LAND
REVENUE SYSTEM AND
ADMINISTRATION
1818-1861.
Land was the important source of income; both for the people and the Government. It was but natural that in the interest of the Government as well as that of the general public, at least to say, the Government paid their first attention on the aspect of land revenue administration immediately after their conquest of Sagar district. As it is a fact that the Government was not aware of the local customs and conventions regarding administration and more particularly of the land revenue administration. Therefore, the Government did not introduce any radical innovations in the administration of land revenue, and retained in its broad and essential features, the system prevailing under the Marathas, the 'gifted race'. Their avowed aim was to remove abuses and introduce "maxims of regularity, economy and purity into the administration", rather than to devise a new system of their own. They were of opinion that an estate cannot be managed without a responsible head residing in or belonging to it, that the occupant cultivators must be dependent for support and guidance.

on a landlord, that for the state to collect its land revenue from individual cultivators was objectionable. Therefore, the early British rule witnessed a series of summary and short-term settlement which followed the Maratha precedent with certain modification. First, whereas the Marathas allowed the revenue to vary from year to year according to the nature of the harvests and the necessities of Government, the British not only fixed the demand for the year but left it, moreover, invariable for a term of years, and the suddenness of this change not only made it difficult for the Government at once to regulate its demand within sure and certain limits, but also rendered it equally so for farmers and cultivators unaccustomed to a fixed and invariable assessment to form sound and correct calculations, or to foresee whether the contracts they subscribed to would ultimately turn out profitable or the reverse. Secondly, while under the Marathas the leasee


was given a free hand in the distribution of each year's demand over the agriculturists of his village, the new regime prevented him from carrying the demand on to them as before, thus placing a heavy demand on the lessee. Thirdly, while under the former the realizations were adjusted from year to year in accordance with the character of the harvest, the British system was less elastic and the officers considered themselves bound to recover the full amount on their roll.

In the early decades of the British rule, short-term settlements with lease system of collection, at first for a single year and then three settlements each for five years, were made in the Sagar district. This period of trial and error in short-term settlements, which the British claimed to have been a period of experiment in Land Revenue Administration in Sagar district was a costly proposition as far as the material, social and institutional values of the district were concerned. However, the period deserves special attention for it became the foundation for the rest of the


century with regards the land revenue administration of the district.

In 1818 when Sagar came under British rule, a settlement was made by Sir T.H. Maddock, then Mr. Maddock. It lasted from 1819 to 1823. Messrs. Maddock and Moodie were the officers first employed in the district, and land revenue to the close of the first quinquennial settlement was fixed by them. Coming to a recently ceded territory which had been thrown into a state of the greatest disorder and confusion, the regulation of its assessment was necessarily an undertaking of the most arduous character the difficulties of which were to these persons much aggravated by inexperience in revenue matters and a most extraordinary pressure of other business, some arrangements were, however, indispen-sable, and they made every enquiry in their power to enable them to act upon the safest grounds. The information collected from other sources was nevertheless extremely suspicious and unsatisfactory, and in the end, impressed with the belief in the superior value of the records of Maratha collections, they were mainly guided by the accounts for the last 10 years of their administration and they referred most commonly to those years in which the collections were the highest as is clear
from a sentence in the memorandum recorded by Lieutenant Moodie, "the revenue now to be levied is fixed by referring to the best of ten years." Therefore, their labour terminated in a excessive demand which was Rs.5,88,104.

The second quinquennial settlement (1824-1828) of these paragana was commenced by Mr. Edward Sterling, a gentleman remarkably sanguine in his expectations of revenue, who here as elsewhere seems to have acted upon the rule of accepting the higher offer given in for a village, and consequently no relief was afforded by him to the indigent and suffering population. This settlement was completed by Major Hardy and the assessment was increased to Rs.6,49,701.

The third and last quinquennial settlement (1829 to 1833) of these paraganas was commenced by Major Hardy and completed by C.Fraser, Principal Assistant Commissioner. The assessment was decreased to Rs.6,27,958. Agriculturists were now divided into


Agriculturists were now divided into three general grades, namely, the malguzars, the cultivators and the labourers.

The settlement referred to above, were of a summary character and the revenue demand was fixed on general consideration. In regard to measurement, the settlements were partial, extending only to the cultivated lands, the rest being filled in by guess. No attempt appears to have been made at measurement during the second or the third quinquennial settlements. Not only this, but there was also no fixed system of survey in these settlements. At former settlement the idea was to assess by valuation or appraisement. For purposes of assessment, the soils were classified into the following varieties: - Maer and kabur of 1st. Class; superior quality of sand, which only occurred extensively in parts of the khurai plains, where it was generally stiffened.

with an admixture of clay. Moond and Rathia of the 2nd class; typical wheat soil. Easily worked and well cultivated, it could grow wheat continuously without manure, fallow or rotation. It was always of good depths, and thought it dried sufficiently for the monsoon ploughings, it was very rententive of moisture. Ryan and Paturose of the 3rd class, almost coal black in colour; and Bhatsu and Pethur, the 4th class high and stony land and almost uncultivable. The settlement officers then framed for each class of soil (or in some cases merely for the whole area taken in a lump) a rate which seemed to express its revenue paying capacity, and by multiplying the areas by his rates he obtained the revenue which was prima facie fair enough. Assessment in those days went principally by judgement. The rates were obtained or justified by a priori reasoning of a kind not readily followed by outsiders, having reference to the average produce of the land and the share to which the State was on abstract, grounds entitled, and often starting from no firmer basis than the traditional 'Raja's sixth'. Comparatively little stress was laid on the income actually derived from the land by the people in possession. It meant that land was made liable to revenue in accordance with its hypothetical revenue-paying capacity, without
regard to the system of management which was followed by particular proprietors. Moreover, the judgement of the Settlement Officer was not merely used as a corrective; in the form of a generalization as to fair revenue rates, it constituted the very basis of the procedure.

These settlement were made with the patels or managing farmers. Many Government lease-holders used to cultivate land themselves, but the greater portion of land was leased by them to others who were the actual cultivators. The lessee might be the hereditary headman of a village, though this was not frequently the case. He would more commonly belong to a family which had acquired possession of the village some generations previously, and had held it from lease to lease, ever since. Some times he might be a local chief, some times he might be a stranger, a merchant, a banker, a speculator in land or a court favourite. The chief test of their continuance was the payment of the revenue demand. The lessees could not sell or transfer, or inherit: nor was there any clause to give them a beneficiary interest in improvements.

The occupants or cultivators of the soil were
the tenants of the lessees. That which they paid to
the lessee in cash was the regular rent, and for each
estate a rent roll was prepared. Their payments were
usually in cash, not in kind; many of them possessed
rights of occupancy and the amount of rent leasible
or such was limited by prescription, that it, these
latter were liable only for certain fixed rates of
rent, and so long as they paid that, they could not
be ejected. If a tenant should desert or default,
his fields were at the disposal of the lessee. If the
lessee could introduce new tenants to reclaim the
waste, the extra rent contributed to settle the quota
of rent payable by each of his cultivators, but it
gave rise to innumerable complaints of extortion on
the part of cultivators against the Government lease-
holders and as appears from the following extract from
a letter Mr. Maddock wrote to Lieutenant Moodee on 23
April, 1820. Mr. Maddock was induced to prohibit all
lease-holders from levying any excess beyond 10% above
the Government assessment imposed upon their villages.
"That a misunderstanding did exist last year on the
subject of the Doobsee I am aware, and we must endeavour
to leave no doubts respecting it in the minds either of the ryote or zamindars. I will therefore, be much obliged to you to take every measure for the publicity of the rule that the patel is allowed to assess the cultivators at 10% and no more above the Pattah he has received from Government, and that from the excess he is to provide for the village expenses, including the patwaris."

This period of tentative methods was far from being a success because these new experiments suffered from several errors and abuses such as over-assessment, frequency of misguided interference by the district officers, lack of sympathy for the peasantry and most of all from rigidity in collection. In these revenue settlements the assessment appeared to be arbitrary and extortionate. As R.M. Bird observes, "It has unfortunately happened that the mode of management since the country passed under the British rule has been of a nature tending to continue the inveterate evils which we found." It must, however, be said the British availed


themselves of every legitimate means for the improvement of the revenue; the enclosed table, 'C' which gives an idea of the manner in which the villages of this tract were appropriated in the last year of the Maratha Government and the first year of the settlement, makes the point clear. It may be pointed out here that the British realised a larger revenue from this tract than their predecessors had done. Impressed with the belief in the superior value of the records of Maratha's collections, they were mainly guided by the accounts for the last years and as they unfortunately referred most commonly to those years in which the collections were the highest, their labours resulted in an excessive demand. The annexed table 'D' makes very clear the manner in which the demand was ascertained.

T-11285

Really, no stronger evidence could be produced of the long continuance of the excessive taxation or of the risks attendant upon a contract for the assessment of a village. Malguzars and cultivators became dissatisfied and indifference to the tillage of their lands. The excessive taxation crippled the agricultural economy, plundered the habitations and left people in constant fear. They lost their villages, often they lost their
lives, frequently they became hewers of wood and drawers of water. Colonel Maclean writes, "Our first assessments appear to have been based on the highest Kamil Jasa realized by the Maratha rulers. Our officers just entering a ceded province appear to have had no other data to guide them, and they must have been very sanguine in their expectations of revenue if they hoped to realize during a series of years the highest amount realised under native Government, with all its various imposts, during one favourable year."

The Government seemed to be prompted by the need for larger resources and revenue. The fatal mistake was to suppose that peace and security would enable the people to pay the same revenue as the native rulers with all their skill in squeezing up to the last point, and their leaving just enough for their cultivators to live on could extract. It may also be noted that the belief that the benefits conferred on them a settled Government should enable the people to pay more, led to an abortive attempt on the part of the new British rulers


to maintain and even enhance the revenue handed over to them by the Bhonsla Government. Inevitably, the welfare and happiness of the cultivating communities suffered giving rise to discontent which brought unpopularity to the new administration. The revenue collectors eagerly sought favour and promotions by increasing the assessment on land whenever the settlements were renewed. The more the assessment was increased the greater was the praise bestowed upon the revenue collectors by the Revenue Secretary to the Government of India.

The district officer had been allowed, when the seasons appeared to be unfavourable, to estimate, as best as they could, the productivity of the crops, and then to fix the amount that should be collected, and this not once or at distant intervals on the occurrence of an overwhelming calamity, but as a regular practice. The results were an extensive system of fraud and speculation, and the cultivators rarely received the benefit of that which was foregone by the Government, and they were forced to pay all that could be collected from them. The district officers closed their ears to complaints or grievances of those connected with land.

16. Imperial Gazetteer of India Provincial Series, Central Province., Calcutta, 1908, p. 86.
and allowed the economic life of the people subsisting on agriculture to be shattered. In fact, Saugar was new to such rigorous collections and with an increasing assessment from year to year the landed class of the district was exposed to danger.

Moreover, the British officers appear to have habitually interposed themselves between the lessee and the ryot with the idea of protecting the latter against the excessive demands of the former. The lessees, consequently, were deprived of the only chance which remained to them of maintaining their position. As Fuller J.B., wrote "Under our administration the patel lost the power of distributing the assessment, but was still expected to pay the same percentage of the rental. This was possible so long as he could make annual changes in the revenue payable by each ryot, the patel could provide for the realization of the demand, heavy though it was. But with the discontinuance of the annual rent adjustment, inequality in individual assessment became inevitable, some ryots would pay comparatively lightly, and this would be at the expense of their fellows and of the patel."

A system of interference had been introduced which, by destroying all confidence, drove away capital from the land. The stores of the merchants were opened and grain forcibly taken away to be given out to the cultivators for seed without any payment being made to the merchants, or any assistance afforded him for the subsequent recovery of the property of which he was thus despoiled. This spoliation is stated to have occurred in favour of cultivators to whom the bankers had refused to make advances from past experience of their fraud and unfaithfulness. Capitalists having obtained decrees against agriculturists were not permitted to sell their cattle or imprison their persons because it was supposed that either of those measures would leave the land uncultivated. It meant that in the vain hope of propping up an exorbitant assessment, and under the mistaken notion of practical skill in the management of details, a system of mischievous interference in the private arrangement and concerns of individuals had almost in the whole of district prevailed.

Apart from the heavy assessment and the manner of its realization, the closing years of the third sett-
lement (1829-1833) were marked by an extraordinary succession of seasons of great calamity with the result that the lessees were constantly in arrears. This made heavy remissions of revenue inevitable resulting in a considerable fall in the revenue collections. But these remissions were of advantage only to the lessees, the cultivators obtained no relief. The agriculturists, for whom they were meant, reaped the least advantage. J.B. Fuller, was right when he said, "it is noticeable that the reductions and remissions which were constantly made were in the interests of the patels only. It was specially stated by Mr. R.M. Bird, in 1893-34 that "the existing system of remissions was of advantage only to the farmers and the Gutcheray Amla and he was universally told that the cultivators obtained no relief."

The process of these settlement was accompanied by large-scale dispossession of long-standing malguzars


20. Ibid., P. 46.
because the heavy demand of the British had led to the exclusion of numerous hereditary malguzars. The annexed Table 'E' presents a clear picture of the state of affairs.

Consequently the British had to search for a new body of tenants, and the salutary connection which had previously existed between the cultivators and dispossessed proprietors was all at once broken off and dissolved. The former proprietors were also very naturally dissatisfied with their measures which threw every obstacle in the way of their successors, and immediately withheld in many instances the assistance they had been in the habit of affording to the cultivators. These successors were not infrequently speculators, unused to the management of villages, and possessed of little or no capital, and were compelled to borrow the funds required for their own wants, as well as for those of the cultivators; they often failed to procure the requisite arms when wanted, such men were indifferent substitutes for those who had preceded them, and their insecure position involved much risk and danger.

The revenue settlement was disadvantageous in another way also. The assessment was made in Farkukhabad rupees whose exchange value was higher than that
of the Nagpur rupees. This disparity in value between
the two kinds of rupees current simultaneously at Sagar
affected adversely the interests of the malguzars and
peasantry alike as the settlement was made without
proportionate abatement. The Batta operating in the
market for the exchange of currencies worked as an
additional tax which seemed very burdensome. The settle-
ment, therefore, became a genuine cause of complaints
and frequent grumblings were heard from Sagar. The
disparity in the currency necessitated immediate
measures for reform as suggested by Holt MacKenzie
on 8 May, 1823.

The unfavourable result of the revenue adminis-
tration of 'Sauger and Nerudda Territories' attracted
the attention of the Government, and in 1833 R.M. Bird,
Member of the Sadar Board of Revenue, North-western
Provinces, was deputed to examine the revenue adminis-
tration of the 'Sauger and Nerudda Territories' and
report on its condition. Mr. Martin Bird, who enquired
into the administration of the Territories in 1833
stigmatised the system which had hitherto prevailed
as "an attempt to prop. up by temporary expedients
a revenue confessedly excessive."

21. Bird R.M. 1 Note on the Sauger and Nerudda
Territories; Nagpur, 1834, p. 2.
As a result of his tour Bird felt that the demand of a jumna was higher than could be realized, except during a succession of favourable years, that it left every man dependent not on his own skill or industry to create the largest possible surplus for his own use after meeting the demand of the Government, but on the bounty of the Government doled out at the discretion of the district officers, to leave him something out of his own demand on which he may subsist. Now that every district officer could justly offer the exact degree or indulgence required, or secure the due apportionment of the relief to varying conditions of those for whom it was intended, was a mere impossibility. In such a state of things, no cultivator could possibly calculate beforehand as to what he might be allowed to keep, and what he might be forced to surrender, and this exchange of the stimulus or hope for the discouragement of utter uncertainty must of necessity have paralysed all exertion. The system, coming with that of short leases and no security for renewal, was of itself sufficient to account for the unimproved and exhausted state of the lands, which were ruined by overcropping and want of culture.
In his report submitted on 31 October, 1834, Bird, made a few suggestions. The reduction of the high nominal jumma to an amount which could on an average of year be collected, was regarded by him as an indispensable preliminary to the introduction of a successful system of administration. No improvement could take place while insecurity persisted.

The next step was to introduce leases of sufficient length, to give those who used land in return for rent and interest an incentive for improving their lands by the outlay of capital, and to induce them to obtain from wasting the powers of the soil by incessant over-cropping, and to restore those powers by irrigation, manure and fellow.

The third suggestion put forward by Bird was to allow the cultivators to make his own arrangements for lands and rents, recording the same as was the contemporary practice in the provinces so that the observance of contracts could be enforced.

Bird's fourth suggestion was to lay down a few broad rules for the due administration of different departments, so as to secure a general uniformity of
administration in the whole of the Territories, instead of each district being managed, according to the particular fancy of the officer in charge, and the whole Territories being governed entirely at the discretion of the Commissioner.

The fifth suggestion related to the division of the Territories into a smaller number of districts, each to be placed under a sufficient but not excessive European and "native" establishment on a proper system of subordination, instead of the whole being parcelled out into a number of petty principalities under the uncontrolled, or at best very imperfectly controlled, administration of a single and often very inexperienced officer, and to have one superintendent over the whole in communication with the Sadar Nizamat Adalat and the Sadar Board as in other divisions.

Consequently, orders were issued to make a settlement of the Territories under the following rules:—

That a settlement of the whole Territory be made at such a jumma as the local officers may show to be fair and equal for twenty years.

That the settlement be made with patels in possession, that parties engaging be not liable to be removed during the term of the settlement, except for default, and that assurance be given of renewal of the leases on such terms as may be agreed upon, on condition of good management, and that for cancelling an existing lease or displacing a patel on a new settlement, the sanction of the Sedar Board would be necessary.

That the lessees be allowed to make their own terms with ryots, furnishing a jamabandi for record as practised in the other provinces, subject to the authority of the Board and filing a fresh jamabandi yearly or whenever any change in conditions on which the ryots cultivate be made, on pain of bearing cost in any suit for rent in which the sum demanded may exceed the rates of jamabandi last recorded.

That the standing crops and personal property of the cultivators, except cattle and implement of husbandry and grain, may be distrained for arrears of rent by the patel and that an unsatisfied decree for arrears of rent entitle a patel to remove the ryot and dispose of his fields at pleasure; and that all property, without exception, be liable to sale in execution of decrees for rent.
That _petels_ be permitted to dispose of the terms of their leases with the consent of the Deputy Commissioner, but not to under let.

That _tahsildars_ be allowed to aid distraint, and sell distrained goods on application, for arrears of rent under the same rules as the regulations prescribed and as they may be applicable; that they may be allowed a limited power of issuing _dastaks_ for arrears of revenue, but that they may be not allowed to set aside or control the management of the _petel_ without the order of the district officer, and that they may be strictly prohibited from all interference with the interior management of the villages as regards the courses of crops, the distribution of lands, the mode of payment, the enforcement or remission of demands of rent or interest, the supply of advance of money, food or seed, and in short, all the other details of daily occurrence.

That both _tahsildars_ and district officers be strictly prohibited from interfering in their revenue capacity with private money or banking transactions, or in any way fixing or limiting the amount of profit
or interest or the market rate of money or grain.

That it be explained to the people, and the declaration be steadily acted on, that the jumma which was to be agreed to was to be collected without remission, and that no remissions be allowed except in cases altogether beyond the rule of ordinary calculation.

That the wild hill and forest tracts stated to be still uninhabited and possessed by aboriginal gonds under chiefs of their own, be let on long leases and on very low terms to the chiefs themselves or to some person who was acceptable to the local chief, and that no attempt at mujajer administration be made in those tracts.

On his recommendations, the assessment operations for a period of twenty years were carried out by C. Fraser, who submitted his report on them in May, 1835. The assessment was made on comparatively reasonable and light rates. The rates were based on their usual percentage of 66% of the assets, and the assessment was


decreased to Rupees 6,09,615.

The method of assessment at this settlement was again summary without any proper survey. As Fraser himself stated in his report, "the measurement on record was made prior to the last settlement, and I have not undertaken another, because they are expensive, create much dissatisfaction amongst malguzars and cultivators, afford great room for Speculation and oppression, and when performed by the instruments at my command, or crowded with errors and gross miscalculations. But erroneous as the last undoubtedly was, I have nevertheless found it of some use in a general comparison of villages with one another.

The principal guide of the settlement officer was his personal observation on successive visits to the situation, condition of crops, prices and circumstances of the different villages and their inhabitants. Moreover, a careful examination of the numerous changes of occupancy which had occurred in the lists of malguzars, and his anxiety to reduce their demands to a moderate and appropriate scale, led him from time to time to review


and reconsider all their previous settlements. The result was that in this settlement the revenue demand was allowed from Rs. 6,27,958 to only Rs. 6,09,615.

At the time of the twenty years' settlement (1834-35 to 1854-55), Sagar district comprised 18 paragenses and 1,385 villages. The villages were appropriated in the following way:–

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belonging to the British Govt.</th>
<th>Belonging to Scindia.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under regular assessment</td>
<td>890½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessed at a quit rent</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent free</td>
<td>91½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,122</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The villages were assessed either collectively in talucks or separately and individually, and the number comprised under former head was 197, and under the latter, 1,084½. Of these 566 were held by hereditary occupants and 766 by farmers. Inclusive of the jagir Pithores, there were

---


29. Fraser C. : Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Sagar District, 1834-35 to 1853-54, Nagpur, 1876, P. 49.
in all seven talookas namely Pittoria containing twenty
six villages, Itawa and Mohase fifty, Jaisinager fifty
nine, Erum thirty two, Marhat twenty four, Sindwahoo
seven and Umsee twenty seven. The assessment was fixed
by the Settlement at the undermentioned annual
sums:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>British Territory (Sonat Rs.)</th>
<th>Scindhis's Territory (Sonat Rs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1834(1242 F)</td>
<td>4,19,114</td>
<td>35,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835(1243 F)</td>
<td>4,19,102</td>
<td>56,057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836-37 (1244 F)</td>
<td>4,21,502</td>
<td>56,482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837-38 (1245 ,,)</td>
<td>4,22,035</td>
<td>56,507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838-39 (1246 ,,)</td>
<td>4,22,260</td>
<td>56,507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839-40 (1247 ,,)</td>
<td>4,31,724</td>
<td>58,085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840-41 (1248 ,,)</td>
<td>to 4,31,724</td>
<td>58,335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853-54</td>
<td>to 1861</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hereditary malguzars and cultivators were honoured
and several malguzars, and cultivators were restored by
the Britishers. The annexed table 'F' presents a very
clear picture of it.

No remission was allowed except in extraordinary
circumstances as regards this period in which the settle-
ment was actually in force. The following deductions
were made:—
First, reduction of jumma during the period Rs. 15,190,58
Secondly, reduction of jumma, Rs. 66,500,97
Thirdly, the amount returned between the old and new jumma with reference to Sedar Board's letter No. 200 dated 23rd June, 1854. Rs. 1,192,65

This leaves a sum of Rs. 1,60,260,30 spread over thirty years and given an average collection per annum of Rs. 5,34,201.

The headmen were given powers to distress the standing crops and personal property of the cultivators other than cattle, grain and agricultural implements for arrears of rent and to eject the defaulters if the decrees remained unexecuted. It meant that during this period the Government bound itself not to demand more than a stipulated sum from the persons who took leases of each mouzah of township in the Territory. The sum thus stipulated for was moderate, leaving a fair average profit to the estate as it then stood, and allowing the lessee all the further profits which might arise from improved or extended cultivation during the lease. This was a state of things which had

never existed before.\textsuperscript{31}

Moreover, to eradicate the evils of complaints of extortion on the part of cultivators against the Government lease-holders and of dangerous interference of British officers the following rules were framed by Mr. C. Fraser:\textsuperscript{32}

1st-The officers of Government will not interfere in the regulation of a lease-holder's demand upon his under tenants.

2nd-Written leases and engagements shall be exchanged at the commencement of the season for cultivation between Government lease-holders and their under tenants, and no complaints will be received from either party after 15th of July each year unless they be supported by relevant vouchers.

3rd-Disputes between lease-holders and their under tenants about the rent of lands held by the latter will be adjusted by arbitration, and applications for the assemblage of arbitrators, and application for the assemblage of arbiters will be complied with if given in before the 15th of July of each year.


\textsuperscript{32} Fraser C. Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Saugar District, 1834-35 to 1853-54, Nagpur, 1876, P. 53.
4th-Lease-holders shall deposit with the Genuinga of the paragnus a copy of their rent-rolls for the succeeding year attested by their own signatures and those of the village patwaris not later than the 31st of July, each year, and fines will be levied from the subscribers for any inaccuracies detected in them.

These rules avoided the dangerous interference of the officials. Their relations with the ryots changed the whole system. As pointed out by J.B. Fuller, "... perhaps the most important point in the system of the twenty years' settlement was the crystallization of the policy of interference between ryots and patel." In general, the people appears to have accepted the assessment cheerfully and to have started with good hearts to improve their lands. But it gave rise to inequality in individual rents because though the melguzars were formally declared to be entitled to use a tenant for increase of rent, yet it appears that not a single suit of the kind was ever brought, except for increase proportionate to increased cultivation. Moreover, the

law of the Territories, which prevented a malguzar from suing even a new tenant, except by regular suit and prescribed no means for raising the rent of an old one, paved the way for an impression among the ryots that their rents were unalterable, except by Government orders, an impression which offered very great obstacles to the readjustment of rents during the making of the next settlement.

In such a position, in spite of the slight decrease in the revenue assessment, the twenty-years' settlement did not work well. In 1842 the disturbances, sporadic expressions of resentment against British domination, caused by the Merhat and Chandrapur Land-owners did much damage to the agricultural community, and this was accompanied with the revolt of the Cond chief, Melen Shah. In 1845, therefore, it was found necessary to give a general reduction of 10% of the revenue throughout the whole district, while the villages of the Rehli tahsil got a reduction as much as twenty percent, and pargana Garhakota of 16%.

On the expiry of the period of the twenty years for which the settlement was made, a formal proclamation was issued in June 1854, and preparations were

made for a revision of the assessment.

In the meantime, the land revenue was collected according to the old assessment, under a promise to the people on each estate, that if the new assessment, when made exceeds the previous one, no demands on that account for the intermediate period will be made, but on the other hand, if such assessment be less than the previous the taxpayer will be entitled to a refund for the said intermediate period. But the Sagar district at this time suffered from several misfortunes. In 1854, the Rabi crops entirely failed in the Banda tract and a similar fate befell the Sagar pargana in 1855. In 1856 the tract suffered from drought and in 1857 the revolt broke out. In 1859-60 there was a severe epidemic, and a murraim among the cattle in 1861. Therefore, assessment of twenty years' were continued until the assessments of the thirty years' settlement, i.e. up to 1863, which superseded them, when brought into force. At the revision of settlement it was found that the revenue of the whole area called a district (the Sagar district) in 1861 was as follows:


Banda Tehsil  
Rs. 65,888

Sager  
Rs. 1,80,971

Khurei  
Rs. 1,34,164

Rehli  
Rs. 1,45,779

Total:  
Rs. 5,26,802

There were other lacunae also in the twenty years' settlement. The leases of the several muzess were given to persons who were called farmers, but the extent of their rights under that denomination was left very indefinite. No right of property in land was recognised. The farmer was not informed as to what discretion he had in regard to the cultivation of new land. He did not know on what terms he could obtain a renewal of his lease, or whether he could even expect its renewal at all. He was left in doubt about the devolution of his rights after his death. Further, he was debarred from freely transferring his right in a way that might appear to be the most advantageous. All that he did know was that he could collect the value of a certain part of the product from the cultivators, that he was bound to pay to the Government a fixed portion of the amount thus collected.

In order to induce the people to expend their own
capital and to put forth their own strength in the cultivation of the land, the primary source of life and administration, it was necessary that they felt assured of reaping the full benefits of their investments. But these conditions were altogether neglected in this settlement which was essential to the success of the system introduced. Therefore, the malgums and cultivators neither tried for the development of land nor invested their own capital in extending the area of cultivation. They extracted only the natural outturn of the crops. In fact, the twenty-years' settlement was no more successful than its previous settlements. The need of the times was change, the law of nature, in Tennyson's words.

---