

CHALLENGES IN REVENUE ADMINISTRATION OF ASSAM IN THE PRESENT DAY CONTEXT AND THE ROLE OF REVENUE OFFICER

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BRIEF INTRODUCTION

- Under the Ahoms, the subjects i.e people themselves along with land were considered King's property.
- Paiks were given 2 puras (approx-3 acres or 8 bighas) of rice land (ga-matee) free from any tax as a remuneration for his labour service. The allotted land was neither hereditary nor transferrable.
- Paiks were also allowed land for his house and garden called "bari land" against which he had to pay a house tax or poll tax or hearth tax. Bari land was **heritable** and transferrable

COLONIAL ASSAM

- During Colonial rule, revenue came to be taken only in cash and land considered to be permanent, heritable and transferable.
- Initially, land settlement was done on a yearly basis and revenue was collected through an intermediate class comprising **Choudhuri, Patgiri, Mouzadar or Bishaya** who are assisted by Patwari , Thakuria or Kakoti
- 10 year settlement or decennial settlement from 1883 followed by publication of ALRR in 1886.
- 20 year settlement from 1902-1903
- 30 year settlement from 1923

LAND SETTLEMENT HISTORY IN LATE COLONIAL ASSAM

- **Gopinath Bordoloi- Nov 1939**

Regulated settlement of landless cultivators on wastelands with maximum **30 Bighas** per family. Immigrant definition did not cover Cacharis and Sylhetis. **Protected belts** to be constituted. VGR/PGRs to be kept free. Settlement to immigrants who came before 1.1.938

- **Muhammad Sadulla- 1940**

Settlements up to 30 Bighas to be given to landless (less than 5 bighas) on payment of premium, but **size of family not defined**. 64,000 bighas earmarked in Nowgown

- **Muhammad Sadulla August 1943 “Grow more food”**

Land development scheme announced with overt objective to grow more food during 2nd World War and Bengal famine by providing more lands to immigrants in PGRs and VGRs. Later, land eroded landless and others evicted from lined villages were considered for allotment/settlement from December 1943.

- **Resolution of 1945**

Resolution dated 15th January, 1945 decided that the **maximum allotment be restricted to 30 Bighas** per family and such family should consist of less than five persons.

POST INDEPENDENCE LAND POLICY

- In October, 1947, a new Chapter added in the ALRR, 1886 to enable creation of protected Belts & Blocks and notify protected classes of people; Creation of 47 Belts/Blocks from December 1947 till 1989
- Settlement of land in such Belts & Blocks now restricted only to protected classes and permanent residents of the Belts & Blocks
- 1958 - limiting settlement up to **8-12 Bighas** to the landless cultivators.
- 1968 - Settlement to actual tiller of the soil/entitled family is one having 10 Bighas or less /priority to those having no land.

POST INDEPENDENCE LAND POLICY

- 1972 - Agricultural Farming Corporations encouraged to be formed with the eligible landless cultivators. Tenants who held 8 or more Bighas not landless. Around 14(?) AFCs were perhaps created.
- 1978 - Settlement to be allowed up to **8-12 Bighas of land /land ceiling fixed at 50 Bighas.**
- **Land policy 1989:-**
- Any indigenous people having equal or less than 3 Bighas of land was considered as a landless.
- Allotment/settlement only 1 Bigha for homestead & 7 Bighas for agriculture in rural area / 1 Katha 10 Lessa in GMC area/2 Kathas in other Towns
- **Land policy 2019:-**
- A person having equal or less than 1 Bigha of land in rural areas was considered as a landless in villages.
- Allotment/settlement of **1 Bigha for homestead & 7 Bighas** for agriculture in rural area(modified from half & three bighas) / 1 Katha 5 Lessa in GMC area/1 Katha 10 Lessa in other Towns.

RE-SETTLEMENT OPERATIONS AFTER 1947

- Re-Settlement operations of 1956 provided settlement for 30 Years .
- Kamrup 1956 – 66, Sivsagar- 1956 -64, Nagaon- 1963-73, Lakhimpur-1964-74, Darrang- 1968 -78, Goalpara- 1979 to 2015 except one circle, Cachar- 1988 and continuing
- Guwahati resettlement operations from 1986 to 2010. The 1936 Re-Assessment Act was amended in 1997 allowing issuing of periodic lease for a period not less than 20 years.
- State profile as on date:
 - Revenue Circle- 154
 - Total villages – 26,395
 - Total N.C. villages- 1,030
 - Density-Rural 85.90 %, Urban 14.10 %

ADMINISTRATIVE STRENGTH IN THE FIELD

- Total Revenue Circle : **154** (Revenue Circle in BTR: **19**)
- Circle Officer (ACS): **81**
- Circle Officer (ALRS): **66**
- Vacancy for Circle Officer: **2**
- Circle Officer (Attached, ACS): **1**
- Circle Officer (Attached, ALRS): **70**
- Circle Officer (Attached) who cleared Survey & Settlement training: **46**
- Circle Officer (Attached) who have not cleared Survey & Settlement training: **25**
- Lot Mandal: Total Strength: 2718 (Vacancy: 394)
- Supervisory Kanango: Total Strength 285 (Vacancy :89)

CHALLENGES BEFORE THE CIRCLE OFFICER

- CO - multifarious responsibilities other than revenue work like law & order, election, census, NRC updation, different verification and inspection work, inquest, protocol and liaisoning work with the other line departments.
- Approximately 150 villages are under one circle officer in Colonial time and CO used to visit each and every village and knew the Gaonburhas personally. However, touring has ceased. There is no authenticated inspection to verify the entries made by the LM nowadays
- No maintenance of tour diary of the CO. Reportedly, none of the 19 registers are maintained properly. Mouza inspection not carried out regularly
- No Protection of Grazing grounds (VGR/PGR) ; **Land reforms are a forgotten chapter**
- The preparation of doul and revenue collection given low priority.
- For the Revenue year **2019-20** (1st July, 2019 to 30th June, 2020) Assam doul amount was 77 cr but the current collection was 29 cr which is 29.52 % of the above. Total Arrear demand -246 cr but total collection was only 42 cr which is only 17%.
- Circle Office inspection not carried out vigorously by DC/ADC
- Reclassification of land to increase land revenue to be undertaken.

CHALLENGES BEFORE THE LOT MANDALS

- Dependence on Lot Mandals:- Each Lot Mandal has average 3 to 5 villages in a single lot and sometimes even 6 to 8 villages in large circle with average three to four thousand pattadars. All this require proper maintenance of record in 31 columns in chitha including crops details (17 in urban excluding crop details).
- LMs, taking into account their present numbers and responsibilities, are unable to cope
- Though ILRMS online computerized land record has been initiated from 2015, some lot mandal are recording their entries in PC themselves. Overwhelming majority do not know how to use PC.
- Each lot mandal does a number of miscellaneous works like census, different events, data collection for different line department etc.
- LM are also not maintaining their tour diary.
- Doubling numbers of LMs will help expedite disposal of cases
- 2718 lots in 154 circles = 17.6 lots per circle.
- Against 2718 LM posts, 2324 are in position. 394 posts vacant

CHALLENGES IN ABSORBING TECHNOLOGY

- Data purification and updation of chitha and jamabandi in ILRMS (Integrated Land Record Management System)
- Complete digitization and synchronization with DHARITEE updation
- Quick disposal of mutation, partition, reclassification and issuance of partition patta as desired by HCM
- Quick disposal of land sale permission, dispensing with DC's NOC for flat sale will help expedite flat sale permission
- Protection of tribal belt and blocks through updation of records .
- Quick completion of Re-settlement operations in some Districts like Cachar, Hailakandi, Karimganj (T.S) and Chandrapur Revenue Circle in Kamrup (Metro), if necessary, by using private parties.

CHALLENGES IN ABSORBING TECHNOLOGY-2

- The survey and settlement training needs to be shortened. No need to spend weeks on teaching obsolete methods like chain survey and using of theodolite traversing for preparing polygon. Modern methods like using ETS and differential GPS (DGPS) together with drone survey are not only less time consuming and effective. Therefore, focus needs to be on use of modern methods for imparting training.
- Record correction-updation-digitization-synchronornization in ILRMS to be made.
- For record correction carefully needs to check with manual data with ILRMS uploaded data and complete record correction to be made against each pattadar dag wise.

CHALLENGES IN CONDUCTING CADASTRAL SURVEY AND GRANTING MORE DECENTRALIZATION

- NC villages still exist in some Districts including Kamrup Metro. Cadastral survey of 672 villages still left
- Centralisation rather than occurred in 2019 land policy like in the case of conversion of Annual Patta to Periodic Patta.
Conversion from Annual patta to Periodic patta.
 - Town area –Government
 - 3 km radius from revenue town---DC
 - 5 km radius from Municipality town—DC
 - 15 km radius from GMC—DC
 - Rural area—Circle Officer

ROAD MAP FOR EFFECTIVE REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

- 'Hanging' or interloper pattadars to be deleted following proper procedure under rule 116 of the ALRR, 1886.
- All circle to maintain the land bank details meticulously.
- The Govt. land to be kept free for quick allotment for Govt. project. And so should the surviving VGRs and PGRs be kept free to meet local needs,
- Monthly updation or any changes of land bank to be maintained to be monitored by ADC revenue.
- All revenue officer to keep prepare and earmark any upland in their respective circle for flood or any kind of disaster.

ROAD MAP FOR EFFECTIVE REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

- The existing lots to be reorganized to create more Lots.
- More Lot Mandals need to be recruited.
- Any Govt. allotted land not utilized by any organization for the purpose for which it was allotted in the last three years or more to be reported.
- Rajah Adalat to be organized in regular basis.
- “Namjari Sibir” to be organized so that the details of non mutation cases to be collected or to apprise the pattadars and buyers to carry out those on the online mode.
- All the prescribed “ safar” (field tour) prescribed by Assam Land Record Manual to be carried out by the CO.

ROAD MAP FOR EFFECTIVE REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

- Re-settlement operation to be completed immediately, if necessary, by using private parties. All 672 unsurveyed NC villages to be surveyed in mission mode
- All AP land fit for conversion to PP needs to be converted in a mission mode through a more decentralized approach is required for speedy completion. There are 55,37,789 PP (PP Pattadars 2,31,54,328) and 4,66,349 Annual Pattas. (AP Pattadars 12,55,272) This 4.66 lakhs Annual Pattas need to be converted.
- Issue of PP against allotment certificate as also PP to tea tribes and tribals must be taken up on a mission mode
- For conversion of Annual Patta to Periodic Patta, Record of both protected classes and permanent residents needs to be updated in tribal belts and blocks.
- Decision needs to be taken on how to effectively utilize the services of ALRS

INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT

- Delegation of financial and administrative powers to DCs.
- Time bound service delivery under ARTPS Act.
- Village Land Use Plan (VLUP).
- Village Land Management and Conservation Committee (VLMCC).
- Village Land Bank (VLB)
- Revenue MIS
- e-SAFAR
- Constitution of Cabinet Sub-Committee to suggest suitable amendment in ALRR,1886 towards ensuring land rights to IP of Assam.
- Launching of Operation Basundhara



THANK YOU