
ROLE OF MODERN RYOTWARI SYSTEM

Article Particulars

Received: 30.5.2017

Accepted: 3.6.2017

Published: 28.7.2017

**Dr. V.K. ARUNAGIRI**

Guest Lecturer,
Department of History,
R.V.Government Arts College,
Chengalpattu – 603 001, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract

The Britishers introduced many land revenue reforms in order to increase their wealth. Among these reforms modern Ryotwari system occupied an important place because it introduced many changes in the land related problems and replaced the defects of Ryotwari system of 1814. The two obvious defects of the Ryotwari System of 1814 were found in the classification of land, methods of survey and over assessment. Among the two obvious defects the over assessment made or caused many of the inhabitants had fled the district. After that the government introduced many relief measures. Though these were benefited by only a few.

Keywords: Britishers, Ryotwari System, ryots, Torture Committee, Revenue Settlement Department, zamindar

The total failure of the Ryotwari system of 1814 and its results changed the attitude of the officers. In 1838, the collector of Madurai Blackburne felt that the peasants fled due to the over assesses of the government and affected untold able miserable's. Therefore he requested the government to find out suitable remedial measures and grant concessions to the ryots. The government was not willing to reconcile because the remedial measures and grant concessions made loss of the income to the government. In between 1838 to 1854 many collectors appointed to this district though they are not able to improve the position of the peasant. In 1854 R.D Parker, the then collector of Madurai take steps to improve the position of the peasants and wrote letter to the Board of Revenue emphasizing the need to resurvey the lands. His letter did not introduce any serious effect and the Board did not give serious consideration to this. Generally the situation of the agriculture Madurai district was deteriorating day by day because of the frequent droughts, famine and epidemic. Besides, the vagaries of monsoon and the poor farming techniques affined the peasants and the Madras government met out financial crisis. The financial difficulties of the Madras Government changed the entire attitude of state and the government was not able to reduce the rents of the peasants. To solve the financial crisis the government introduced high rates

of taxes proved to be quite injurious to the general welfare of the inhabitants. All collectors recommended the government to reduce the assessment. In 1854 Bourdillion, an experienced civil servant reported that because of the oppressive exactions a large majority of the ryots had a hand-to-mouth existence. After the report of Bourdillion in 1854 the government appointed the Torture Committee in 1854. It reported that there was the practice of torture followed by officers in Madurai district. The report showed that flogging, sun treatment, fastening were all very usual methods of torture. There were number of reports against the tahsildars and sub collectors who were oppressive and who compelled the ryots to do things against their will. The government officers did not follow proper methods in Madurai there was no regular scientific and methodical survey. There the high officers adopted a method of high assessment and the absence of accurate records. These resulted in the decline of cultivation. The immediate decline of the cultivation urged the government of India and the Home Government to take immediate remedial measures relating to the peasants. Consequently in 1858 the Revenue Settlement Department was constituted and Newill appointed as the first Director of Revenue Settlement. The newly constituted revenue settlement department takes necessary steps to fulfill the necessity of the peasants Survey and careful settlement of the land revenue will remove the evils and that the moderate taxes and assessment would result in an increase of the area under cultivation. After the introduction of new Revenue Settlement the early ryotwari system was abolished and a scientific survey of the district was undertaken in 1872 and completed in 1884. All the then existing six taluks, Dindigul, Madurai, Melur, Palani, Periyakulam and Tirumangalam were surveyed. The survey revealed an increase of 9.3 percent in the extent of cultivated area in the case of wet lands and 7.5 percent in the case of dry lands. Based on this survey a modified settlement was introduced during the year 1885.

The Chief Features of the Revised System

The distinguishing feature of this system is that the state is brought into direct contact with the owner of the land and collects its revenue through its own servants without the intervention of an intermediate agent such as the zamindar or farmer and its object is the creation of peasant proprietors. All the income derived from extended cultivation goes to the state. Ryotwari lands are known as ayan, sirkar, koru or government lands. The salient features of the revised ryotwari system were the exclusion of landlords, protection of the interests of the actual cultivators of the soil, direct settlement with the individual ryots, fixed rates, and the collection of tax in money. This modern ryotwari settlement consisted of five stage-demarcations of boundaries, revenue survey, classification and inspection of soils, assessment and record of rights of ryots. The new revenue settlement highly helped the peasants than the previous ryotwari system.

Demarcation

Demarcation means the boundary of a specific area, demarcation line, limit (i.e.) a conceptual separation or distinction. There is a narrow line between sanity and insanity.

An important change was introduced by the new ryotwari system in the land was known's as boundary demarcation. It was under taken by the survey department. It was done in accordance with a procedure laid down by law. The India Act XXVIII of 1860 and Madras Act II of 1884. Clearly expressed the guide to the boundary demarcation were put up and field, village, and taluk maps were prepared to show the position, area and shape of every field. Permanent boundary marks, whether of fields or villages stone or masonry pillars placed at the main boundary angles. In this new system the government collects cash for cost of repair and maintenance from the revenue payer. Demarcation of boundary was a significant one because it gave clear boundary to the land holders.

Revenue Survey

There is a considerable difference between the assessment of villages in Madura and Dindigul, it is imperative that a resurvey and re-classification of the lands should be made, before introducing the system. This would prove much more satisfactory to the inhabitants and finally turn out more beneficial to the country than lowering the assessment fixed on the defective classification of Mr.Hurdis. After the introduction of boundary demarcation the government initiated the steps to identify the revenue survey. It was the second stage of the modern ryotwari settlement. In 1881 the settlement department began its operations in the district and submitted report known as the settlement scheme. It was approved by government in 1885. After the approval of the government the introduction of settlement scheme began in 1885, and the work was completed in March 1889. The revenue survey showing all the physical features and separated the lands such as hills, jungles, roads, channels, tanks, topes, housed and cultivable lands in this settlement scheme the size of the fields were to be accurately shown. Through this revenue survey the cultivation of the crops in the lands were easily understood by the government.

Classification of Soils

The government followed an advanced method such as the inspection and classification of the soils. After the survey was completed lands were classified on the basis of the nature of the soil, produce and irrigational facilities. The soils were classified and grouped under the two main headings viz., Regar or black cotton soil and red ferruginous. The regar was further divided into the classes, black clay, black loam and black sand, while the red ferruginous was divided into two classes, red loam and red sand. Each of these classes was subdivided into five sorts, the best, the good, the ordinary, the inferior and the worst. By merging soils of equal productive value, 8 *tarams* were fixed. They were again sub-divided according to their fertility into 'classes' or sorts. The alluvial and exceptional soil included the rich island soils or lanka as well as garden and other permanently improved soils of more than ordinary productiveness. In Madurai the Periyar region was placed under the first class, while the areas, not so well supplied with water were placed in the second Remaining all other areas with poor water facilities constituted the lower class. In the Non Periyar area the following system of classification was adopted. River fed soil which was ordinarily supplied with

water for eight months and upwards. River-fed or rain fed areas which ordinarily had water supply for less than eight months but not less than five months and less than five months but not less than three month. All other soils were placed under the last class. The characters of the soil, as particularized in the above series have a very decided influence upon their fertility. Even though some circumstances affected the productive power of the soil. As the soil of each series varied in quality it was necessary next to consider what other circumstances mainly affected the productive powers of the soil. Firstly the mechanical composition of clay, sand, lime and organic matter and secondly the chemical composition of the soil had to be taken into account because the minute quantities of salts, acids and other mineral ingredients, were essential to the nourishment of plants. These factors were considered very important in the arriving at the proper assessment.

Assessment

Generally the assessment increased the wealth of the government treasury. So the government gave more importance to the assessment of the lands. In the earlier settlements the rates of assessment were 50 percent of the gross produce for wet land and 33 percent for dry land. When the revision began, the maximum was reduced to 3 percent, the average being about 25 percent. The new scheme introduced tax uniformity without the differentiations of lands such as wet and dry. Again this scheme affected the day to day activities of the peasant. In course of time a gross produce percentage was not considered sufficiently accurate and the net produce was taken into consideration by deducting the cost of cultivation. Again that the government understood that the then assessment was not suitable for this district. So the government introduced another scheme. In 1864 that the government share of the revenue was fixed at one half of the ascertained net produce. In fixing the actual rates of assessment it was usual to round off the half net so as to produce an even gradation from one rate to another. Finally, completing the assessment work separate money rate was fixed known as a '*taram*'. It highly supported to the peasants because they paid assessment through money not crops. The assessment under the new system the land were divided according its water and irrigation facilities. Following that the irrigation for the Perennial River and tank fed areas the rain fed areas. The land irrigated by river channels, spring channels and other channels yielding a good supply of water but requiring much labor belonged first, second, third and fourth class respectively. All lands fed by small jungles streams with a precarious water supply as well as under rain fed areas were of the fifth class. The grading under the same *taram* of soils differing in class and sort but possessing the same productive powers was called the merging of soils. In the new system a high officer was appointed by the government for the assessing of the revenue. The officer was called as the Deputy Commissioner or settlement officer who had the power of assessing the revenue. For his assistance he should appoint all the officers to collect the revenue. He should get the miscellaneous accounts already prepared by the classifiers during the progress of the classification such as the account relating to transfer from dry to wet and vice versa,

transfers from single crop to double crop etc. He also got the false charges noted in the classification registers in accordance with the revenue accounts of the harvesting immediately preceding that which the settlement was introduced. The officer had taken into account merits and demerits of the lands before fixing rates generally. In fixing the rate the general condition of the seasons, good and bad and the average climatic conditions of the tract were taken into account and deduction of 25 percent was generally made in the case of unprofitable areas. Besides they changed the old method of crops calculated the Madras measures and was converted into kilograms. During the assessment, the government granted concessions to the peasants due to the affect of natural calamities following this there were they followed two types of remissions- Casual remission and fixed remission. Casual remission was granted in cases of crop failures due to drought, flood, blight etc. Fixed remission was granted where waste lands were rendered cultivable by the labor of the ryot. These remissions gave certain relief and have some enthusiasm to the peasants related with the new scheme.

Record of Rights

After enter the right of property land settled map, boundary all necessary items of the field, boundary, measurement and map. It showed the individual land. Above all the creation of records was a significant one because it gave individual right to the occupant this work is called as which deals the final work of the Ryotwari settlement was the preparation of the record of rights. Before the preparation of the record they prepared primarily of the fields map and the field registers. Field map and field register were highly used in several ways, Field map exhibited the position, number and shape of each field and the field register gave its number, area and soil class. Moreover, the field register also showed whether it was irrigated or unirrigated and stated the assessment and the name of the occupant. Generally in Madurai district the peasants used their lands without any proper for identification before the preparation of the field register. That create great confusion among the peasant it had been seen while preparing the field register. The settlement officer was often found confronted with disputes regarding the right of occupancy. After the preparation of the field register it, was recast annually, to the extent of recording the annual charges of occupancy. As the occupant of every field was the revenue payer for that field, the Ryotwari field register was also regarded as the annual revenue roll. Finally, for the administrative convenience the field was sub-divided indefinitely, and every sub-division down to the hundredth part of an acre, was distinguished by a serial letter or number and entered in the register under the number of the field. Thus, as a result of the introduction of the Modern Ryotwari system, the demarcation of boundaries, revenue survey, classification of land, assessment and registration were properly done for the first time by the government. By this new system the government as well as the ryots was benefitted. Moreover, the modern ryotwari system paved the way for the improve of the economic position of the people of Tamil Nadu particularly in Madurai district. This system is more advantageous to Government and certainly more desirable to the inhabitants. It encourages the ryots to extend their cultivation by lowering the

assessment. The revenue from the country would correspondingly increase. By granting the individual pattayams or pattas it would make the lower classes of inhabitants independent of the higher. This policy gave an abundant fruit.

References

1. Madurai District Record, Vol.8863, p.403.
2. Ibid., p.343.
3. Francis, W., Madurai District Gazetteer, Madras, 1906, P.192.
4. SrinivasaRaghavalyengar, A memorandum on the progress of the Madras Presidency during the last forty years, Madras, 1893, p.27
5. Dutt, R.C., The Economic History of India, Vol.II, Calcutta, 1906, p.50.
6. Torture Commission Report in the Parliamentary papers, 1858, p.2.
7. Madurai District Record, Vol.5322, p.162,.
8. History of Land Revenue Settlement and Abolition of Intermediary tenures in Tamil Nadu, Madras, 1977, p.90.
9. Baliga, B.S., Madras District Gazetteer Madurai, Madras, 1961, p.34.
10. Ibid., p.35.
11. Manual of the Administration of the Madras presidency, Madras, 1889, p.104.
12. Collins Thesarus of the English language – Complete and unabridged 2nd edition, 2002, Harper Collins Publishers, 1995, 2002
13. Ramachandran, C., East India Company and Soth Indian Economy, Madras, 1980, p.25.
14. Baden Powel, Land System of British India, Vol.III, Delhi, 1972, p.36.
15. Baliga, B.S, op.cit, p.38.
16. Francis, W, op.cit, p.202
17. Chakravarthy, A Hand Book of Land Tenures in the Presidency of Madras 1688 to 1924, Madras, 1924, p.109.
18. Board proceedings, No.2491, dated 27th August 1885.
19. G.O.No.1155, Revenue dated 4th December 1891.
20. Boag, G.T., The Madras Presidency 1881-1931, 1933, p.58
21. Francis, W, op.cit, p.206.
22. Board Proceedings No.56, dated 30th January 1883.
23. Natarajan, Rise and growth of the Ryotwari system of Land and Revenue administration in the Madras Presidency, Madras, 1984, p.218.
24. G.O.No.968, Revenue, dated 8th November 1886.
25. G.O.No.944, dated 6th September 1885.
26. Kaye, John William, The Administration of the East India company, Allahabad, 1966, p.27.
27. Board proceedings, No.2491 dated 27th August 1885.
28. G.O.No.5012, Revenue, dated 12th December 1895.
29. G.O.No.4345, Revenue, dated 12th December 1895.