



## Land Revenue Reforms Under the Nizams

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### Introduction:-

Ancestors of the Nizam were belongs to Samarkand in modern day uzbekistan (central Asia). Khaja Abib, grandfather of the first Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah-I, Came to India during the period of Aurangzeb, He made a favourable impression on the Mughal emperor and was soon granted many favours & given a robe of honour. After his death, his grandson Qamaruddin Caught Aurangzeb's eye when he displayed Considerable Skill as a Warrior. He gave him the title 'chin Qalich khan (Boy Swords man) at the age of 19. He was appointed to Subedar of Deccan During Muhammad Shah's period he acted at his wazir from 1722-1724.<sup>1</sup>

He soon get disgusted with the wazir post, so, he decided to go back to Deccan where he could maintain his supremacy, Here he led the foundation of Hyderabad state & Asaf Jahi Dynasty in 1724.<sup>2</sup> The princely state of Hyderabad with its vast area, plentiful resources and a large population different ethnical and administrative divisions, some larger than the average of Indian states, legitimately entitled it to the traditional name of ' The Dominions of His Exalted Highnes'.<sup>3</sup>

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## Land Revenue Reforms :-

Asaf Jahi Dynasty ruled nearly 224 years in Deccan, In order to run the administration very efficiently, They introduced reforms in the field of the Revenue Administration. The Chief source of Asaf Jahi region was “Land Revenue”, It was major income source to the Government. The Mughal system of land revenue introduced gradually in the Deccan.

The taxes levied in the Mughal Suba of the Deccan under Nizam-ul-mulk can be broadly classified into two heads Mal and Wujuhat, Whenever was imposed on cultivated land as per the schedule rate of assessment was termed as Mal. It further divided into Jihat and Sair Jihat. <sup>4</sup>

The various types of Wujuhats, levied and collected in the Deccan during the Nizam's were Abi, Baghat, Bhat, Bhatt Chahurram, Dastur and Tehbazari etc.....

The land revenue administration of the Deccan under the Nizam- al-Mulk Asaf Jah Consisted mainly of two Stages. <sup>5</sup>

1. Tashkhis (Assessment of Revenue)
2. Tahsil (Actual collection of the assessed Revenue)

The chief Source of income for the government was land revenue, The stability and well-being of the economy depended on devising a proper machinery for its collection Land revenue was collected by an antiquated method which was fraught with countless disadvantages to the cultivators, this pernicious system was known as "Revenue Farming". <sup>6</sup>

Under the Revenue Farming system, The Contractor not only collected the land revenue and also other taxes. There was no connection between the Talukdar and the tiller of the soil. The middlemen were exploited the farmer. The system of Revenue Farming gave rise to unlimited misery and woe. For this

disadvantage Salar Jung abolished 'Revenue Farming system' throughout the dominions occupied the first ten years of the administration of Sir Salar Jung.<sup>7</sup>

Salar Jung with his far-seeing policy realized at once that the erratic administration was indirectly responsible for the whole chaotic state of the Government. The talukdars were gradually dismissed and other appointed to smaller salaries.<sup>8</sup> These trustworthy servants of the Government supervised the assessment and Collection of Revenue in the districts. The multifarious illegal extortions disappeared, There changes created a sense of confidence in the minds of the Cultivators and deserted villages become inhabited once more.<sup>9</sup>

A regular system of measuring each field separately and assessing it was also introduced under the new system, instead of making the assessments at harvest time, where the harvester was not allowed to touch his Crops until assessments had been completed, assessments was made on a fixed scale at a certain date and the harvester could dispose of his harvest when and how he chose.<sup>10</sup>

The abolition of the "Batai system" was one of the most beneficent initiated by sir Salar Jung, Benefit of the revenue reform made the cultivator once more become prosperous, barren lands became fruitful and villages, which had been deserted for over a hundred years, again became inhabited.<sup>11</sup>

The next setup was to introduced a system of "Revenue Survey" It helped to Government contact with the farmers directly with a suggestion of the Director of Revenue, Mahdi Ali, temporary training schools were established for revenue officers. Which helped to great Success, This new system of reform proved to be so excellent that, thirty years later the revenue of the state was nearly three times as great in Hyderabad city itself it had been more than trebled.<sup>12</sup>

Land Revenue also increased, In spite of these improvements the fields had not been accurately measured. The soils were not classified uniformly. It made necessity of introducing new methods of assessment. In 1876, the revenue Survey & settlement Department was established. This department started its operations in the paithan taluka of Aurangabad District. When these initial experiments proved successful the work was gradually extended to other districts also.<sup>13</sup>

Mr. Mahdi Ali, the Revenue Secretary in 1876, In the beginning controversy started among the high official about choosing a survey method Two methods in vogue, about One known as "Bombay method" and the other as the "North-west provinces method". Mr Mahdi Ali had a long experience with the North-west province method and he also studied minutely the Bombay method. Which he was a stranger and witnessed its practical working in the Poona, Ahmednagar Khandesh & Akola districts, It was most suitable for marathwad region.<sup>14</sup>

#### **Working of the Survey department:-**

1. Settlement Boundary Dispute.
2. Erection of Boundary Marks.
3. Measurement of fields
4. Classification of lands

Among these four, the settlement "Boundary Disputes, occupied much of the time of the department.<sup>15</sup>

A District collector was appointed as the head of the Revenue administration for every district. He was known as 'Talukdar' He was assisted by two officers known as second & third Talukdar. Every division was

constituted by two or three Talukdar. A Tehsildar was appointed to look after the administrative division known as 'Taluka'.<sup>16</sup>

Certain administrative processes are directly concerned with land revenue, these are three in number.

1. Land records
2. Settling and assessing the revenue
3. Collection Revenue

Land records should be accuracy. In case land is mapped properly no accuracy will be possible. Village maps should be prepared as to show every field and even almost every tree. The land record system was inaugurated for the first time in the Nizam's dominions in 1328 F (1918 A.D)<sup>17</sup>

Assessment of revenue is the second administrative process. Assessment had varied from time to time, whatever be the assessment, some definite principle should be laid down as there would not only assure uniformity, but also facilitate the state to forecast its own revenue with accuracy.

Collection of Revenue is the third administrative process. If revenue is not collected in time, subsequent collection might rendered more difficult, and might involve more Severe measure, revenue by definition is intended to be collected and ought to be collected. Best this may or may not always possible.<sup>18</sup>

### **Method of Survey:-**

The Simple chain and cross-staff method was adopted in Survey method, the Chain employed measured 33 feet, and the unit of measurement was the acre the acre was sub-divided into 40 guntas, each gunta being gunta one chain square. Sub-division of a gunta were represented by annas, 16 annas making up one gunta. This type of Survey didn't accuracy in topographical detail. Mr. makefield, who was the Director's General of Revenue, he observed their method of survey and applied a scientific Survey.<sup>19</sup>

### **Classification of soil**

Soil were classified into three classes.

1. 'Regar soils', which were suited for dry crops.
2. 'Chalka soils' of Telangana used for raising dry crops.
3. Wet and Garden Lands.

These were further classified into two grades, firstly fine uniform black soils, Secondly coarser red or greyish. In the case of Soils of class I, depth determined their relative value, in class II & class III relative proportions of clay second decided the value.<sup>20</sup>

### **Board Revenue:**

The Board of Revenue was established in 1864, was required to supervise, direct & Control the administration of revenue of the entire territory. The Board consisted of a president & four member & all decisions were taken by the majority opinion. The members appointed to the Board were persons having rich experience in revenue affairs. The Board Revenue was required to submit quarterly, half yearly & annual reports on all matters under its charge to the Government.<sup>21</sup>

A central Revenue office (Sadr- Mahkama-i- Malguzari) was created at the state level with other two members the former Revenue Board. However the central revenue office had a short span of life when it was replaced in 1868. A. D by a functionary called. Sadar -ul- Mohum, who was provided with a secretary, an assistant secretary and necessary establishment consisting of the subordinate officers & clerks. Sadr-ul-Mohum was appointed to supervise the administration. He was next only to the prime Minister and was given full power of Supervision and control over the Departments entrusted to his care. His power much wider compared to the erstwhile revenue Board, and Consisted

land revenue, agriculture & Commerce stamp papers, customs forests, abkari etc..<sup>22</sup>

The Board of revenue was again established in 1882. This consisted of three members with a secretary & four Assistant secretaries, certain power of the Sadr-ul-Maham were transferred to the Board. The Office of Sadr-ul-Moham was amalgamated with that of the Madar-ul- Maham (Prime Minister) assistant minister called. the appointed, Moin-ul-Mahams administered the revenue department in collaboration with the Prime Minister under his control and guidance. The Board Revenue was again abolished in 1885 and the Sadar Talukdar was replaced by the 'Subedar' the term 'Simt' yielded place to the term "Subha".<sup>23</sup>

A Revenue Board was again established to supervise the revenue work in 1894, but again abolished in 1901. In 1910, the office of the Director General of Revenue was created. Sadr-ul-Maham was incharge of The Revenue Department. The office of the Revenue secretary and the Director General of Revenue continued, and this system was operation all through the period under consideration.<sup>24</sup>

There were different types of tenures under which lands were held in the Nizam's Dominion. Among the different categories Diwani lands accounted more than 60 Percent of the total. The total area of the Diwani land measured 31.038.919 acres which formed 58.64 percent of total state of 82. 698 sq. miles or 52.926. 720 acres.<sup>25</sup>

Secondly, certain lands owned by the Nizams the revenue from which went to the Privy Purse, Such lands were called the "Sarf-i-khas lands" under the third category belonged to Jagirs. To begin with Asaf Jah, The first Nizam liberally granted military Jagirs to his trusted followers who accompanied him

to the Deccan and helped him to established his Kingdom. Most of his Hindu followers also were granted Jagirs even though they were assigned civilian duties.<sup>26</sup>

The Paigah Jagir was responsible for maintenance the Nizam's household troops was a royal favorite. The Nizam took personal interest even in the family affairs of the three branches of paigah, The Nizam even entered into matrimonial alliances with members of the paigh family. Consequently the enjoyed wide powers and influence in the Nizam's Dominions.<sup>27</sup> Another one is Inams, which were given for religious purposes. The Muslim Mosques as well as Hindu temples had large Inams attached to them.

The efficiency of the administrative system in the Jagir areas was low compared to the Diwani territories. The Jagir villages were scattered over large territories, proper communications could not be maintained which affected the Standard of administration.<sup>28</sup>

Much of the Confusion in land revenue administration during the pre-Salar Jung period could be attributed to the absence of Survey of the land. In the absence of Survey, There was no way of knowing the actual extent of land in the possession of the cultivators. Land could neither be classified scientifically nor proper boundary marks erected. Boundary conflicts were a common occurrence and the officials settled the disputes often in an arbitrary manner.

Salar Jung realised that regular Survey of land was a must for the Success of the ryotwari system. He abolished many pernicious system like Revenue Farming & Batai system etc... He reorganized the land revenue system, which helped to increased land revenue, Benefit of the revenue reform made the cultivator Once more became prosperous. All higher positions were reserved either for noblemen or for the British. The influence of the British Resident was felt on every move of the Government. The various decisions taken by the



Government indicated that State had always a soft Corner for the Jagirdars and Inamdars through whom the Government found it easy to control large tracts of land. It was this policy of the Government and its inability to regulate and control the behavior of the field officials of the revenue department had sown the seeds of dis- contentment leading ultimately to pleasant unrest and agitation in the Nizam's Dominions.

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