

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **ISSUES IN LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION**

Study of land revenue administration cannot be complete without the study of the issues involved in it. In the previous chapters, the powers and functions of the revenue officers from Collector down to Talathi have been discussed. In this chapter, an attempt is made to highlight the issues which affect the effectiveness of the land revenue administration. The theoretical discussion of the problem has also been supplemented with the data collected from the interview of the respondents.

The issues have been discussed in this chapter in the following sequence. 1) Delay 2) Political Interference 3) Transfer 4) Training 5) Proposal of District Government and the Collector.

#### **1. DELAY**

The common complaint about the revenue administration is delay which ultimately gives rise to another problem of corruption. Various provisions have been made in the code, manual and notifications of the government to avoid delay but no satisfactory solution has been found to avoid it or to minimise it.

People visit the revenue offices with the hope that they will get the required help from the officers, but their experience of getting work done compels them to keep away from revenue administration. As observed by R.K. Vepa<sup>1</sup> "There is no doubt that the average citizens view of Govt. offices is dismal one; and most try to avoid contact with them as far as possible. In fact, so bad is the image of a Govt. office that one feels genuinely surprised if one were to meet with just a little courtesy or understanding in them".

A retired I.A.S. officer quoted that "The acid test of the performance of a civil servant both at the top and at the bottom is his ability to deliver

goods. His usefulness to the common man has been eroded. Even for paying taxes, govt. dues, charges etc; a man has to run from pillar to post. The tortuous and dialatory procedures cause much inconvenience and harassment to the people".<sup>2</sup>

A question was asked to the officer respondents "Are the land revenue matters in your office pending for a period more than 3 months?" 89% of the officers (16 out of 18) agreed and only 11% of them denied about pendency, however their inspection reports indicated that they were not free from pendency. Thus, it can be concluded that pendency has become a universal phenomenon in land revenue administration.

#### **Cause of Delay:**

The respondents were asked to mention the causes of delay in land revenue administration which are classified into five classes as under. a) Heavy workload on government officials, b) protocol duties e) inadequate staff d) centralisation of powers e) intentional delay.

a) **Heavy Work Load on Govt. Officials:** The revenue administration is subject to strain on account of various types of work which it has to handle at a very short notice or on a priority basis viz. work in connection with natural calamities like floods, earthquakes scarcity, food and civil supplies, land reforms etc. The major schemes which Collectors are now required to shoulder and which take a bulk of his time are EGS, D.P.D.C. and large number of Developmental works. This was not so about 15 years back and more so not immediately after the reorganisation and introduction of MLRC, 1966

To know the attitude of the Revenue Officers towards the Land Revenue functions a question was asked to the respondents from Officers' category "Which of the following works is given priority by you?" 1) Land revenue 2) Law and order, 3) Supply and 4) Co-ordination (please give preferences). Their responses are classified in the following table.

**Table 7.1: Break up of priorities given by the Rev.Officers to various functions**

Functions	Priorities given by Respondents					Total
	I	II	III	IV	Other	
Land Revenue	2	3	7(39%)	2	4(22%)	18
Law and Order	10(56%)	2	2	0	4	18
Supply	1	7(39%)	2	4	4	18
Co-ordination	1	2	3	8(44%)	4	18

It could be observed from Table 7.1 that first priority was given to the law and order function by 56% officers. Considering the maximum number of frequency in each preference, the second priority goes to supply function third priority goes to land revenue and fourth to the co-ordination function. Though the land revenue function is the basic function of the department it got third priority while only 11% of the officers gave first priority to the land revenues function.

Four officers gave other answers as all the functions were of equal importance, all the functions were interdependent, the situation and circumstances decide which function should be given priority.

To a supplementary question : 'please state reasons for above answer' the officers giving first priority to law and order stated that all other functions depend upon law and order situation. It gives security to public property and life and social tranquility depends upon it. Delays in matters of supply or co-ordination are tolerable but delay in maintaining law and order is not tolerable.

This shows that attitude of revenue officers towards land revenue function tends to hold it as a subsidiary function which can be kept aside for performing other functions.

In 1994-95 most of the revenue officers were engaged in the election work. Literacy campaigns, pulse-polio inoculation, small savings collection, role of administrator in co-operative or local self govt. institutions, recovery of other departments etc. are the examples indicating growing work of the revenue

officials. The study group appointed by Govt. of Maharashtra also observed that "in most of the cases such work happens to be important in nature at that particular time, from point of view of priorities given by Government. As a result, it always happened that the basic revenue functions get second priority and the staff of the Revenue Department has to get itself engaged in functions which are not basically the duties of that Department"<sup>3</sup>.

One has to agree with the conclusion that today Collector's role as the officer in charge of general administration has overshadowed his role as a Revenue Officer, therefore, it would be more appropriate to call him a District Administrator or Collector and District Administrator<sup>4</sup>.

The heavy workload of various functions is the principal cause of delay which ultimately results into inefficiency of the administration. To assess the relationship between overburdening and efficiency a question was asked to officers "Do you agree with the view that the efficiency of the revenue officers in land revenue matters has decreased on account of overburdening of functions other than land revenue ? Why ?" Their responses are classified in the following table.

**Table 7.2: Officers' Response Towards 'Overburdening Reduces Efficiency'**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	13	72%
Disagree	05	28%
	N= 18	100%

It could be observed from Table 7.2 that a substantial majority of the respondents (about 72%) agree with the view that overburdening of other functions reduces the efficacy of land revenue work while 28% of them disagreed with the view.

The respondents who have agreed gave following justification for their view. On account of other works of urgent nature as election, law and order

situation, protocol, meetings organised by superior officials, one loses contact with land revenue work. Moreover Revenue has lost its importance as a main source of State Finance, therefore, functions related with it have become minor functions. Further, more time is consumed in other works which are time bound and with specific targets decided by the Govt. Every year new functions have been added to the revenue department.

The Respondents disagreed with the view justified that the responsibilities entrusted by the Government in the interest of the Nation or for welfare of society must be accomplished in time. This results into negligence of land revenue functions for some period. The delay does not mean inefficiency. To cover the backlog of revenue work, extra work has to be done by revenue staff, campaigns and tours are also arranged to recover pendency of land revenue matters.

b) **Protocol duties:** Considerable time of the Revenue Officers is also consumed in protocol work. In spite of general orders intended to minimise such work, a good deal of time of Revenue Officers is spent only in accompanying Ministers and Dignitaries visiting their areas. As a result the disposal of cases by the Collector and his subordinates is much below<sup>5</sup> the expected standard and they are also not able to do the prescribed touring pertaining to night halts.

c) **Inadequate Staff:** Since the implementation of zero base budget in Maharashtra, the vacant posts of Govt. servants were not filled in urgently. In the Collectorate and in Tahsils some of the posts of clerks were vacant for two years, resulting in excessive workload on other staff. The inadequacy of staff is both quantitative as well as qualitative. Due to lack of training the personnel lack the skill of drafting, noting, filing as well as the sense of commitment to work.

The inadequacy of staff as one of the reasons of delay was also observed by the Heble Commission: "Collectors have complained that the

workload of revenue officers has increased enormously in recent years but adequate staff for dealing with this increase has not been sanctioned. There has been an enormous increase in the correspondence work in the Taluka and District offices on account of greater social and political awareness among people. A large number of complaint is received than before. The recovery of government dues other than land revenue has also been increased and there is also increase in litigation".<sup>6</sup> To cope with the changing situation the staffing pattern has not been changed.

**d) Tendency of Centralisation of powers:**

It is observed that the levels of decision-making have tended to be progressively pushed upwards so that what in the old days a Tahsildar at the Taluka level felt competent to decide would now be at the sub-divisional or even district level and so on up the line. The Dist. Collector's powers, which at one time were considerable, began to be circumscribed by directives from State Capitals. This tended to delay decision on even simple matter, and led to overburdening of the senior officials.

At present, as observed in earlier chapters, there is centralisation of powers at the Collectorate level. The power of giving permission for use of land for non-agricultural purpose is mostly centralised at the Collectorate level, however, the power of giving permission for transfer of watan land or adivasi land are centralised at the Divisional Commissioner level.

**e) Intentional delay:** In a democratic set of government, it is expected that the administrator should supervise and ensure the efficient implementation of policies and must work for 'the identity of administration with the people for whom the administration exists'<sup>7</sup>. It is also expected that the grievances of the people should be examined quickly, carefully and, above all fairly<sup>8</sup>. In practice we find that people are required to visit and persue the revenue officers even for a small matter. Though the required documents are submitted, there is no guarantee that the matter will be finalised within specific time limit. People

have lost confidence in the administration. Perhaps the greatest single factor that has contributed to the loss of confidence in the administration, has been the growing corruption in public services<sup>9</sup>.

Majority of the respondents from category of people spoke in terms of equation; revenue administration is equal to corruption. No action is taken on the application at any level of revenue administration without some gratification to the talathi or to the concerned clerk, indicates that intentional delay is caused for corruption. There are innumerable instances of corruption prevailing in the revenue organisation. Some subordinate staff exploited the poor cultivates in demarcation of their plots, sanction of remission of land revenue and cess, distribution of relief materials, disposal of encroachment cases, land disputes, various revenue inquiries, allotment of cultivable lands to adivasis and assessment of compensation in land acquisition<sup>10</sup>.

It is rightly observed that "Exhortations have been addressed to public servants to desist from bribe taking and to the people from bribe giving. These appeals rather overlook that, while a number of persons may be giving bribe to derive undue advantage, the state of administration in the country today is such that in a substantial number of honest citizens find themselves compelled against their better judgment to slide into the practice of greasing the official palms when they go into government offices to get their legitimate work attended to, if only to escape harassment from delay and similar causes"<sup>11</sup>. The first effort to eliminate most of the drawbacks of revenue administration was made by Mr.A.K. Lakhina, known as Lakhina Experiment.

**Lakhina Experiment:**

Shri. A.K. Lakhina, the District Collector of Ahmednagar adopted a novel exercise of administrative reforms in the District Collectorate to make it more efficient and people oriented.

He observed that citizen does not have a very pleasant impression about the existing government machinery. Inordinate delays, unhelpful attitude of

officials, favouritism, corruption, inefficiency in grievance redressal, lack of information on procedural details are some of the reasons of public disgust. Common belief is that either influence or bribe produces results. A feeling of helplessness that seems to be there in common man probably arises from the inadequacy of inherited administrative model<sup>12</sup>.

Lakhina suggested 3 types of reforms as follows :

- a) **Regulation of clerk-public contact** : This includes designing the office as per the task sequence, counter system where tokens are given stating procedural requirement and time bound decisions are taken.
- b) **Demystification of procedures and easy accessibility of documents**: This includes preparation of leaflets and pamphlets in simple vernacular language stating requirements and procedures, adopting six bundle system of papers, preparation of desk manuals, easy accessibility of documents to public, cleanliness and dust proofing.
- c) **Motivation and Training** : This includes modern organisation and management approach, commitment to accept new procedures and means and training of Class III employees at the time of recruitment<sup>13</sup>.

To implement all these reforms require iron will of the inspirer, the moment it fades, the system recoils.

This experiment was implemented initially at Ahmednagar Collectorate. Due to the success achieved from these reforms it was called as 'Lakhina Pattern' of the Collectorate, and it was implemented throughout the Maharashtra State at all levels of revenue offices. Old furniture was modernised, wooden chairs were replaced by comfortable ones, glass cabins for the departmental heads were provided at the entrance of the office, record room was modernised to trace record easily, names of the six bundles were affixed on each shelf. However, the soul of the reform i.e. breaking the people-clerk contact, token system and time bound decision system was not implemented anywhere except Ahmednagar. The pattern is still used in many offices for sorting and arranging

record as per the format given by Mr.Lakhina.

**Utility of Lakhina Pattern:**

A question was asked to the officers to determine the utility of Lakhina Pattern in creating efficiency in revenue administration 'Do you think that the Lakhina Pattern is useful for increasing the efficiency of revenue department? Why' Their responses are given in the following table.

**Table No. 7.3: Break-up of Officers' Responses About Utility of Lakhina pattern**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Fully useful	5	27.7%
Partially useful	9	50.0%
Not useful	3	16.7%
Don't know	1	5.6%
N =	18	100 %

It could be observed from Table 7.3 that only 27.7% of the respondents think that it is fully useful to increase efficiency of revenue department, 50% of them think that it is partially useful while 16.7% of them think that it is not useful at all. To the supplementary question why ? their reasoning was an under.

**Fully useful:** These respondents justified their opinion on grounds that due to binding of time bound decisions a sense of disciplined work (Commitment) is created and sense of accountability is also created. Due to breakage of contact between people and clerks malpractices can also be prevented.

**Partially useful :** The respondents holding this view pointed out that all recommendations were not implementable. It was implemented to bring out only the environmental change i.e. modern furniture, cabins, colour to building etc. It was also useful in sorting and arranging records in six bundle system.

**Not useful:** The officers holding this view pointed out that there is lack of commitment towards timely work at the lower levels. All the work cannot be considered as time bound work due to uncertainty of allotment of urgent work

to revenue officials. Excessive workload, lack of proportionate staff, tradition bound ways of procedure of work of clerks are other reasons for denial. As a clerk at the Tahsil or Collectorate handles 8 to 10 subjects, the record racks are used as per convenience of the clerk and not according to the tables of 6 bundles pasted on the racks.

To create efficiency in the revenue administration the Lakhina experiment has failed, it must succeed. There is need of iron will of administrator to implement it. After implementation of new staffing pattern recommended by the Bongirwar study group, Lakhina experiment should be implemented in spirit.

**Suggestions to achieve efficiency:**

It has been observed that the revenue officers specially the District Collector and Sub-Divisional Officers are overburdened officials. To achieve efficiency following suggestions are made:

1) **Reducing the size of the District and Sub-Division:** The District with larger size and large population becomes heavy district from view of the workload of the Collectorate. To achieve efficiency, the districts should be divided. Maharashtra Govt. has already divided Ratnagiri, Aurangabad, Chandrapur and Osmanabad districts. The proposal of division of Nashik and Ahmednagar Districts has been accepted in principle in 1993, but remains to be implemented. The division of district will reduce the workload at the Collectorate. Similarly, if a Sub-Division is created for 2 Talukas, the Sub-Divisional Officer will be relieved from excessive work enabling him to supervise and inspect the work at the Taluka, Circle and Saza level.

ii) **New Staffing Pattern:** On the basis of scientific study on Reorganisation of Revenue Activities, the Bongirwar study group has proposed a new staffing pattern in which the staff has to be recruited in proportionate to the cases handled in the revenue office. Implementation of this recommendation is likely to avoid delay in the administration. Nevertheless it ultimately depends upon the zeal of individual officer with which he 'gets work done' from his

subordinates.

iii) **Decentralisation of powers:** To avoid delay there is need of decentralisation of powers from the Divisional and Collectorate Levels. The powers of granting permission for transfer of watan or adivasi land should be delegated to the Collectorate level while powers of granting N.A. permission should be totally delegated to the respective tahsildars. The conference of Divisional Commissioners from Maharashtra came to conclusion that to create efficiency in the revenue administration and to make it people oriented there is need of decentralisation of powers in the revenue department.<sup>14</sup>

iv) **Training for revenue service:** For the post of clerk and Talathi in revenue administration appropriate training should be given at the time of entry into the revenue services.

v) **Election Branch :** At the Collectorate and Taluka level permanent election branch with adequate staff should be established. This staff may be used to clear out pending cases of other branches in the period when there will be not election.

## 2. POLITICAL INTERFERENCE

Democratization has brought the political leaders and administrators together, the politicians as the policy formulators and the administrators as executors. It is, however, expected that the politicians or ministers should not 'interfere' in the administration. A very important factor which saps the morale of the civil service is the interference of the Ministers and Politicians in the work of administration on behalf of their partymen, friends and relatives<sup>15</sup>. In the study of land revenue administration the study of political interference, is also of crucial importance.

### **Relation between Politicians And Administrators:**

As for the role of the politicians and the administrators, the politicians bring to the notice of administration problems faced by the people, request

for preferential treatment towards certain sections of the society, pressure for getting certain things done or refraining from taking certain actions, complaints about administrative lapses or high handedness and claims for official acceptance of one set of programmes as against another. Similarly, the administrators seek the help of political leaders in maintaining law and order, in executing development programmes, and in solving their own personnel problems<sup>16</sup>. Today, since administration is controlled by popularly elected ministers, there is a feeling that such decisions can also be modified or even reversed by 'pressure' at the appropriate level<sup>17</sup>

**Justification of Interference:**

The interference of the political leaders and Ministers is inevitable in the democratic set up. An I.C.S. Officer has presented his experience as follows "It often happened that the Deputy Commissioner made one recommendation while the local party boss made another, which probably was favoured by the Minister who was a representative of the particular party. It required considerable flexibility of mind to appreciate that in a democracy, representatives of the people in Government had to do things to keep them in power even if this did not help to maintain the position of their senior officers in the districts<sup>18</sup>

Most of the IAS Officers have accepted 'the political interference as the political participation of the leaders'. An IAS officer remarked in 1983 that "We are now working in a different external environment, greater political interference or let me call it political participation in administration is inherent in the democratic political system that we have adopted for the governance of our country?"<sup>19</sup> The experience of a retired revenue officer also supports the tradition 'The Ministers considered the officers to be the employees of the Minister, issuing oral orders and expecting them to be carried out'<sup>20</sup>.

**Causes of Interference:**

The politicians have greater control over the officers' transfers, postings

and promotions. As a result, the politicians are in a good position to exploit these officers. These officers easily succumb to the pressure since they need political favours. As observed by Mangat Rai (I.C.S. Punjab) “from the first day of independence, the politics influenced the administration and administrators learnt to be sensitive to politics”<sup>21</sup>. The political leaders perform the role of representative as an agent of the people and tend to evaluate administrative performance in terms of personalized demands and expectations<sup>22</sup>.

One of the respondents from officers' cadre told that previously the M.P.'s and M.L.A.s were consulting revenue officer to get the things done but now, people directly contact the Ministers who direct the concerned officer to get the work done. If the orders are not obeyed, it is most likely that the concerned officer may get transferred elsewhere within a short period. In the words of Bottomore 'Political administrators do not last very long if they become isolated from the political leadership of the state and dominant social classes in society'<sup>23</sup>

#### **Spheres of Interference:**

In land revenue administration, the areas prone to interference by the political leaders are transfer and postings of revenue staff, N.A. orders, proposals of purchase / sale of tribal land or watan lands, allocation of govt. land for specific purpose, acquisition of land for public purpose, distribution of surplus land, determination of paisewari, action to be taken against encroachment on government land etc.

#### **Respondent's opinion about Political Interference:**

A question was asked to the respondents from revenue department “Do the persons from following groups try to interfere the land revenue administration? a) Higher Officials b) Political leaders”.

None of them said that there is pressure from higher officers. While 14 officers (78%) and 15 field officers (62%) pointed out that the pressure or interference in the administration is from the political leaders. Thus, about

70% (29 out of 42) of the respondents have come across the political interference.

**Means of Interference:** The means of interference as explained by the officers are of various types. Sometimes the files or papers of concerned matter are called at the State level and decisions are taken. Some ministers contact the officers on telephone and instruct them about specific matters under their jurisdiction. The local political leaders or party leaders personally visit the office along with the applicants while some people bring the recommendations of ministers. Even the revenue staff make good use of recommendations of ministers for their transfers.

The respondents who agreed about political interference in the revenue administration were asked a supplementary question "How do you react to the political interference?" Their responses are classified in the following table.

**Table 7.4 : Break-up of Respondent's Reaction To the Political Interference**

Response	Officers	C.O.& Talathis	Total	Percentage
Oppose	3	2	5	17%
Succumb	2	3	5	17%
Fit in the Rules	8	8	16	56%
Delay	1	2	3	10%
	14	15	N= 29	100%

It is evident from Table 7.4 that the respondents perform four types of roles at the time of political pressure.

**Oppose:** About 17% of the respondents said that they never took any decision under the pressure of political leaders. They strictly remained attached to the rules and regulations and clearly opposed the interference, which resulted in their transfer. One of the SLAO added that he was a Sub-Divisional Officer but due to non-tolerance of political interference he was transferred as SLAO at Nashik.

**Succumb:** 17% of the respondents said that there was no other alternative

but to succumb to the pressure of ministers. While taking some decision by going out of way, informal consent of their immediate superior officer was also obtained.

**Fit in the Rules:** Majority of the respondents 56% said that when the pressure becomes unavoidable, they try to fit the case in rules and regulations. For this, use of back dated stamps, orders, affidavits is made and on paper the case becomes sanctionable.

**Delay:** About 10% of the respondents said that when they did not want to do illegal things under political pressure, without denying directly they used to assure about it. In the name of preparation of documents or some other reasons purposefully tried to delay that decision. One of the officers said that the suggestions, recommendations, advice or instructions of political leaders should not be seen as interference. Though the leaders accompany the people for their revenue work, they also do not expect that all they have presented must be done. The things not fulfilling legal requirements can be dropped by the officers and leaders also do not mind it.

**People’s view about Political Interference:**

To assess the popular view towards political interference a question was asked to the respondents from people’s category “Do you think political pressure plays an important role in the land revenue administration?”. Their responses are shown in the following table.

**Table 7.5 : Break-up of Respondents’ view About Political Pressure**

Response to Political Pressure	Frequency	Percentage
Plays an important role	14	43.75%
Do not have important role	10	31.25%
Any other response	02	6.25%
Don’t know	06	18.75%
	N= 32	100%

It could be observed from Table 7.5 that a majority of respondents

43.75% hold the view that political pressure plays an important role in influencing land revenue administration. About one third of the people (31.25%) think that political pressure can't influence the land revenue administration. Two persons giving other responses told that there is no need to find out politician for pressure. Economic (money) pressure can achieve anything. They said that the revenue officers directly demand money for urgent matters. Six respondents were not-knowing anything about the role of political interference.

The respondents giving positive response were asked to explain their experience in brief. They cited the examples which indicated that due to political pressure priority is given to the matters supported by the leader viz. permission of Collector, Commissioner or Govt. can be obtained immediately, in quasi-judicial work favourable decisions could be obtained, N.A. transfers could be effected immediately and in case of encroachment on Govt. land removal may be delayed.

Thus in the view of the majority of the people the revenue department has lost its credibility. Most of the people exert political and economic pressures to avoid delay in decisions by the revenue authorities.

### **3. TRANSFER**

In land revenue administration transfers of revenue officers is one of the causes of delay as well as the effect of political interference. The State Government has laid down principles regarding transfer of revenue officials Accordingly for Gazetted officers a period not more than 3 years on a post and not more than 5 years in a district has been prescribed. In the same way for non-gazetted officers a period not more than 5 years on a post and not more than 10 years in one headquarters has been laid down<sup>24</sup>.

It is expected that a gazetted officer should not be transferred before expiry of a period of 3 years without special reasons. The data of tenure of revenue officers is presented in the following table.

**Table 7.6: Frequency of Transfer of Revenue Officers from Nashik District**

Officer	No. of officers from 1-4-91 to 31-4-94	Minimum period	Maximum period
Dist. Collector Nashik	4	21 days	1 yr 3 months
S.D.O. Niphad	3	3 months	1 yr. 10 months
S.D.O. Nashik	3	20 days	2 yrs.
Tahsildar Niphad	2	1 yr. 1 month	1 yr. 11 months
Tahsildar Peint	4	1 month	2 yr. 3 months
Tahsildar Sinnar	2	1 yr. 6 months	1 yr. 6 months.

It could be observed from Table 7.6 that during a period of 3 years 4 persons acted as District Collector for different duration minimum being 21 days and maximum 1 year 3 months. In the two selected sub-divisions Niphad and Nashik 3 officers held the post and maximum period was about 2 years. In case of Talukas, at Sinnar and Niphad Taluka 2 officers and at Peint and Nashik Taluka 4 offices hold post of Tahsildar for different period. The minimum tenure of Tahsildar was one month and maximum 2 years and 3 months. It can be concluded that the revenue officers of and above the grade of Tahsildar are often transferred.

A related question was asked to the revenue officers; "Do you agree with the view that frequent transfers reduce the efficiency of revenue administration? Why?". Their responses are tabulated in table No. 7.7,

**Table 7.7: Respondents opinion about Transfers and Efficiency**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Reduces efficiency	10	55.5%
No effect on efficiency	8	44.5%
	N = 18	100%

It is evident from Table 7.7 that a majority of officers (55.5%) agree with the view that frequent transfers reduce the efficiency in land revenue work. They justified their answer on ground that transfer results into loss of continuity of administration, if an officer is transferred on account of political pressure

he suffers emotional set back, the work of case hearing and site inspections also remains pending as it requires application of mind.

Further, table No.7.7 also indicates that about 44.5% of the officers hold the view that transfers do not reduce efficiency. They justified that losing contact with routine administration and taking charge of new office may cause delay for some time till the officer becomes familiar with the office staff and people. To overcome the pendency the staff has to work upto late night.

It is rightly observed by B.C. Mathur that "transfers should not be used as an instrument of harassment of officers either by their superiors or political leaders. Frequent transfers from one place to an insignificant post, will not only demoralize an officer but cause great harassment and inconvenience to the members of the family of the officer.... too many people are moved from one place to another for no apparent reason. This does uncalculable harm to public interest apart from demoralising public functionaries"<sup>25</sup>. The revenue officer gets transferred before he settles down. As a result of political and administrative behaviours, his (Collector's) tenure has become too short and office has been attending the level of dysfunction<sup>26</sup>.

Though transfers became an administrative necessity, it should not be used as a weapon and deviation from normal rules about transfers, should be an exception rather than a rule.

#### **4. TRAINING**

The need for adequate training of public service staff is universally recognised. The efficiency of the administration can be increased only if all its officers, superior as well as subordinate, are properly trained before they take up their duties.<sup>27</sup>

At present, the training facilities are available only to Class I and Class II officers of the Revenue department. In case of direct recruits pre-entry and post entry training and refresher courses provide training for them opportunities

at Yashwantrao Chavan Development Academy, Pune.

There, however, is no provision of training for the staff below the level of Naib-Tahsildar viz. the Aval Karkuns, clerks and talathis which form the major core of the revenue staff having greatest personnel contact with the people and which performs the original functions of recording, noting and forwarding the papers for decision to the revenue officials.

Untrained personnel in the revenue administration is one of the principle causes of delay and inefficiency. Whenever additional staff is sanctioned, the posts are filled in by promoting talathis, junior clerks and aval-karkuns as the case may be, irrespective of whether they have the requisite training or experience to perform these duties. The new recruitment is of clerks and talathis who are from open market are straight way placed on the job, without any training in the basic elements of revenue law, tenancy law, record of rights, maintenance of various accounts and such other duties. In result, they are unable to dispose of even half the work expected of them.<sup>28</sup>

The appointment of untrained staff, not knowing the rules and regulations of his work sometimes leads not only to inconvenience for the public, but also to loss of revenue to the Government. Considering the importance of training the Heble Commission recommended that "a tahsildar should be appointed in every district to train the clerks and talathis recruited newly. The training should include field training and on the job training as well. Similarly, at the Divisional level there should be a Training institution for intensive training of Aval Karkuns to equip them for the higher posts of Naib-Tahsildar, and for refresher courses for Naib-Tahsildars and Tahsildars"<sup>29</sup>. The establishment of training centre, for talathis and clerks, at the district level was also recommended by the Pimputkar Committee in 1959<sup>30</sup>.

### **Respondents Perception of Training**

To understand the respondents' perception about training a question was asked. 'Do you feel need of training for the post of clerk, talathi and Circle

Officer? Why?' Their responses are presented in the table No.7.8

**Table 7.8 : Respondents' Perception of Training**

Response	Officers	Field Staff	Total	Percentage
Essential	18	22	40	95%
Not Essential	00	02	02	5%
N=	18	24	42	100%

It could be observed from Table 7.8 that all the officers hold that training is essential for the lower level staff and clerks. Out of field staff of Circle Officer and Talathis only two respondents hold the view that training is not essential. A thumping majority of the respondents(95%) feels need of training and only 5% of them negate it.

The reasons justifying training are of various nature viz. to bring change in the outlook of the servants, to create drafting and noting skills among them, to increase efficiency of the administration, to create sense of social commitment and to bring to their notice the latest changes in the administration and procedures.

The respondents rejecting importance of training stated that the first appointment as an additional talathi for 3 to 6 months itself is Training period and as C.O. are appointed on the promotion basis, there is no need of training for them. As mentioned in the Manual it is the responsibility of Circle Officer to impart training to the talathis working under his charge.<sup>31</sup> However as the Circle Officer has to supervise and guide all the talathis from his Circle, thorough guidance is not possible. This traditional approach has resulted into short sightedness and degeneration of revenue services at the lower level. To wipe out traditional tendencies and to create new outlook training is essential.

For clerks, it was pointed out by them that revenue departmental examination has been provided. To get promotion of A.K. one has to pass it within 3 years from the date of registration. The clerks are guided by the Aval Karkun of that section. When a clerk is transferred to a new table (the

branch in which he had not worked previously) about a months time is required to become familiar with the nature of work, rule and regulations, standing order files, procedure of noting etc. Sometimes a new A.K. learns these things from the clerks of the branch.

Training, however, is a *sine qua non* at all lower stages of revenue administration and it should be a continuous activity. For talathis and clerks training should be organised at the District level while for A.K. and Naib-Tahsildars refresher courses should be organised at the division level.

## **5. PROPOSAL OF DISTRICT GOVERNMENT AND THE COLLECTOR**

A new model of District Government has been proposed by P.B. Patil Committee in Maharashtra which is likely to affect the land revenue administration and powers and prestige of the District Collector. In this part, an attempt has been made to present the relevant recommendations of the Committee and opinion of the respondents from the officers and field level officials of the revenue department.

For evaluation of Panchayati Raj in Maharashtra a Committee under the Chairmanship of Principal P.B. Patil was appointed in 1984 which submitted its report in 1986. The major recommendation of the Committee are -

- i) Taking into consideration the vast size of the nation, diversity and population there is need of creation of third level of government i.e. District Government in India<sup>32</sup>.
- ii) Full autonomy should be given to the Panchayati Raj institutions and Zilla Parishad should act as a legislature at the district level.<sup>33</sup>
- iii) In every district, a District Development Commissioner (D.D.C.) should be appointed as Chief Executive Officer of the Zilla Parishad and he should be an ex-officio secretary to the District Planning Development and Evaluation Committee<sup>34</sup>. He should be a senior officer from the I.A.S. cadre assisted by a District Development Officer of the grade of District Collector.<sup>35</sup>

iv) The District Government should be realised in three stages of 5 years. In the first 5 years, the Talathi establishment should be transferred to the Gram Panchayats along with his revenue functions, in the next 5 years all the revenue functions of Tahsildar should be transferred to the Panchayat Samiti and in the next 5 years all revenue responsibilities of the Collectorate should be assigned to the Zilla Parishad<sup>96</sup>.

If the State Govt. decides to implement these recommendations, the appointment of the officer of the grade of Divisional Commissioner as a D.D.C. in Zilla Parishad may reduce the prestige of the Collector in the eyes of the people as he may be losing his powers of control over the Zilla Parishad and later on from the land revenue administration.

At present the Collector exercises supreme powers in the district in respect of law and order, planning and development, land revenue administration and as a controlling authority of the local self-government institutions. According to recommendations of P.B. Patil Committee all functions except law and order will be transferred to the Zilla Parishad. The Collector writes the confidential report of all district level officers in the present pattern but after establishment of the District Government, the Collector will become subordinate officer to the D.D.C. losing his present prestige and powers.

**Revenue Officers' views about recommendations of P.B.Patil Committee:**

A question was asked to the officer respondents to acknowledge their view about recommendations of the P.B. Patil Committee. "As per recommendations of P.B. Patil Committee is it feasible to transfer the land revenue functions to the Zilla Parishad and to appoint officer of the grade of Commissioner in Zilla Parishad"? Why? Their responses are shown in the table 7.9 on following page.

It could be observed from Table 7.9 that 8 officer respondents i.e. 44.4% told frankly that they did not know the recommendations of the P.B. Patil Committee. Of the remaining respondents only 2(11.2%) of them said that the

**Table 7.9 : Officers' view towards recommendations of P.B. Patil Committee**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Feasible	2	11.2%
Not feasible	8	44.4%
Don't know	8	44.4%
	N= 18	100%

recommendation was feasible. Their response was 'we are already overburdened with other work therefore, the move to transfer revenue functions to Zilla Parishad is a welcome one and to give priority to the developmental work the appointment of D.D.C. is justifiable'.

About 44.4% of the respondents were of the opinion that the recommendations of the Committee were not feasible.

To justify their opinion, they put forward the following reasoning-

- i) With the implementation of Panchayati Raj in Maharashtra, the experiment was tried from 1962 to 1967, however, due to failure of that experiment, talathi establishment was taken away from Z.P. and again assigned to the revenue department.
- ii) The appointment of the D.D.C. has no relevance to the subordination of District Collector or losing his prestige. The function of maintaining law and order and supply are sufficient to keep his prestige in the eyes of the people.
- iii) The Municipal Corporation can be considered as a miniature of proposed District Government as head of the executive is the Commissioner of the grade of Secretary. In spite of his presence in the district the prestige of District Collector has not been affected. Due to the concentration of the powers in the elected representatives of the people the administration is deteriorating and the Commissioner is helpless. To avoid such condition of District Government, the recommendations of the P.B. Patil Committee should not be implemented.

A similar question was asked to the Talathis and Circle Officers 'What

will happen if the Talathi establishment is transferred under the control of Village Panchayat?”.

The field staff did not approve this recommendation on account of the following grounds -

- i) **Politicisation of Administration** - At present the Administration runs as per rules and regulations. Transferring talathis to the Village Panchayat will increase politicisation of administration. Due to interference of political leaders laws will be violated and revenue administration will lose its impartiality.
- ii) **Illegal Decisions** : Talathi will become servant of Gram Panchayat and he will have to obey the decisions taken by the elected body. The recovery of land revenue and other revenues may also suffer.
- iii) **Accountability to two heads**: Some talathis who were in service in 1964-1966 told their experience that very funky position was created during that period as talathi was answerable to both the Block Development Officer of the Panchayat Samiti and Tahsildar.

The issue of transferring services of Talathi to Zilla Parishad was considered by the Heble Commission in 1971. It justified the decision of Govt. of Maharashtra to delink talathi from Zilla Parishad as “To have the executive representation of Government at the village level, Talathi was reestablished, not for land revenue purpose alone, but as a multipurpose executive agent of the Govt. Administration of food policies, security of the country and other executive actions require government’s representation”<sup>37</sup>. Therefore, if the services of talathis are transferred to Zilla Parishad, there will be no-one to represent the state government at the village level and again need of talathi will be felt.

Land Revenue Administration is a regulatory function executed on the basis of various Acts, Codes, Rules and Regulations enacted by the Government. It has to do with the management of land and ownership of land which is a means of livelihood of the majority of the people in the State. Transferring this function to the Zilla Parishad raises doubt about impartiality

of the decisions under the leadership of representatives elected by the people.

One has to agree with the recommendation of the P.B. Patil Committee that Zilla Parishad should be a third level of Government i.e. District Government. Considering the growing importance of planning and development functions these should be fully assigned to the Zilla Parishad and Collector should be relieved from these functions. The controlling functions of the Collector in respect of local self-government in the district should also be transferred to the D.D.C. The Collector will also be relieved from the function of co-ordination as it will be achieved by the D.D.C. Due to relief in work, the Collector will be able to concentrate effectively on the problems of law & order, land revenue administration and supply.

#### **GENERAL OBSERVATION**

The major grievance of the people, who have come in contact with any level of revenue administration, is about delay. The land revenue functions are considered as subsidiary functions by the revenue officers as they give third or fourth preference to it. Excessive work-load on officers, protocol duties and inadequate staff both qualitatively and quantitatively are the causes of delay presented by the revenue officers. However, people consider it as intentional delay made by concerned officials with expectations of undertable dealings.

To improve the efficiency of revenue administration and to eliminate most of its drawbacks an attempt was made at Ahmednagar Collectorate known as 'Lakhina Experiment'. It was implemented only to bring out environmental changes neglecting time bound decisions and breaking contact of people with clerks. It should be implemented fully after restructuring of staffing pattern as recommended by Bongirwar study group. Reducing size of the district and sub-divisions, decentralization of powers are other measures to reduce delay.

The interference of politicians in the land revenue administration is also an important issue. The transfers and promotions of revenue officers are influenced by ministers; therefore they take care to obey their orders,

suggestions or instructions. Only 17% officers could show daring of directly opposing the leaders when illegal matters were required to be done while 56% of them took favourable decisions by fitting the matter in frame of rules. Most of the people exert political and economic pressures to avoid delay in decisions by revenue authorities.

Transfers and Training of Revenue officers are issues closely related to the issue of delay and political interference. For the period of 3 years under study, it was observed that at some talukas and sub-divisions 4 persons were transferred with average duration of 9 months each. Frequent transfers of officers reduce the efficiency of administration was the view of majority of officers. The transfers are inevitable, but it should not be used as an instrument of harassment of officers either by their superiors or by political leaders.

The need of training of talathis, Circle Officers, Clerks and Aval Karkuns was reiterated by various committees and commissions but no provision has been made by the government. To increase the effectiveness of land revenue administration, there is need of pre-entry training to these personnel as well as need of refresher courses for the officers above the grade of Naib-Tahsildar.

The growing importance of planning and development at the district level, the spirit of democracy and local self-government compels one to think in terms of district as a 'third level of government'. The recommendations of P.B. Patil Committee has raised the issue of loss of supremacy of Collector in the District as a senior I.A.S. Officer is proposed to be appointed as District Development Commissioner. After transferring service of talathi to the Village-Panchayat, step by step all revenue functions of Taluka and District levels are recommended to be transferred to the Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad respectively.

Land revenue administration being regulatory administration is likely to be affected to a larger extent by the political leaders if the recommendations are

implemented. It is suggested that the planning, development and co-ordination functions of district Collector should be fully transferred to the DDC along with the function of control over local self-government in the District, however, the land revenue, supply and law and order functions should not be transferred to the District Government. This will relieve the Collector to a large extent and he will get sufficient time to inspect and supervise the functions performed by sub-ordinate offices.

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