

P R E F A C E

History would be a granny's tale of kings and princes, but for the insight it offers into the life lived in the times gone by. It derives its worth as a serious discipline because it addresses itself to the study of social, economic, cultural and administrative aspects of the ages past.

It was with this view in mind perhaps that my esteemed guide Dr. G.S. Tripathi, M.A., Ph. D. suggested me to work on Land Revenue System and Administration in Saugar District from 1861 to 1917 when I expressed to him my desire to undertake a doctoral project. I, being in the State Civil Service of Madhya Pradesh since 1972, felt enthusiastic about the topic for it was closely related to my professional duties. The task, however I was soon to learn, was not easy to manage as there was, barring the District Gazetteer and a few reports, no published work on the subject. I could however compass it because of the unfailing support I received from my guide. My posting at Saugar further helped me as it brought within my easy access the source material on the subject.

The present work divides itself into six chapters. I would endeavour here to give a brief resume of the contents of the different chapters.

The first chapter offers a brief outline of the history of the formation of Saugar District as a part of

the Central Provinces. It described how the territories belonging to Peshwas and Sindhias came to pass under British Control and organised administratively. The District formed in 1861 and comprising at first of 18 parganahs (a Maratha administrative Unit) was divided into four Tahsils Saugar, Khurai, Rehli and Banda. This chapter also offers an account of the Maratha revenue administration and the plight of people it was responsible for.

The second chapter considers the British Revenue Administration from the time of the passage of the territories which were to comprise the Saugar District under British control to the year 1866. At first short term settlements of the duration one to three years and quinquennial settlements were tried and found unsatisfactory. In the year 1833 R.M. Bird was asked to go into the matter and give a report. The result was twenty year settlement. The chapter considers how and why it was not a distinct success.

The third chapter deals with the settlement of 'thirty years', the settlement of 1887-97 and the settlement of 1911-16 and details what new grounds the settlement of thirty years broke. The thirty years' settlement was based on a regular survey and accurate field maps and records. It created proprietary rights and defined the respective positions of malguzars, tenants and field

labourers. It also fixed the rights and duties of the village functionaries such as patwaries and kotwars. This chapter considers how the next two settlements improved upon the thirty years' settlement and how they were received by people.

The fourth chapter discusses the different regulation enacted to bring order to revenue administration. Upto 1863 revenue administration was based largely on the ancient usage. The Central Provinces Settlement Code of 1863 for the first time offered a systematic frame work by compiling executive instructions issued from time to time for revenue administration. The act of 1917 decentralised revenue administration, defined the powers and duties of the different functionaries and also specified the position of malguzars and tenants.

The fifth chapter works out the Socio-Economic implications of the British rule in the district and relates them to the revenue administration. The trading interests of the rulers led as elsewhere to the pauperization of artisans in the district. This led in turn to greater dependance on agriculture, rise in the value of land and the growth of the classes of absentee landlords and moneylenders. Extortionate rent and usurious interest jeopardised the well being of farming classes. The chapter considers the adequacy or otherwise of the measures taken to alleviate the popular distress.

The sixth chapter presents an overall view of the British revenue administration setting out the problems that cropped up from time to time. It considers the solutions attempted and their efficacy. The problems were basically of three types; of routine administration, of malguzar tenant relations and of agricultural development. The chapter is followed by a number of tables which elucidate the points made in the thesis.

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H.L.

(.H.L. Prajapati)