

## Mapping Power: Colonial Governmentality, Cartography, and Reordering Agrarian Spaces of Kashmir (1887-95)

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**Abstract:** *Applying Foucault's concept of governmentality, the paper asserts that the colonial governance in Kashmir aimed to establish a novel connection in the agrarian space, peasant population, and discipline. Using a multidisciplinary approach, it examines how the British colonial administration aimed to exert control over the agrarian landscape through cartographic techniques. Central to the study is the crucial role of cartography in shaping perceptions of space and power. The paper scrutinizes colonial authorities' cartographic practices, from land surveys to detailed map production, revealing how these representations not only organized the agrarian landscape but also reinforced colonial hegemony.*

**Keywords:** Colonial governmentality, Space, Cartography, Peasant, Kashmir

Foucault's concept of governmentality offers insight into the evolution of the modern state and the construction of the "economy" as a subject of governance.<sup>1</sup> Foucault asserts that the process of governance transformed the occident from the eighteenth century onwards. According to Foucault, the eighteenth century marked a crucial shift. During this period, inter connected developments in the economy led to the transformation of the art of government to the science of government. Consequently, the traditional notions of sovereignty and family as governing models changed, paving the way for a more sophisticated approach to governance. Colonial governmentality,<sup>2</sup> which aims at enhancing the economic power of the state, regulatory and extractive tasks were performed on both individual and collective aspects. Remarkably, these functions were carried out not solely through force but through the implementation of modern forms of regulatory discipline.<sup>3</sup> Colonial governmentality thus played a great role in shaping and regulating economic activities in a manner that reflected the changing dynamics of governance in the modern era.

Consequently, colonial administrative methods, including technologies like surveying and mapping, gave rise to abstract spatial concepts and operational sites for governance. The resulting spatial knowledge, in turn, facilitated the development of modern forms of governance.<sup>4</sup> However, a Western incursion into India brought about a fundamental shift by replacing the indistinct frontiers of traditional political arrangements with specific linear frontiers which became characteristic of the contemporary nation-state.<sup>5</sup> Imperial spaces employed boundaries as a tool to transform abstract space into the concrete reality of space.<sup>6</sup> This transformation in the understanding of the territory of the modern state has noteworthy epistemological implications. This was achieved through the use of maps, graphic representation, diagrams, and similar inscription devices.<sup>7</sup> The creation of modern world maps undeniably stems from European expansionism across the globe. Cartographic representations in this context intertwine with the intervening and reconstructive influence of colonial power, giving rise to new discourses on space.<sup>8</sup> The space that the colonial state wanted to produce was to a great extent instrumental space that colonial authorities can control, regulate and appropriate according to the needs of new governance. In the context of the imperialist needs of the global economy in which colonial states were facilitators, the main political space that they sought to produce contributed to the accumulation of rationality. The production of this new space requires clear demarcating boundaries and locating places in a grid of systematic precision. In totality, it wants to produce an ambiguous space of differences that will gradually serve an important role in the evolving global economy of exchange and accumulation. Within this ambiguous space, specific categories of spaces were demarcated and hierarchized and thus were made manageable to control and conciliation. The process of the revenue surveys empowered the colonial state to conduct itself most authoritatively in its political space or sphere. All this necessitated or completed the production of abstract space and generated knowledge of villages of British India for administering it. Since the inception of British colonial rule, the authorities or men on the spot imposed a web of different official categories over the native or local agrarian relations. All this resulted in the delineation of property rights and the constitution of private property in land along with revenue appropriation became the spatial tactics of colonial revenue authority.<sup>9</sup> The modus in which new spaces of appropriation and knowledge were produced illustrates the processes of colonial governmentality. The pre-colonial methods were replaced ultimately by newer methods of control through science, objectification and rationality. The process of accuracy became contested in the conduct of the revenue surveys often led to debates over the use of colonial survey methods and indigenous or native measurement practices.

Indeed, territorial surveys and cartography began to serve increasingly suitable roles for administration including definite property rights in land,

territorial boundaries, domains of administration, and social control with accuracy. In pre-British times, states had also produced their spaces by delineating their territories thoroughly by land measuring techniques. These methods along with maps yielded accurate measurements and thereby fulfilled their cognitive requirements. However, mapping culture in the modern sense as a tool for facilitating measurement, inquiry and examination simultaneously did not exist in India prior to the colonial authorities. There is no denying the fact that the maps were produced by both Hindu and Arab geographers in pre-colonial times. It is wrong to conclude that colonial surveying and mapping was, however, a one-time effort. The process evolved over more than a hundred years. Therefore, in the early stages of the formation of the modern state, "territory" became an object of knowledge to make it a "revenue state". And it became an essential tool for making an epistemological conquest possible. In this process, governmentality increasingly replaced territoriality and became a necessary tool for delineating masses in clearly or consciously demarcated areas. Thus, the colonial construction as well as the deployment of novel political machineries as part of the new political rationalities required the reconstitution of space for fulfilling colonial economic and political needs.<sup>10</sup> Like British India, this so-called modern agrarian system in the Valley is of recent origin dating back to the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There is no dearth of scholarly works on the colonial period that deal with the agrarian sphere of the Valley but only a few explicitly examine the processes of the agrarian aspects. The present paper elaborates on the construction of the modern agrarian system in Kashmir by focussing on colonial governmentality and its allied fields for deep surveying. Virgin domains of political technologies of colonial governance like space, time, classification, and measurement were made integral parts of the "economy" and "society" of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. All this and many other things resulted in more pronounced governmental intervention and knowledge production and thus empowered the anxieties of social phenomenon in a modern scientific way.

### **From Exploration to Domination: Cartographic Constructions of Imperial Territory**

The establishment of the British colonial state in India began with a determined resolve to build and maintain a lasting empire. Faced with an unfamiliar and unpredictable landscape, the British were eager to assert control over the conquered territory and its people. As a result, they undertook an ambitious imperial endeavour focused on understanding these previously unexplored regions. The company executives possessed limited understanding of the social, political, economic, and cultural complexities in the territories they had taken control of.<sup>11</sup>

To prevent any potential political or economic upheaval, they sought to fill the knowledge gap by seeking the help of skilled cartographers.

Proficiency in this arcane art was indispensable for the colonialists to unravel the enigmas of the unexplored lands and render them intelligible.<sup>12</sup> The relationship between colonialism and cartography is a significant and intricate one, highlighting a profound connection between these two fields. Cartography, as the science as well as the art of map-making, primarily deals with the depiction of territories and the acquisition of knowledge about geographical spaces. However, when colonial powers, particularly represented by entities like “the Company” adopted and utilized cartography, it took on a highly political dimension, becoming inexorably intertwined with colonial ambitions and endeavours.<sup>13</sup> As a result of this fusion, the production of cartographic representations became crucial in both understanding and governing the newly acquired territories. Maps served as powerful tools for the colonizers to comprehend the landscapes, resources, and potential economic benefits of the regions they sought to control. Moreover, they facilitated the management and control of these territories, providing crucial information for navigation, exploration, and establishment of administrative structures. The act of mapping, which might seem neutral in principle, transformed into an instrument of power and domination in the context of colonial expansion. By creating maps that represented the colonial territories in a way that served their interests, the colonizers could bolster their authority and justify their actions to their home countries and the international community. It imposed artificial boundaries and delineations that often disregarded the pre-existing cultural, social, and political structures of indigenous populations, leading to further subjugation and displacement.<sup>14</sup> In Edney’s analysis, the officials of the Company were motivated by their ambitious desire to exploit India’s abundant resources and expand their commercial interests. However, they understood that achieving these objectives required a deep understanding of the land and its people. To accomplish this, they invested heavily in acquiring knowledge. Skilled surveyors, geographers, cartographers, and other experts were employed to gather data and create detailed maps and visual representations of India. The ultimate aim of this concerted effort was to transform India into a more manageable and easily comprehensible space that could be effectively controlled.<sup>15</sup> By becoming knowledgeable about the region, the Company officials sought to establish themselves as experts on India. This expertise plays a crucial role in justifying as well as legitimizing their actions within the region, as they presented themselves as well-informed decision-makers. It served as a tool to assert their authority and present their interventions as informed and necessary for the betterment of India.<sup>16</sup> The intricate knowledge they obtained about the land and its people was utilized to solidify their control and claim a sense of superiority in their dealings with local communities and rival powers. They strategically invested in understanding India’s geography and its people, not out of genuine interest or appreciation for the region’s richness, but as a tool to

further their economic and political interests. This deliberate pursuit of knowledge allowed them to portray themselves as experts, thus reinforcing their dominion over the territory and enabling them to exert control over India's resources and people for their own gains.

### **Agrarian Space in Flux: Colonial Settlement Policies and their Consequences**

As the criticism of misconduct in Kashmir became more prominent in the second half of the nineteenth century, there was a growing demand for a structured and efficient land revenue system supported by a competent administrative framework. Despite acknowledging the agricultural potential of Kashmir and praising the skills of its cultivating classes, as highlighted in the correspondence of Officers on Special Duty, there was a resounding condemnation of the Dogra administration for its oppressive role.<sup>17</sup> British colonial officers held a strong aversion towards the agrarian system in Kashmir. From their perspective, the agrarian landscape was marked by a lack of peasants' land rights, an absence of measurement-based assessments, opaque record-keeping practices, state-controlled grain monopoly, and the pervasive influence of landlords and officials over the entire agrarian framework. They believed that an immediate and comprehensive overhaul was necessary to address these issues. Colonel Nisbet, while emphasizing the streamlining of the revenue system of Kashmir asserted: "The destiny of the Valley of Kashmir is based on land as it constitutes the major source of revenue to the state and forms the basis of survival of the peasants and other working classes".<sup>18</sup>

What is important to underline is that in the pre-Residency period, Kashmir had largely remained immune from the influences of colonial ideologies of governance that had (re)shaped the agrarian landscape of India. Therefore, hardly any kind of map-making or measurement-based revenue assessment could be seen in Kashmir.<sup>19</sup> Thus in the post-residency period, the Maharaja was persuaded to accept the land settlement pattern of the Valley and thus in 1887, Andrew Wingate was employed to carry out this crucial job on similar lines as those of British India.<sup>20</sup> Wingate assessed two important tehsils of the Valley viz. Lal and Phak.<sup>21</sup> It is here that we see cartography was first employed as a normal way of looking at and knowing the rural landscape. On similar lines to those of British India, cartography was employed to make the unknown landscapes appear legible and capable of being grasped, controlled and secured. Mapping, to borrow the words of Neeladri Bhattacharya, wasn't simply an "act of bounding", it "re-spatialised the terrain".<sup>22</sup> By making the location of lands clear and the fields within them unambiguously demarcated mapping made it possible to enumerate and adjudicate land rights. Moreover, "diverse kinds of space, with all their heterogeneity and difference, their histories and lived pasts, were transformed into abstract and uniform space that could then be divided into homogenous units".<sup>23</sup> However, this project of mapping

territories and demarcating boundaries was not an easy one as it required great vigour, courage and patience. Also, the complicated nature of Kashmir's agrarian landscape made it more tiring. The Settlement Reports and Notes by the different British officers in Kashmir amply demonstrate the seriousness, meticulous planning and hard work that were put in by the officers to accomplish this exercise. Even the minute details were scrutinized by the Settlement Officers themselves.<sup>24</sup> The Wingate assessments accorded prime importance to surveys, mapping, delineation of peasant rights, fixity of tenure and scaling down of land revenue demand and all these features characterized all subsequent revenue settlements in Kashmir.<sup>25</sup>

It is pertinent to mention here that all the British Settlement Officers, like Wingate, Lawrence, Rivet and J. L. Kaye had a poor opinion about the surveys and assessments carried out under Maharaja Ranbir Singh's rule. They condemned the assessments carried out under the Dogra regime as inaccurate and ambiguous, lacking transparency and clarity. Wingate made a mocking critique of the existing agrarian system which had turned cultivators into tenants-at-will, forcing them to move from estate to estate, causing an untidy situation in the agricultural system. Therefore, following the footsteps of colonial establishment in British India throughout the nineteenth century, he fully supported granting occupancy rights to the peasantry of the Valley.<sup>26</sup> According to him, the land revenue system in the Valley had left the resources of the state empty due to the existence of a class of officials between the state and the peasantry.<sup>27</sup> It was believed that granting occupancy rights would inculcate interest among the itinerant peasantry for land, helping in converting what he believed was a "thrifless peasantry" into a "contended and thriving community" that could be beneficial for both the state as well as for the peasantry.<sup>28</sup> In his introductory Report Wingate asserts that the durbar was neither in a position to function without the help of cultivators nor any land settlement that would last long without the active participation of the agricultural populace. The cultivators will assist and sympathise with the state only after getting the possession rights of the soil they till.<sup>29</sup>

The proposal to grant occupancy rights to the cultivator was in complete agreement with the imperial policy of privileging settled agriculture over other forms of cultivation. All this reinforced a discourse of agrarian governance based on the village as a fundamental unit of agricultural output around which power was disseminated.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, it also accommodated and incorporated the elements of the habitus—"local"<sup>31</sup> without displacing the notion of the state being the absolute owner of the land, thus creating a "sovereignty-property matrix".<sup>32</sup> For instance, the village *Assami* means a cultivator with the *miras* or hereditary rights to a few plots of fertile and irrigated land within the village however the same for the state was the lawful occupant of land—one recognized by the state.<sup>33</sup> Thus,

the accommodation of the customary rights of the cultivating community was ensured while reordering the agrarian space.

Apart from occupancy rights, Wingate was also in favour of bestowing selling and mortgaging rights to the peasants, subject to the condition that the land transaction was made within the cultivating community. For instance, an occupier could sell, transfer, and mortgage his land to any person who belonged to the cultivating class; there was no provision for making the land transaction with a non-cultivating class.<sup>34</sup> In support of this Wingate maintained:

"In order to carry out the production smoothly by the cultivating community they should be able to raise the money by sale or mortgage. Because, without having something under possession who is going to open accounts or contract with a day laborer".<sup>35</sup>

The peasants would continue to enjoy the occupancy rights as long as the revenue entered at the time of assessment (*jamabandi*) was paid to the state, failing which their entitlement over land would cease to exist.<sup>36</sup> Fixity of rent alongwith occupancy rights was considered an indispensable inducement for improvement. Declaring the state as the sole owner of the land was not something novel or special in the case of Kashmir. The colonial state had for long considered the ruler in India as an "oriental despot", possessing ownership of the whole of cultivable land.<sup>37</sup> In Kashmir, however, this decision was also motivated by the considerations of strengthening state control over land for enhancing revenue and protecting it from encroachment. Additionally, Wingate strongly argued for the fixation of revenue at a reasonable sum for a term of years and the establishment of a system of accounts which would restrict the powers of the revenue-collecting officers.<sup>38</sup> He proposed that the land revenue preferably be collected in cash to stimulate grain trade in a free market and bring prosperity to the peasantry. It was argued that the collection of land revenue in cash would prove helpful in removing the flaws prevalent in the collection of land revenue.<sup>39</sup> However, the recommendations of Wingate were severely opposed by the revenue officials and the city populace alike. As a result, he had to give up his work.<sup>40</sup>

Sir Walter Lawrence, who succeeded Wingate as Settlement Commissioner in 1889, faced similar challenges as his predecessor in carrying out the Settlement work. However, he showed vigour by sabotaging the plans of the opposing group and completed the Settlement work in 1893. Beset with a similar ideology and following the same methods of work as his predecessor, Lawrence conducted extensive ethnographic tours of the rural landscape of the Valley and made recommendations for the land revenue settlement with remarkable features.<sup>41</sup> He proposed that the state should confer *permanent hereditary occupancy rights* on each person who was willing to pay the assessment fixed on the land entered in his or her name on the settlement papers.<sup>42</sup> The occupant could not be evicted as

long as the total revenue was paid to the respective authorities. The words used in every *Assessment Report* submitted for the approval of the *Darbar* include: "Permanent hereditary occupancy rights will be bestowed on every person who at the time of assessment or at the time when the distribution of assessments is effected, agrees to pay the assessment fixed on the fields entered in his or her name in the Settlement papers. Thus, so long as the assessment is paid, such occupant will not be liable to ejection".<sup>43</sup> Lawrence was not in favour of bestowing selling or mortgage rights to the cultivators. He remarked, "This right of occupancy is hereditary, but it is not alienable either by sale or mortgage".<sup>44</sup>

The argument posited by Lawrence regarding the ban on alienation was that if such a right was given to the peasants, they could easily be cheated by the corrupt officials because the peasant class hardly understood the value of the land. Lawrence considered the right to sell or mortgage land as risky as well as disastrous for people and the state. According to him, it would ultimately lead to extensive alienations and thus in a few years, the "ignorant and inexperienced Kashmiri cultivators" might become victims of the cunningness of the rural elite, selling their land for a meagre amount as a result of which enormous properties would be possessed either by officials or by many dominant *Mussalman Lambardars*<sup>45</sup>. Lawrence's reluctance to grant the right to sell, mortgage and transfer to the cultivator was also guided by the objective of securing and maximizing land revenues for the *Darbar*. Perhaps, it was envisaged that land alienation would also result in a decrease in production by recreating the pre-settlement conditions and reducing the cultivators to the position of a tenant-at-will. Moreover, in a frontier state like Kashmir, the British did not want power to remain diffused; they looked at the powerful rural elite with apprehension and considered centralized state control under the overall supervision of the Resident as politically expedient.

Moreover, influenced by the philosophy of *Utilitarianism*, Lawrence had proposed the collection of land revenue in cash. He believed that this would diminish speculation and perquisites, thereby benefiting the state as well as the local population.<sup>46</sup> It was also posited that cash assessment would help in the emergence of a vibrant rural market by facilitating and promoting transactions in cash instead of kind. However, given the strong opposition from different quarters, land revenue was ultimately decided to be appropriated partly in cash or in kind.<sup>47</sup> It was due to this that the state was losing a significant amount of revenue by accepting cash and kind settlement, the urban population remained implacable and the government should continue to supply cheap grain to the urban areas.<sup>48</sup>

To make a fair land revenue settlement, the distribution of revenue among the *assamis'* was made based on the size of the holding, quality of the soil and irrigation. This helped in bringing uniformity in revenue rates among the different regions. The Settlement also fixed land revenue for 10 years to familiarise the cultivator with his tax liabilities and incentivize him

to convert his resources and labour power into profitable commodities. This resulted in a significant decrease in the peasant migrations from estate to estate.<sup>49</sup> This way the colonial/British dream of making settled agriculture a norm was also to be realized. It would not be out of place to mention here that owing to the prevalence of differential revenue rates across the villages, a strong bond between the cultivator and his village could not develop thereby forcing him to migrate from estate to estate.<sup>50</sup>

The Lawrence Settlement also looked into the question of taxes levied upon the peasantry. The burden of taxes imposed on the cultivators was lightened and *lambardars*, *patwaris* and other influential sections of the rural society were considered the *assamis* and thus had to pay their share of the total revenue.<sup>51</sup> Also, the miscellaneous taxes collected from peasantry on walnut trees, forests and livestock were included in the land revenue of the state.<sup>52</sup> All illicit taxes [*rasum*] levied by the revenue officials were declared illegal.<sup>53</sup> To make the Settlement successful, Lawrence vouched for the cancellation of all arrears against the peasantry.<sup>54</sup> This was done to encourage the peasants to take up cultivation with enthusiasm and to put a check on the growing trend of the desertion of fields.<sup>55</sup> It is pertinent to mention that owing to the accumulation of huge arrears the peasantry would quite often abscond the lands as the only resort, which in turn caused huge losses to the state treasury. Therefore, toeing the line Lawrence, the revenue member also proposed a fresh start, urging caution as the backlog of dues loomed larger than the cultivators' capacity to pay. In consideration of the importance of cancellation of arrears for the promotion of agriculture, Pratap Singh finally agreed to write off the arrears.<sup>56</sup> Both Lawrence and Prideaux (Resident) praised this act of the Maharaja Pratap Singh.<sup>57</sup>

Thus, after making many efforts by 1895 all villages within the tehsils of the Valley had been surveyed with their reports submitted to the State Council. In this process, the entire interior topography of each tehsil and village was mapped with minute details. Not only the boundaries of tehsils and villages were sketched but the surfaces of the ground were also portrayed. Every detail of the interior was depicted and represented with coloured variations. Thus, the maps drawn didn't simply exhibit the external boundaries of the tehsils and villages but they also reflected their physical aspects and internal peculiarities.

### Shortcomings of the Settlement

The fiscal landscape of Kashmir underwent significant changes between 1887 and 1895, as the government revised the revenue assessment and imposed a sizeable increase in taxes. The revenue collected from land continued to rise as new regions were added to the list of re-assessments. In fact, the proposal was that by 1906, the state's coffers would be enriched by another 3.5 lakhs annually. This foresight proved accurate, as the years between 1890 and 1925 witnessed a steady ascent in land revenue collected by the government. These changes reflect a concerted effort by the state to

bolster its financial stability and tap into new sources of revenue. It is evident that the government's tax policies had a profound impact on the state's fiscal landscape and played a substantial role in shaping its path over time.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, the British were also careful not to disrupt the existing social and economic order, particularly about the privileged landholding class. As a result, settlement officers were instructed to turn a blind eye to certain villages and areas, such as those held as Dharmarth or belonging to influential officials. Furthermore, villages that were leased out to contractors or were considered *Amani*, as well as areas held by *Chakdars*, *Tankhadars*, *Mukarraridars*, and *Muafidars* were also excluded from being assessed at prevalent rates. These exclusions were considered suitable because they helped maintain a progressive relationship with the ruler and the social elites.<sup>59</sup> However, despite the claims that the settlement policies were designed to protect the interests of cultivators, in reality, they favoured the landholding class. The cultivators were left at the mercy of the landholders who were able to extract maximum surplus from them through oppressive demands. This left the cultivators struggling to make ends meet and unable to improve their economic condition. The exclusion of certain villages and areas from being assessed at current rates also meant that the revenue collection was not as efficient as it could have been. This led to a situation where the British colonial administration was unable to fully exploit the resources of the land and the potential for economic development was limited. Furthermore, criticisms were aimed at revenue-collecting officials, indicating that they were not performing their duties adequately. Despite these criticisms, no efforts were made to restructure or reform the existing system, nor were any steps taken to reduce the tax burden on cultivators.<sup>60</sup> However, the British continued to employ native intermediaries, such as *Lambardar's*, *Choukidar's*, *Zaildar's*, and *Tahsildar's*, to collect taxes from cultivators. These intermediaries required payment from the cultivators, either directly or indirectly, adding to their financial burden. While it is true that dealing with each *assami* (cultivator) separately would have been impractical for the state, relying on intermediaries who often exploited the cultivators was not a solution either. Lawrence, in his recommendation for the efficient functioning of the administration and convenience of the people, proposed the restoration of the post of *Mir Chaudhri* – a semi-hereditary official at *Tehsil* level responsible for collecting land revenue. According to Lawrence, this post was extremely beneficial in the past and would aid the administration and people in the present as well. To ensure the smooth collection of revenue, the *Zaildars* were also retained as important pillars of the revenue-collecting establishment. Lawrence advocated that only two *Mir Chaudhuri's* and *Zaildars* would suffice for *Tehsil Lal*, and would be compensated like earlier, with a *maufis* of three *Kharwar's* or 12 acres, out of which eight (8) would be irrigated. Furthermore, Lawrence recommended the renewal of the role of the

*choukidar*, a village office bearer who was entrusted with the task of keeping watch and maintaining order. Lawrence also proposed that the *choukidar's* be placed under the supervision of *tahsildars* to enhance their effectiveness. In evaluating the impact of settlement policies, Chitralkha Zutshi contends that "under the revenue settlements, the land revenue demand remained largely unchanged, signifying that those responsible for its collection and management retained considerable influence over the peasantry. Despite the peasantry was ostensibly freed from the control of revenue officials, as asserted by colonial authorities, the shift to cash payments linked them to the broader economic system thereby making them susceptible to its fluctuations.<sup>61</sup> Additionally, the transformation of the hereditary right of occupancy into a legal category approved by the state altered the peasant into a tenant at will, subject to potential eviction from their land, besides, forfeiture of possession rights merely due to an inability to fully meet the land revenue obligations".<sup>62</sup>

This paper highlights the pivotal role of surveying and mapping as essential tools in the state-formation processes of early modern Europe, revealing their extension to various parts of the world during the zenith of empire formation. Focusing on the agrarian landscape of Kashmir, this study demonstrates how colonial governmentality, facilitated through cartography, led to a restructuring and reforming of the region. The conducted surveys brought to light inherent deficiencies in the existing agrarian system, prompting a critical examination and revision of its principles. This process was instrumental in devising new modes of land revenue settlement and shaping the agrarian landscape. These surveys, marked by a discourse of scientific rationality, facilitated the emergence of new intervention strategies and discourses about space. As the British colonial state aimed to establish itself primarily as a revenue state, the execution of revenue surveys played a decisive role in instituting the colonial state within its political space. Through this, the construction of new space though abstract was completed. Also, critical knowledge about the agrarian landscape of Kashmir was generated, providing the necessary foundation for effective administration. In essence, the paper highlights the multifaceted impact of surveying and mapping in shaping the political and agrarian landscapes under the influence of colonial governance.

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