheep	Goats
1.	1977	21.38	4.99	12.16	6.92
2.	1982	23.25	5.63	1909	10.04
3.	1988	27.68	5.93	24.93	13.96
4.	1992	30.55	7.33	29.47	17.66

*Source:* Dr. Sheikh Bashir Ahmad, An Economic Study of Jammu and Kashmir.

It is evident from the above table shows that the livestock population has increased to 87.07 lakhs for the year 1992 which is about 13 lakhs increased over the population of 1988. The livestock Census of 1977 shows that state had 3009 cattle available for one thousand hectares of the ne cultivated area which increased in 1997-98 to 4313 cattle per thousand hectare of cultivated land.

No doubt there was an appreciable increase in the population of livestock in the state after 1947 but most of the indigenous cattle of Kashmir were of nondescript type which

impeded the enhancement of production capacity of the cattle. Although the sector received generous financial assistance from the state government as and a number of schemes were launched by the concerned departments regarding the development of livestock but there had not been any substantial transformation in this sector due to the lack of adequate feed and fodder resources, poor veterinary facilities and inferior breeds. Although the state Government has now recognized the importance of this industry and new strategies and developmental packages have been initiated, but in general livestock of Jammu and Kashmir is poor and inadequate in quality and quantity. The state failed to substantially transform this vital sector of the economy.

## 2. Conclusion

After the independence of 1947, far reaching changes were witnessed in socio-economic setup of Kashmir. This was the period when whole world was changing owing to industrialization, modernization and globalization. The economy of the state underwent great transformation. In some spheres it witnessed considerable gains and in some others the gains were less with All India pattern. The state witnessed increase in aggregate as well as per capita income, diversification of economic activities, growth of physical and social infrastructure, decrease in mortality rate and increase in literacy rate. The consumption patterns and the standard of living also went to a considerable change.

Agriculture the predominant sector of the economy underwent tremendous changes because of the new policies of Government. Several measures were taken for the reconstruction of the economy of the state and to liberate it from the dominance of colonial exploitative structures. One of the most significant aspect of agricultural development in the state of Jammu and Kashmir after independence was that of land reforms. Under the land reform policy the newly formed government transferred the land to the actual tiller with various rights and that too without paying any compensation to the original owner of the land which freed the peasant from subjugation and autocracy. The land revenue was decreased and subsequently abolished which made the condition of peasants enabling them to save the money and divert it to other pursuits of life. The economic emancipation led to the social advancement of the people thereby raising the standard of their life. The land reforms included measures designed to eliminate the obstacles in the agrarian development with modification of rural credit, land division, taxation, marketing facilities, cooperative organization and agricultural education. The Government resumed all the assignments of the Government revenue and abolished Jagirs, Muafs and Mukararies except those granted to religious institutions. The peasants got proprietary rights over their lands and the hitherto uncultivable. The peasants got proprietary rights over their lands and the hitherto uncultivable. Further the development in technology and irrigational infrastructure brought drastic changes in agricultural sector by releasing it from the shackles of stagnation. After 1960's agriculture of Kashmir underwent further significant changes. The introduction of high yielding seeds and chemical fertilizers increased the production manifold. However, the food requirements of the state could not still be fulfilled and it remained largely

dependent for the import of food grains from other parts of the country. Nor were new technologies within the reach of every peasant who could use them to enhance the production.

The allied sectors of agriculture like horticulture, sericulture and animal husbandry also witnessed change and development after 1947. With the introduction of planned economic development, the allied sectors of agriculture received due attention by the Government because these sectors provided tremendous potential for economic development. However, the measures taken for the development of these allied sectors were not sufficient and needs reconsideration for the effective planning pertaining to the development of these sectors.

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