

## **A Response to the Rejoinder by Iftekhar Iqbal**

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First, let me express my profound apologies if I have hurt the feelings of Dr. Iqbal as his word in the last part of his rejoinder indicates. No, I did not mean any disrespect for colleagues in other disciplines, particularly history, of whatever form, political, legal, economic or social. We have only the records left by people who have come and gone before us some time hundreds of years back. And as it happens, trying to capture even things which may seem obvious is fraught with difficulties because what is obvious now was not so then; or what was obvious before is not so now. This is because culture changes and with that the minds of people. Trying to read minds of people hundreds of years or even 50 year earlier is not an easy job and that is what a historian is often called to do. But herein lays the scopes for imaginative interpretations. That is why I requested my other colleagues to go through the original references that Dr. Iqbal has so painstakingly recorded. For that matter, I myself had opened the pages of the Dufferin Report almost 30 years after I have last done it and looked at it far more critically than what I did then.

But let me get to the basic point made by Dr. Iqbal. He contends that I should have read the other chapters. I did, yet, I thought that it would be best to examine the ones that I did because I had had some interest in the Permanent Settlement (PS) and to learn whether there were factors other than a certainty of a fixed sum of revenue as we have been taught since school days which were uppermost in the mind of Lord Cornwallis and his henchmen. Dr. Iqbal argues that there was an ecological argument behind it. My contention was that it may be but it did not become obvious to me from the analysis put forward by him. Nor has he tried to clearly dispel my views in his rejoinder.

But let me put forward another point. Naturally, the ecology of a geographic area determines or influences human behaviour and human systems such as agriculture and its management including surplus appropriation. I think this is a fertile field for further discourse, both based on past phenomenon and those at the present.

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