

CHAPTER 3: CHANGING NATURE OF LANDED RELATIONSHIPS UNDER COMPANY'S RULE (1800-1850)

The political changes that occurred after the collapse of the Mughal Empire in the eighteenth century led to the emergence of many collateral parties. The English East India Company emerged as the most powerful mercantile corporation in the sub-continent in the late 18th century. They had established their political supremacy over certain territories of Gujarat during the beginning of 19th century. Their main focus was on profit and therefore acquiring control over land and its resources became the mainstay of their colonial policy. The components of land revenue administration discussed in this chapter focus on evolution and changes carried out which affected landed relationships. Using the narrative of 'change' and 'continuity' of the eighteenth century, an attempt is made here to understand and analyse the interface between land, landed relationships and policies of English East India Company. This will enable an understanding of whether the British introduced completely new land administrative systems or at least at elementary levels there was a continuation of the older systems? The methodology used here investigates the parameters of tenurial changes that accrued. Simultaneously a study is carried out to understand the evolving structures of land tenures and its impacts on agrarian relationship.

Introduction

Indian subcontinent has been subject to many conquests and depredations from time to time by different powers. Under these powers, new system of land administration was enforced which became integrated into their land. The land tenure under the British had also evolved from the pre-existing systems of land administrative mechanism. The British government introduced their ideas in India and modified the existing land systems.

The first land revenue settlement carried out by British in India was the permanent or *zamindari* settlement of Bengal made by Lord Cornwallis in 1790. The main objective of this settlement was the introduction of a system which worked similar to the English landlord system.¹ However, it failed to achieve its objective. Later the administration introduced *ryotwari* system in Madras Presidency in 1793. This system came to followed in Bombay Presidency in the 19th century. It was proposed to base the *ryotwari* system upon a complete survey and assessment of the cultivable lands and it was claimed that, in this way, government would obtain a view of the resources and condition of the districts. Since it was a survey-based system, therefore, the *ryotwari* tenure is also called survey tenure. It was also believed that the direct dealing of government with *ryots* would benefit the peasantry.²

Land Administration Under Company's Rule (1800-1827)

The districts of British Gujarat had continued with the older systems till changes were brought about to the pre-existing ones. At that time, there was no special law regulating the relations between landlords and tenants in Bombay Presidency. The landlord-tenant relations were mostly governed by mutual contract or local usage and custom. The British had also inherited the problems of the earlier revenue systems. For instance, under *bhagabatai* system the share of

¹ Gordon, R. G. (1917). *The Bombay Survey and Settlement Manual. Volume I. Part I - Historical*. Bombay: The Government Central Press. 20

² Gordon, R. G. (1917). Volume I. 21

government was very less.³ Besides, it varied as per the season such as the monsoon crop paying highest, the cold season crop less, the irrigated crops least.⁴ Hence there was no steady flow of revenue. The share of produce most commonly taken by government was one-third and one-fourth of the *khareef* or early and one-eighth and one-tenth of the *ravi* or second harvest.⁵ Even after the revenue was collected the government share was placed in store house for a long time waiting for the instructions.⁶ In addition to the random revenue value, there extra cesses called *babtis* made up little towards the aggregate of the revenue.⁷

The English acquisition of political power and fiscal resources in Gujarat did not alter fundamentally the structure of power relations. In order to dominate the agrarian economy, English East India Company was incapacitated by the presence of the Marathas and other power holders. It supported the notion of a state that was constantly negotiating with local power groups. Even during their heyday, the Mughal Governors of Gujarat were also forced to negotiate with them. It was the distinct nature of Gujarat's economy which constrained the state to extract resources through negotiations and sharing of privileges with local parties. Certain characteristics of the political economy of Gujarat such as the multiple centres of power, the unique political system representing a 'shared sovereignty', as well as the culture of resistance to political authoritarianism testifies to the fact that the rulers were limited in their ability to play any dominant role in the economy.⁸ It was mostly carried out by local revenueu functionaries.

³ Robertson, E. P. (1865). *Glossary of Gujarat Revenue and Official Terms*. Bombay: The Education Society's Press, Byculla. 42

⁴ Elliot, F. A. H. (1934). *The Rulers of Baroda*. Baroda: Baroda State Press. 222

⁵ Robertson, E. P. (1865). 42

⁶ Elliot, F. A. H. (1934). 222

⁷ Robertson, E. P. (1865). 42

⁸ Nadri, G. A. (2009). *Eighteenth-Century Gujarat: The Dynamics of Its Political Economy, 1750-1800*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV. 21-22

The British when they came to power modified the existing system according to the circumstances and conveniences. This was done in phases. Between 1800 and 1817, English East India Company had conquered about one-third of Gujarat plains and consolidated it into British Gujarat of Bombay Presidency. In this phase they identified broadly two types of villages viz., (i) peasant villages and (ii) landlord villages. The peasant villages were under the possession of peasants/*ryots* who managed the affairs of villages for themselves. The British officials considered peasant villages as government villages. The landlord villages were under the possession of *gameti*, *girasia* or *bhumia* (among Hindu – mostly Rajput) and *kasbati* or *maleki* (among Muslim) who were the descendent of aristocrats, warriors and officials of the medieval dynasties. The British official considered landlord villages as alienated villages. Therefore, the two type of villages – government and alienated villages which had maintained during the medieval period were continued even under the British rule.⁹ According to Baden Powell, the system of land revenue settlement can be divided into three classes viz., (i) settlement for single estates under one landlord, (ii) settlement for estates of proprietary bodies, usually village communities and (iii) settlement for individual occupancies called the *ryotwari* system. In first two classes, the settlement was made by government with the landlords or village community and holder of individual occupancies were merely the tenants of these proprietors.¹⁰ Following is a narrative of management of government and alienated villages under Company's rule between 1800 to 1827.

⁹ Fukazawa, H. (1974). Structure and Change of the 'Sharehold Village' ('Bhagdari' or 'Narwadari' Village) in the Nineteenth Century British Gujarat, *Hitotsubashi Journal of Economics*, 14(2). 9

¹⁰ Gordon, R. G. (1917). Volume I. 4

1. Management of Government Villages: There were two form of government villages in terms of land tenure. One was share-hold (*bhagdari* and *narwadari*) and another was unshared (*senja*¹¹) villages.¹²

(i) Settlement of *Bhagdari* and *Narwadari* Villages: The *bhagdari* and *narwadari* villages were mostly found in Ahmedabad, Kheda, Bharuch and Surat.¹³ Most of the *bhagdari* village were found in Bharuch and a few in Surat, and the *narwadari* villages were found in Kheda and a few in Ahmedabad.¹⁴ During the first quarter of nineteenth century, more than five hundred *bhagdari* and *narwadari* villages¹⁵ were estimated to be in British Gujarat.¹⁶ In *bhagdari* and *narwadari* tenures, peasants of the same family or caste divided village land into *mota/muskh bhag* (big share) and *peta bhag* (small share) and were jointly responsible for the payment of revenue of their respective divisions.¹⁷ In these tenures, villages were mostly organized by traditionally agricultural caste of Kanbi (in Kheda) and Bohra (in Bharuch). The other castes consisted of Rajput, Brahmin, Koli etc. These divisions had continued at least since the medieval times.¹⁸ Hence under colonial rule it formed the economic basis for the continuity of the share-hold villages despite the introduction of ‘new’ land revenue system during the first half of the nineteenth century.¹⁹ The British Government had to eventually recognize the *bhagdars* and *narwadars*, big or small, as peasant proprietors.²⁰ Despite the threat that they

¹¹ *Senja* is derived either from Hindi word ‘*sanja*’ (partnership) or Arabic word ‘*sej*’ (enclosed group). (Rustamji, K. (1898). *Jamabandi Settlement Report of the Petlad Taluka of the Baroda Division*. Baroda: The Government Press. 31)

¹² Fukazawa, H. (1974). 9

¹³ Fukazawa, H. (1974). 9

¹⁴ Fukazawa, H. (1974). 12 and Nand, B. (2009). *Village Communities and Land Tenures in Western India under Colonial Rule*, New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors. 153

¹⁵ About 26 in Ahmedabad, 138 in Surat, 60 in Kheda and three-fourth of total 398 government villages in Bharuch.

¹⁶ Fukazawa, H. (1974). 12

¹⁷ Fukazawa, H. (1974). 9

¹⁸ Fukazawa, H. (1974). 10, 12

¹⁹ Fukazawa, H. (1974). 9

²⁰ Patel, G. D. (1950). *Agrarian Reforms in Bombay (The Legal and Economic Consequences of the Abolition of Land Tenures*. Bombay: Vasant Bhuwan, Gorewadi, Mongal Lane, Matunga. 24

were accused of carrying with oppression, the British Government continued to strengthen them.²¹ Thus, the continuity from the pre-British times was maintained.

(ii) Settlement of *Senja* Villages: In *senja* system, the peasant did not divide the village lands and owned the plot of land separately. Therefore, they were individually responsible for the payment of revenue. In such a case the village headman and accountant managed its affairs. This type of tenure was prevalent in more than half of the total number of villages in British Gujarat. The British continued this tenure with some modifications based on survey assessment.²²

(iii) Settlement with Local Revenue Functionaries: The British were not so much familiar with the existing system of revenue assessment. Therefore, they followed the line of Maratha's administration and adopted revenue farming in the government villages. In fact, circumstances of the early nineteenth century necessitated the British Government to farm out different *parganas* to the hereditary or local revenue functionaries such as *desai*, *amin*, *mazmudar*, *patel* etc., who had established consolidated channel of communication between the government and the peasant.²³ For instance, the collection of revenue was farmed out in Bharuch from 1800 to 1805 and in Kheda from 1803 to 1814 to the local revenue functionaries. The collection of revenue from villages were farmed out first to local revenue functionaries of *pargana* such as *desai* or *amin* and then village headman such as *patel* or *mukaddam* and finally to the highest bidders.²⁴ Similarly in Ahmedabad, the British farmed out the *pargana* for five years to *desai* and *amin*. Later the whole district was farmed out to *patels*.²⁵ The *mazmudar* had served as

²¹ Hans, R. K. (1987). *Agrarian Economy of Broach District (Gujarat) During the First Half of the Nineteenth Century*. (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis). Department of History, Faculty of Arts, The M. S. University of Baroda. 173

²² Fukazawa, H. (1974). 9-10

²³ Dhot, J. K. (1986). *Economy and Society of Northern Gujarat with Special Reference to Kheda District circa 1750-1850*. (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis). Faculty of Arts, The M. S. University of Baroda. 254

²⁴ Fukazawa, H. (1974). 18

²⁵ Saxena, R. (1989). *Ahmedabad from circa 1750-1850 – A Review of its Society, Economy and Institutions*. (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis). Faculty of Arts, The M. S. University of Baroda. 143

accountant of village since pre-British times was also continued to perform his former duties under the British.²⁶

The local revenue functionaries under colonial rule came to be considered as the “representative” of the village administration and it was more convenient for colonial government to deal with them rather than with each individual cultivator separately. Therefore, the British continued with the older systems.²⁷ When British captured Bharuch, they realized the services of local officers (*desai* and *mazmudar*) were indispensable. Despite the fact that British found the influences of *desai* and *mazmudar* contrary to the principles of colonial government, they could not ignore or remove them.²⁸ In Kheda District, *desai* and *amin* entered into a *tahood* (contract) with British Government for the amount of revenue which was to be collected for the year from different *parganas*. However, this system did not work for long time.²⁹

Despite the facts mentioned above, revenue farming, according to British officials, met with failures i.e., great oppression to the *ryots*; individual loss to the peasantry; and ultimate decrease of revenue to government. Although it is not always clear that how the revenue farming overturned the institutions and customs of share-hold village and superseded the authority of its headmen. These failures caused the abolition of farming and introduction of *ryotwari* system in share-hold villages in the later phases.³⁰

(iv) Early Revenue Survey Settlement: After the formation of British Gujarat, the existing land tenures in Ahmedabad, Kheda, Panchmahal, Bharuch and Surat were continued with certain modifications in the next phase which in turn altered the nature of landed relationship.

²⁶ Choksey, R. D. (1968). *Economic Life in the Bombay Gujarat (1800-1939)*. Bombay: Asia Publishing House. 15

²⁷ Hans, R. K. (1987). 172-173

²⁸ Hans, R. K. (1987). 6

²⁹ Dhot, J. K. (1986). 255

³⁰ Fukazawa, H. (1974). 18

The British although followed the land revenue management of previous rulers yet they introduce survey in government villages and imposed regular revenue upon them. The earlier tasks of British administrators were to collect data about the existing practices to use it for future reforms. In order to modify the traditional system and to introduce new one, British officials started survey of all government villages. For instance, Bharuch was surveyed first during 1811 to 1820 by Colonel Monier Williams. The whole of Ahmedbad, Kheda and Surat Districts were then surveyed during 1821 to 1826 by Captain Cruikshank, Lieut. Melvill and others. Later a new and more complete survey of all districts of British Gujarat was carried out after 1850 which will be discussed in the next chapter. The earlier surveys supplied government with the requisite social, economic and statistical data for the task of reconstructing the land revenue system.³¹ The surveys were carried out by two or three British officials who were accompanied by several Indian officials. They focused on demarcation of boundary, measurement of land, classification of land, finding of main crops and fixation of revenue. After the survey, the British Government abolished hereditary accountant³² and appointed official accountant (*talati*) in 1814. The *talati* had to examine the condition of peasantry and its tenure and to make the collection of revenue.³³ The practical effect of these surveys was small. Firstly, because the original survey was not fixed by the boundary marks and therefore quickly ceased to correspond with conditions in the field; and secondly, because they were not accompanied by a settlement of the land revenue. This brought change about the position of revenue functionaries.³⁴

³¹ Patel, G. D. (1969). *The Land Revenue Settlements and The British Rule in India*, Ahmedabad: Gujarat University Press. 387 and Fukazawa, H. (1974). 12

³² Hereditary accountant was a member of the villagers and was in charge of writing and keeping various records.

³³ Fukazawa, H. (1974). 19

³⁴ Gordon, R. G. (1917). Vol. I. 33

(v) Changing Position of Local Revenue Functionaries: As has been mentioned earlier by 1814, the British government had successfully replaced *desai* (hereditary accountant) with official accountant (*talati*). This gave a blow to the hereditary powers of *desais*.³⁵ The *desai* and *amin* of Kheda District were also gradually shorn of their diverse powers and responsibilities and reduced from being the master of district to mere ministerial officers.³⁶ It was generally presumed that it will be difficult for collector to carry out efficient management of fiscal unit without the assistant of *desai* and *amin*. Although British had reduced their influence that they had enjoyed under Marathas.³⁷ When British appointed collector (district), *mehta* (*taluka*), *talati* (village) were entrusted with the duties of revenue collection, the *desai* lost their profession as revenue contractor and alongside the political powers which they had enjoyed for several generation in the past. In lieu of their previous services to state, British granted *desai* a fixed annual allowance called *desaigiri*.³⁸

(vi) Ryotwari System: Measures adopted in survey and settlement paved the way for the introduction of *ryotwari* system in British Gujarat. this was carried out by gradually supplanting the traditional systems. This did not mean that the older settlement immediately discontinued. The older tenures continued to exist alongside the newer one. According to B. Powell, “In the Bombay districts, the method of revenue management to which British Government succeeded was that of the Maratha”. He further mentioned that “In the early days of our rule, endeavours were made to continue the old management such as it was found, and from want of experience and defect of machinery of control, frequent over-assessment and much mismanagement doubtless occurred.”³⁹ This was clearly seen in case of British Gujarat.

³⁵ MSA. (1883), *RABP for the Year 1882-83*. Bombay: The Government Central Press. 49

³⁶ Dhot, J. K. (1986). 255

³⁷ Dhot, J. K. (1986). 275

³⁸ Joshi, V. H. (1966). *Economic Development and Social Change in A South Gujarat Village*. Baroda: The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda. 13

³⁹ Powell, B. H. (1882). *A Manual of the Land Revenue Systems and Land Tenures of British India*. Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing. 549

Despite the consisted efforts, almost every new reform introduced in the early 19th century was seemed with many limitations.

The *ryotwari* system introduced in Gujarat was applied to both share-hold and unshared villages. For instance, it was applied to 23 share-hold villages of Ahmedabad District and 136 of Surat Districts about 1820. Thus, the share-hold system in Ahmedabad and Surat had mostly disintegrated and transferred into *ryotwari* system. Overall, it can be safely said that the British Government strongly suspected the jointness of village community and wanted to replace it by individualistic principles.⁴⁰ However, the share-hold system continued in Bharuch and Kheda because the British officials like M. Williams and L. Prendergast had strongly recommended its preservation considering its very superior advantages for revenue collection. In 1820, about 300 villages in Bharuch and 60 villages in Kheda remained under share-hold system although survey had conducted and official accountant had appointed in these villages.⁴¹

In 1821, Mountstuart Elphinstone observed that great extension of *ryotwari* system in share-hold villages had met with failures. He also agreed with the opinions of M. Williams and L. Prendergast regarding the preservation of share-hold village system. He expressed his desire to preserve and increase share-hold villages which could be taken as a sign of prosperity. Therefore, he ordered the collector to restore the former shar-hold system. As a result, the share-hold villages of Kheda District increased from about 60 to 119 around 1830. Although Elphinstone's idea was contrary to the land revenue principles of Company.⁴²

2. Management of Alienated Villages: The British officials had to also deal with landed aristocracy of Gujarat. The settlement of land revenue needed acquisition of territories so that the existing bigger landholders and petty chiefs like *maleks*, *mehwasis*, *girasias*, *talukdars*,

⁴⁰ Fukazawa, H. (1974). 20

⁴¹ Fukazawa, H. (1974). 21

⁴² Fukazawa, H. (1974). 21

izaradars, inamdars etc, could be granted annual or triennial lease as settlement. It is already mentioned that the British treated these landlord's villages as alienated villages. They recognized the private ownership of landlords. They refrained themselves from direct interference with the internal management of landlord villages and only collected the tribute from them which they had been paying to the Maratha Government.⁴³ It is interesting to note the way settlement was carried out. Following is a description of settlement with landlords.

(i) Settlement with *Maleks*: The *maleki* villages were given by the previous rulers as a reward to those soldiers who had shown bravery. Initially the number of *maleki* villages was twelve which covered an area of 90 square miles at the time of its grant in about 1483.⁴⁴ The tribute called *ghasdana* which was levied by Gaekwads on *maleki* villages was continued until the introduction of British rule.⁴⁵ At the onset of their administration, the English officials made attempts to understand the nature of land, landed relationships and the process of revenue collection. They initially did make some changes in the various districts that came under their direct control. They changed the boundaries of villages and divided larger villages into smaller ones. Thereby increasing the numbers of villages. For instance, in 1817, the *maleki* villages in Thasra Taluka of Kheda District were increased from twelve to seventeen and later in 1864 it increased up to twenty-seven.⁴⁶ The British officials then placed accountants in these *maleki* villages and regulated all the lands. The lands were divided into (i) *sarkari* lands paying *vaje* (one-third) and *karam vero* (ii) *vechania* and *gherania* lands paying *karam vero* but no *vaje* (iii) *pasaita* and village service lands, sometimes entirely free and sometimes paying *karam vero* and (iv) lands cultivated by *maleks* personally called *gharkhed* lands were rent free lands.⁴⁷ The officials then abolished all cesses and the practice of levying *vaje* in kind. This

⁴³ Fukazawa, H. (1974). 18

⁴⁴ Gordon, R. G. (1917). Volume I. 269 and Patel, G. D. (1950). 54

⁴⁵ Dhot, J. K. (1986). 400

⁴⁶ Gordon, R. G. (1917). Volume I. 269 and Patel, G. D. (1950). 54

⁴⁷ Patel, G. D. (1950). 55

was substituted with fixed *bighoti* rates upon *vechania*, *girania* and occupied *sarkari* lands in lieu of *karam vero*. The *maleks* still continued to levy their *vaje* in kind. The *bighoti* rates were fixed not according to the quality and productivity of the soil, but upon the caste of the cultivator. The common rates were Rs. 4½ to 6 (Babasi) for *patidars* and Rs. 3 and 3½ for *kolis*.⁴⁸ Further, *talatis* were appointed in these villages and the management was taken away from the *maleks*. This settlement reduced the status of *maleks* from proprietors to that of a tenant. This gave a blow to the power of such revenue functionaries. The British officials with their half-baked knowledge of the traditional system created fissures in the old age systems. They were unable to understand the caste structure and its mechanism. Within three years i.e., by 1820, the system was realized to be faulty.⁴⁹ Since the colonial administration could not get much after eliminating the agency of *maleks* hence they were reinstalled to their previous possession. This was a position that they retained till 1860.⁵⁰ Thus, the *maleks* managed their villages on their own although the rate of assessment were fixed by British.⁵¹

(ii) Settlement with *Mehwasis*: The *mehwasi* chiefs or *thakors* of Kheda and Ahmedabad Districts had posed as a problem to colonial government. In Prantij Taluka and Modasa Mahal of the Ahmedabad District, there were *mehwasi* villages which were held by the descendants of *mehvasi koli* or *rajput* chiefs.⁵² In these villages, the *jama* was subject to revision and the holders were considered proprietors thereof. Similarly, in the Kheda District, certain villages on the Mahi river were held on the *udhad jama* tenure, i. e. the *jama* was fixed but not liable to revision.⁵³ Most of the *mehwasi* villages were rent-free or used to pay a small tribute.⁵⁴ The

⁴⁸ Dhot, J. K. (1986). 492-493

⁴⁹ Patel, G. D. (1950). 56

⁵⁰ Patel, G. D. (1950). 57

⁵¹ Dhot, J. K. (1986). 408

⁵² Gordon, R. G. (1917). Volume I. 268

⁵³ MSA. (1914). SRBG. No. DXXIV.-New Series. (As Revised in 1914). *Character of Land Tenures and System of Survey and Settlement in the Bombay Presidency*. Bombay: The Government Central Press. 11 and Patel, G. D. (1950). 8, 39

⁵⁴ MSA. (1914). SRBG. No. DXXIV.-New Series. 11

British officials did not interfere in the internal fiscal arrangement between *mehwasi* chiefs and cultivators.⁵⁵ But Due to the changes of terms of payment from 'tribute' to 'revenue' the status of the *mehwasi* chiefs changed. It also increased the burden of revenue which went as high as 50 %.⁵⁶

(iii) Settlement with *Girasias*: In case of *girsias*, neither the Mughal nor the Maratha interfered in the internal management of the lands held by *girasias*.⁵⁷ The only thing that changed was the nomenclature. Under British Government, instead of a tribute, it was called a rent or revenue.⁵⁸ The *girasia*'s proprietary rights were duly recognized by Bombay Government.⁵⁹ So far as the *girasias* chiefs were concerned, Mountstuart Elphinstone, the Governor of Bombay Presidency, introduced the concept of leases on annual basis. However, he fixed the payments to 70% of the produce. This changed the equation and the *girasias* had to take heavy loans in order to meet this revenue demand on *giras* lands.⁶⁰ It is important here to get a brief understanding of the term *giras* lands. The *giras* lands were revenue free or alienated lands or *wanta* lands. These were large tracts of lands from which the government could not collect any taxes. For instance, there was almost 58,000 *bighas* of land in the Bharuch District which fell under this category.⁶¹ By and large *wanta* land was held by *girasias*.⁶² Since the *girassias* were the holder of their lands, they had assumed proprietary powers. The British had decided to not interfere in the internal management of *girasias* except give them a right to derive a share. Thus, British proceeded with policy of entering into agreement with *girasia*.⁶³ In 1800 when

⁵⁵ Elliot, F. A. H. (1883). *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Volume VII. Baroda*. Bombay: Government Central Press. 360

⁵⁶ Patel, G. D. (1950). 72-73

⁵⁷ Dhot, J. K. (1986). 536

⁵⁸ Patel, G. D. (1950). 72

⁵⁹ Hans, R. K. (1987). 66

⁶⁰ Patel, G. D. (1950). 72-73

⁶¹ Hamilton, W. (1820). *A Geographical, Statistical, and Historical Description of Hindostan and the Adjacent Countries. Vol. I*. London: John Murray, Albemarle Street. 706

⁶² Hans, R. K. (1987). 62

⁶³ Saxena, R. (1989). 172

British officials assumed control of Bharuch, they claimed a share in the land revenue. The British had to wait for over a decade to assume control over *girassias*. Around 1813, the British officials forced the *girassias* to accept terms of payment whereby they (the collector's administration) would collect land revenue and pay the *girassias*, instead of it being the other way around.⁶⁴ The British appointed *talati*, *patel* and *mukhi* in the areas of jurisdiction of *girasias*.⁶⁵

(iv) Settlement with *Talukdars*: There were some tenures present in the British districts which were neither alienated nor unalienated. Mostly these were lands whose status could not be determined. One such tenure was *talukdari* tenure or estates. The *talukdari* tenure was one of the most important widely prevalent tenures of Gujarat. It had prevailed in all districts of British Gujarat except Panchmahals.⁶⁶ The *talukdars* as the owner of estates had enjoyed proprietary since the pre-British times. Their estates included the ownership of mines, minerals, tree and forests.⁶⁷ According to Peile, initially the *talukdars* were called as *girasias* but under the British for the first time they were called as *talukdars*. They, of course, had to pay a tribute and quit nominal in the pre-British times. This changed when British came to power as they changed the nature of payment where instead of a tribute a rent was fixed on *talukdari* estates. The British also increased the rent almost by 50 % in 1821.⁶⁸ The position/status of *talukdar* also underwent transformation. *Talukdar's* positions ranged from jurisdictional chiefs to the recognized chieftainships to the holders of a few acres in co-parcenary estates. *Talukdar* in fact was not any single community or caste but it was an office that was assigned to individual since the pre-British times. Hence, *talukdars* were often drawn from Muslims, Kathis, Charan,

⁶⁴ MSA. (1883). RABP for the Year 1882-83. 49

⁶⁵ Dhot, J. K. (1986). 537

⁶⁶ MSA. (1914). SRBG. No. DXXIV.-New Series. 8

⁶⁷ Rajyagor, S. B. (1975). *Gujarat State Gazetteers, Mahsana District*. Ahmedabad: Director, Government Printing, Stationery and Publication. 513

⁶⁸ Choksey, R. D. (1968). 26

Waghela, Chudasama, Jhalas and Koli etc.⁶⁹ Mountstuart Elphinstone introduced annual leases and fixed the payment at 70 per cent of the produce. This gave a setback to the powers of *talukdars* and they became hereditary lease holders dependent on the discretion of the government.⁷⁰ Thus, from position of a landlord the *talukdars* were reduced to the position of a mere revenue farmer. This was also issue of the *talukdari* estates which were found in other administrative divisions such as Kathiawar and other Agencies.⁷¹

(v) Settlement with *Izaradars*: *Izaradari* was another system that was practiced all over Gujarat. This was believed to have developed under the Maratha administration in the 18th century. However, some of the scholars find its genesis in the period of Sultanat of Gujarat. During the initial period, British were anxious to continue for some time the existing administrative practices. In order to manage the local revenue administration, *mukhta* agreement were concluded with *izaradars* particularly for the districts of Kheda and Ahmedabad. *Izaradars* were given military protection and were told to not oppress the peasants and to pay the revenue by installments.⁷² Although *izaradars* acquired the supreme authority over the territories of their jurisdiction, the internal administration and management still remained in the hand of *desai*, *mazmudar*, *amin* etc.⁷³

As per the British understanding of the Maratha system, the revenue farming had proven to be exploitative in nature. The British officials who had inherited this system took some times to grasp its working. Since the system was designed around the intermediaries, the state did not have any control over its revenue measures. As a result, the state could not make any profits with most of the revenue being usurped by the revenue farmers. The studies have shown that

⁶⁹ MSA. (1914). SRBG. No. DXXIV.-New Series. 9 and Patel, G. D. (1950). 71

⁷⁰ Choksey, R. D. (1968). 26

⁷¹ MSA. (1914). SRBG. No. DXXIV.-New Series. 9 and Patel, G. D. (1950). 70

⁷² Dhot, J. K. (1986). 298

⁷³ Saxena, R. (1989). 187

revenue farmers and other local officials such as moneylenders had sustained the local economies by enabling steady and continuous inflow of cash. They benefitted the portfolio capitalists but certainly did not benefit the state. The British officials were unable to comprehend the process with which the practice would be abolished.⁷⁴

Land Administration Under Company's Rule (1827-1850)

The British had certain issues with the land revenue systems that had existed in Gujarat. They were fairly clear that they although were to abolish the revenue farming system but also were aware to the risks of initiating sudden new reforms. Hence it was imperative to maintain the indigenous land revenue system, to levy the revenue according to the actual cultivation, to make assessment light and to impose no new taxes etc.⁷⁵ This, however, was not a homogenous policy, and hence was not applicable in the entire British Gujarat at the same time. As and when a district passed into the hands of English East India Company, matters of revenue were handled with caution and the implementation of its policies was carried out in piecemeal manner. The formation of British Gujarat was almost complete by the second decade of the 19th century and hence the Bombay government aimed at instituting a structured land revenue administrative system. The land revenue settlements were made directly with the peasants on permanent, quasi permanent and non-permanent tenures. A variety of assessment rates were fixed considering the type of the soils, crops and cultivating classes etc.⁷⁶

1. The Regulation XVII of 1827 and Settlement of Land Tenures: On the basis of the data obtained and the administrative experience gained during a quarter of a century from 1800-1825, the British Government started putting its house into systematic order. In 1827, elaborate regulations were framed for the creation of the district and village police and for the conduct

⁷⁴ Nadri, G. A. (2009). 21-22, 47-50, 83-84, 149-150

⁷⁵ Gordon, R. G. (1917). Vol. I. 20

⁷⁶ Choksey, R. D. (1968). 66

of civil, revenue and criminal jurisdiction.⁷⁷ As has been mentioned earlier, the British were more concerned with maximization of the revenue collection. In order to safeguard the punctual receipt of land revenue, Mountstuart Elphinstone, the Governor of Bombay Presidency, framed the fundamental principles of land revenue administration of Bombay Presidency. The principles laid down for the guidance of officers were: to abolish farming system or maintain the existing one; to levy revenue according to the actual cultivation; to make revenue assessment light; and to impose no new taxes.⁷⁸ This was formalized in the Resolution No. XVII of 1827, whereby, all lands were liable for assessment according to their quality, and all exemptions from assessment were to be considered valid or invalid according to the views held by the British government from time to time.⁷⁹ According to the second implication of Resolution, every piece of land was liable to assessment on the basis of its kind and not on the basis of the actual overall produce of the village. Thus, it was not the village as a whole but every place of land in the village that was made the unit of assessment. Now the revenue was to be fixed not upon the large estate or village as a whole but upon an individual survey number or upon the separate small holding of individual. On the basis of the Resolution, the new land revenue system called *ryotwari* system was introduced in Bombay Presidency. Hence it is clear that the land revenue administration in Bombay Presidency was not consolidated in single stroke but it went into multiple phases before it evolved as an administrative setup.⁸⁰

One of the major problems that the British officials had faced was that majority of land tenures had no written legal records. It was difficult to place them in any time and space. Therefore, the revenue functionaries and the landed relationships were forged on the basis of mutual

⁷⁷ Choksey, R. D. (1968). 66

⁷⁸ Modak, D. S. (1932). *The Bombay Land System and Village Administration*. Poona: Oriental Watchman Publishing House. 6

⁷⁹ Patel, G. D. (1969). xviii, 388

⁸⁰ Srinivas, K., Awasthi, A., & Vaidya, M. (2017). *History of Land Revenue Administration in Gujarat (1407 AD to 2017 AD)*. Gujarat: Revenue Department, Government of Gujarat. 243

understanding and sometimes trust. This took some care as the British officials did not either have understanding or trust. The local revenue functionaries could not be easily removed from their position and power. For instance, even after the abolition of revenue farming system, they continued under the *bhagdari* or *narwadari* tenures.⁸¹

The Regulation XVII of 1827 provided for the legal rights and duties of government, collector and individual peasants in the *ryotwari* system. It also defined the legal position of the share-hold villages where share-hold system was to be respected and preserved in principle. It provided that if share-holders failed to pay revenue and share-hold system come to be ineffective the collector could intervene and transferred that system into *ryotwari*.⁸² The revenue collection during the early British period showed a large increase compared with that of pre-British period. Despite such conditions, a more-strict revenue system was also devised for share-hold village.⁸³ Under the new system, the revenue collection increased which resulted in additional burden upon the peasantry. This was further accentuated by fall of prices of agricultural products all over British Gujarat during 1836 and 1848. In Bharuch District, the prices of pulse, wheat, *juwar* and cotton fell by 13.68 %, 11.98 %, 46.1 % and 44.63 %. Under such circumstances, the share-hold villages could not preserve their share-holding form and therefore were transferred into *ryotwari* villages. For instance, the share-hold villages in Bharuch decreased from 300 to 277 in 1847 and 244 in 1862. Similar trends could be seen in Kheda. Here the number of share-hold villages decreased from 119 to 90 in 1862. It is clear from these examples that the share-hold system became nominal and approached the *ryotwari* system by the mid of the nineteenth century. However, many of villages under share-hold system continued to exist.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Patel, G. D. (1950). 27

⁸² Fukazawa, H. (1974). 22

⁸³ Fukazawa, H. (1974). 23

⁸⁴ Fukazawa, H. (1974). 24

So far as the peasantry is concerned, the *ryotwari* system did not represent any substantial change in the position of the *ryots* or in the manner in which they paid revenue. The Bombay Government had understood that 100 % implementation of *ryotwari* system was not possible. The Bombay government was committed mostly to the attainment of its immediate goals through merely administrative expediency. The British officials however could not exercise the power without the assistance of local revenue functionaries. Local expediency thus was a major force in the creation and application of early British administration in Bombay.⁸⁵

2. Survey Tenure: As has been mentioned earlier all the territories of British Gujarat were classified into government or alienated villages. In these villages, various types of land tenures had prevailed. The basic purpose of the tenures was to collect revenue from the individual peasant. Thus, the agency that collected the revenue had changed from time to time, but the basic unit had remained the peasant or the '*ryot*'. Hence it made sense to give the settlement a term which would lead directly to '*ryot*'. The introduction or rather restructuring of the existing system was carried out in phased manner. During the initial phase, British government permitted certain holders exempted from payment of land revenue, but subsequently government had to abolish the older systems with some compromises. This was done more to facilitate regular collection of revenue. These initiatives paved the way for the introduction of survey or *ryotwari* tenure. With the introduction of the *ryotwari* system, a direct relationship got established between the government and the *ryots* as it replaced the intermediaries. The *ryotwari* tenure by mid of 19th century had become the most important tenure in British Gujarat. Apparently, the other land tenures also took the shape of *ryotwari* once the survey and settlement measures were implemented.⁸⁶ Following section discuss discusses different types of tenures and the impact of British revenue policy on it.

⁸⁵ Rabitoy, N. (1975). System v. Expediency: The Reality of Land Revenue Administration in the Bombay Presidency, 1812-1820, *Modern Asian Studies*, 9(4). 529-546

⁸⁶ Patel, G. D. (1969). 104

3. Type of Survey Tenure: The survey tenure was of two types viz., (i) old or unrestricted tenure and (ii) new or restricted tenure. In old tenure, the lands were transferable while in new tenure the lands were not transferable except with the permission of collector.⁸⁷ The old tenure may be described as the right of occupancy of government land continuable in perpetuity on payment of the government demand and transferable by inheritance, sale, gift or mortgage without other restriction than the requirement to give notice to the authorities. This tenure was defined in the original Bombay Land Revenue Code, Act V of 1879. Under the amending Act VI of 1901, another type of tenure was created which came to be known as restricted or non-transferable tenure. Under this Act, the Collector was authorized to grant the occupancy of lands for limited periods or occupant could not alienate his land without the previous permission of the Collector.⁸⁸

It is important to note that the survey and settlement which was introduced in the district of British Gujarat was taken from the principles of survey and settlement of Bombay Presidency. Therefore, it is important to examine the evolution and principles of survey and settlement of Bombay Presidency.

4. Survey and Settlement in Bombay Presidency: The basis of the newly established land revenue mechanism was to survey the agricultural lands and then settle on the rate at which the land revenue would be charged. The genesis of the concept of Survey and Settlement can be seen the administrative set up of Sher Shah Suri, which was later expanded by Abul Fazl and Todar Mal in the Mughal period. This system was in some sense continued under the British in Gujarat. However, the first systematic Survey and Settlement in Bombay Presidency was an experimental measure and carried out initially in the *taluka* of Indapur of the Poona

⁸⁷ Kharod, N. G. (1957). *The Bombay Land Revenue Code (Act No. V of 1879)*. Ahmedabad: Chandrakant Chimanlal Vora, Law Publisher and Law Booksellers. A78

⁸⁸ MSA. (1914). SRBG. No. DXXIV.-New Series. 7

Collectorate and not in Gujarat. Armed with their own ideas of survey the target was to rectify the faulty outcome of earlier irregular survey. In 1827, the task was assigned to the Assistant Collector of Poona, Pringle, to devise a system of Survey and Settlement which if found appropriate could then be implemented to Gujarat region as well. This settlement came to be known as Pringle's settlement.⁸⁹

(i) Pringle's Settlement: The Pringle's settlement comprised of a survey of all arable lands filed by field and fixation of assessment of every field. The measurement was done by chain (of 16 *annas* = 33 feet) and cross staff. The standard of area was English acre with its sub-division the *guntha*^{90, 91} Pringle's measures were to divide the soils into classes, as a part of continuous tradition from the Mughals, and, to ascertain the average gross produce of each class and to fix the land revenue. The soil was divided in nine classes and average gross produce of each class was determined by local inquiry from *ryot* and crop experiments. The average gross produce was then converted into money at an average of prices for past years and the net produce found by deducting the cost of cultivation.⁹² The total area of cultivable lands was reduced to acres of the first class in accordance with the "net produce". For instance, if the net produce of the first class was Rs. 16 and of the fourth class was Rs. 4, then 4 acres of the fourth class were counted as 1 acre of the first class.⁹³ Pringle believed that he would fix the standard rates by which the assessments could easily be regulated. It was also to be guaranteed for 30 years so the old one could automatically be replaced by the new one.⁹⁴

Subsequently, an attempt was made to extend the Pringle's settlement over the whole Poona and several surrounding districts. However, this was met with failures. The reason why the

⁸⁹ Gordon, R. G. (1917). Vol. I. 28

⁹⁰ The *guntha* being a square the side of which equals 1 chain or 121 square yards, 40 *gunthas* making 1 acre.

⁹¹ Srinivas, K., Awasthi, A., & Vaidya, M. (2017). 238

⁹² Gordon, R. G. (1917). Vol. I. 28-29

⁹³ Modak, D. S. (1932). 8

⁹⁴ Gordon, R. G. (1917). Vol. I. 30

settlement failed because British officials tried to superimpose a foreign (British) revenue mechanism over Indian one, such as the use of the English acre as the standard land measure. Secondly, communicating with the locals was a problem as they, the English officers had to often rely on the locals such a *brahmin*, who due to the lack of agricultural experience would misconstrue the information. More importantly, however, was the introduction of common tenure and abolishment of the then pre-existing tenures. This resulted in the chaos and confusion among the landed communities. They faced the threat of extinction with disappearance of the old order of things with its complication of *pattis*, local land measures, local assessment etc. The main cause of failure seems to have been the failure of the British officials to realize what was essentially needed was a large reduction of the assessments in order to obtain a real time data. The conditions of the peasantry were further aggravated by consecutive occurrences of famines. Despite failures, Pringle's settlement laid the foundation of a system of a Survey and Settlement.⁹⁵

(ii) Goldsmid and Wingate's Settlement: After the Pringles settlement an attempt was made to improve upon the standards of Survey and Settlement. With that aim, a general revenue survey of Bombay Presidency was carried out in 1836-37.⁹⁶ The Bombay Government appointed Mr. Goldsmid (Civil Service) and Lieut. Wingate (Engineer) to conduct this survey. They were to commence operations in Mohul and Madha of the Poona District.⁹⁷ The officers conducted surveys which included old as well as new systems. They noted various issues that were the result of the earlier Survey and Settlement.⁹⁸

Initially, no accurate maps were prepared but a descriptive record of the boundaries was kept. This led to confusion as the boundaries were not indelibly marked. The surveyors carried out

⁹⁵ Gordon, R. G. (1917). Vol. I. 31

⁹⁶ MSA. (1874). *GRABP for the Year 1872-73*. Bombay: The Government Central Press. 43

⁹⁷ Modak, D. S. (1932). 8

⁹⁸ Srinivas, K., Awasthi, A., & Vaidya, M. (2017). 240

random surveys and a descriptive record of their boundaries was prepared. The assessment was fixed on the basis of the fertility of soil. The soil was divided into three categories, viz. black soils, red soils and gravelly soils. Each of these categories was then sub-divided into three classes thus making nine classes in all. The soil was classified on the basis of depth or purity. After classification, each class of soil was given an assessment rate per acre which is mentioned below:⁹⁹

Class of Soil	Assessment Rates in <i>Annas-Pies</i>
1 st Black	12-0
2 nd Black	9-7
3 rd Black	6-10
1 st Red	8-0
2 nd Red	5-2
3 rd Red	3-0
1 st Gravelly	4-0
2 nd Gravelly	2-5
3 rd Gravelly	1-5

Experiments were conducted on the field. Parts of the fields were dug to examine the quality and depth of the soil and its type. The average acre rate was then calculated by multiplying the shares of each class of its soil by its rate. This gave the assessment of the whole field.¹⁰⁰ Besides, the government fixed the period of settlement for 30 years.¹⁰¹ The maps were prepared to correct the earlier survey.¹⁰² The first general revenue survey of Bombay Presidency

⁹⁹ Gordon, R. G. (1917). Vol. I. 38-39

¹⁰⁰ Gordon, R. G. (1917). Vol. I. 39

¹⁰¹ Gordon, R. G. (1917). Vol. I. 41-42

¹⁰² Gordon, R. G. (1917). Vol. I. 43-44

commenced in 1837 but it was in 1847 that efforts were made to make the survey systematic and uniform.¹⁰³

(iii) The ‘Joint Report of 1847’: In order to extend new settlement in other parts of the Bombay Presidency, an authoritative statement of the principles for maintaining uniformity became necessary. Thus, next step followed was to form definite and permanent form of survey of operations. The process of Survey and Settlement in the Deccan region only came to be formed in 1847 with the publication of the Joint Report of 1847.¹⁰⁴ The Joint Report was prepared by three Settlement Superintendents (Goldsmid, Wingate and Davidson).¹⁰⁵ It was prepared with the object to make the authoritative statement of principles of Survey and Settlement.¹⁰⁶ Initially it was restricted to the Deccan region but with the relatively successful formulation of procedures of Survey and Settlement, it was later applied to Gujarat as well. In fact, Joint Report of 1847 provided a framework for the future Survey and Settlement policy of the British administration in Gujarat. It basically focused on assessment and fixation of revenue settlement on the basis of the outcome.¹⁰⁷ The Report focused on areas such as survey number, classification and assessment.¹⁰⁸ This has been discussed below:

(a) Survey Number: The plot of land that could be cultivated by a pair of bullocks was set up as the standard unit of size and was called survey number.¹⁰⁹ In Deccan, there were the large holdings with sparse population. This led to large lands going waste due to lack of cultivation. In such a condition, the principle of “the area which could be ploughed by a pair of bullocks” was well suited. Hence the survey number in Deccan was comprised the area of from four to twenty acres according to the nature of cultivation and land occupancy. The conditions in

¹⁰³ Srinivas, K., Awasthi, A., & Vaidya, M. (2017). 244

¹⁰⁴ Modak, D. S. (1932). 11

¹⁰⁵ Powell, B. H. (1892). *The Land-Systems of British India. Vol. III.* Delhi: Low Price Publications. 213

¹⁰⁶ MSA. (1874). GRABP for the Year 1872-73. 43

¹⁰⁷ Gordon, R. G. (1917). Vol. I. 67-68

¹⁰⁸ Gordon, R. G. (1917). Vol. I. 88

¹⁰⁹ Modak, D. S. (1932). 11

Gujarat, however were different specifically due to the high-density population dependent upon the land. This had resulted in greater sub-divisions. Therefore, a rule was made of not allowing more than five occupancies on a single piece of land.¹¹⁰ A survey number was assigned and in order to demarcate the boundary of the survey number, stones and small pillar or brick and *chunam* were used. The measurement of the boundary was carried out by the method of chain and cross-staff. Later on, advancements were made and to scale maps were drawn which measured the village, *taluka* and district.¹¹¹

(b) Classification: In the Joint Report of 1847, further classification of soil was carried out into three classes viz., dry-crop, garden and rice lands. The object was to find the relative values of fields fix a rate based on those values. In doing this, it was necessary to adopt a different procedure for different types of lands, such as ‘single factor’ lands or dry-crop lands and ‘multi factor’ land, such as garden and rice land, which by and large ordinary classes of lands of Gujarat.¹¹² For dry-crop land, one scale was necessary with gradations according to the depth and quality of the soil. For garden and rice land, it was necessary to specify the different factors of value, settle the comparative value which each factor bore to the other and to express the total value of the field as a combination of those factors by new principles introduced by British.¹¹³

(c) Assessment: The process of assessment was comprised of three stages viz., (a) grouping of villages (b) determination of the aggregate and (c) distribution of the aggregate. In the first stage, the *talukas* were divided into homogenous group of villages. In the second stage, the

¹¹⁰ Gordon, R. G. (1917). Vol. I. 88-89

¹¹¹ Gordon, R. G. (1917). Vol. I. 91-92

¹¹² Gordon, R. G. (1917). Vol. I. 59-61

¹¹³ Gordon, R. G. (1917). Vol. I. 61-62

nature and effects of the past management of the district was defined. In the third or final stage, the maximum rate was fixed through the classification of survey number.¹¹⁴

The main object of the survey was the imposition or implementation of assessment carried out. The principle of assessment laid down by government for the guidance of its officers was to assess the lands in accordance to its capabilities. To accomplish this objects, cultivable lands were divided in into different categories as mentioned above.¹¹⁵ Lieut. Davidson, known as the father of soil classification in Bombay, devised the system of rupee-scale which served as the basis of the whole Bombay system of Survey and Settlement. This rupee-scale system to the classification of dry-crop land had a maximum of 16 *annas* and eight subordinate classes. The chief objective of this system was to find the relative value of fields and to express that value in terms of a fixed scale. The rupee-scale system was modified for use in the rice lands. After which the rupee-scale system was broken up into three portions of 8, 4 and 4 *annas* for classification of the soil, moisture and embankment factors respectively. In both of these systems, it is important to note that the best class of land was that valued at 16 *annas*. This 16 *annas* scale was found to be restrictive hence the maximum classification valuation of dry-crop raised was from 16 *annas* to 22 *annas*. In case of tank-irrigated rice, the classification scale was raised up to 32 *annas*.¹¹⁶

The system of soil classification and assessment according to Joint Report of 1847 comprised a scale of *annas* based upon depth, soil fertility and quality. This scale was divided into nine classes. It was distinguished into three orders of soil viz., black, red and gravelly.¹¹⁷ [See Appendix No. 1] The following table compares the original scale framed by Lieut. Davidson

¹¹⁴ Modak, D. S. (1932). 12-13

¹¹⁵ Gordon, R. G. (1917). Vol. I. 70, 72-74

¹¹⁶ Gordon, R. G. (1917). Vol. I. 96-97

¹¹⁷ Gordon, R. G. (1917). Vol. I. 74-75 and Gordon, R. G. (1917). *The Bombay Survey and Settlement Manual. Volume II. Part II. – Technical. Part III. – Appendices.* Bombay: The Government Central Press. 338-340

and the scale given in Joint Report of 1847 in order to indicate the classification of soils (9 classes) and its assessment in *annas* holding the compartment of one acre:¹¹⁸

Class (Each Holding 1 Acre)	Original Scale (In <i>Annas</i>)	Joint Report Scale (In <i>Annas</i>)
1	16	16
2	13	14
3	10 ½	12
4	8	10
5	6	8
6	4 ½	6
7	3	4 ½
8	3	3
9	1 ½	2

The net result of the change made was led to a general rise all round in the scale of soil. The increase in the valuation of the 2nd class was 8%; it was 25% in the 4th class; 33% in the 5th class and 50% in 7th and 8th classes. This meant a corresponding rise in the comparative assessment of worst as compared with the better class of soils. This increase was unjustifiable and was therefore corrected in the further survey settlement.¹¹⁹

5. Settlement of *Inam* Tenure: It is also important to mention that, by this time an extraordinary number of claims had made to alienated lands and large portion of these claims were

¹¹⁸ Patel, G. D. (1969). 110

¹¹⁹ Gordon, R. G. (1917). Vol. I. 76

bogus.¹²⁰ During the first 23 years of British rule (1818-1841), the enormous extent of claims to hold land as *inam* were not realized. The first inquiry into claims to *inam* lands made in 1843 and it was the time when question of alienations revived through the efforts of Goldsmid, the Superintendent of the Southern Maratha Survey.¹²¹ The inquiry about claims to *inam* lands resulted with two important measures viz., the reorganization of the Poona Daftar¹²² and the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the alienated lands of the southern Maratha region. This Committee proceed for a period of nine year from 1843 to 1852 when it was transferred into Inam Commission and its proceeding given a legal status by Act XI of 1852. By this act, government was empowered to appoint Inam Commissioners with Assistant Commissioners to investigate the title of persons holding or claiming against government to possession or enjoyment of *inams* or *jagirs* or any interest therein or claiming exemption from the payment of land revenue.¹²³ The Inam Commission was not confined only to southern Maratha region but was also applied in British Gujarat. The Act No. VII of 1863 was passed to deal with *inam* tenure in Gujarat.¹²⁴ The Bombay Government passed an order to prevent the sale of *wazifa*¹²⁵ lands without the prior permission of the governmnet even when these lands had been mortgaged and sold over the period of time. However, there were many cases that *wazifadars* mortgaged and sold their lands. For example, Bibi Saleh (widow of Syed Hamid, a *wazifadar* of Bharuch) was permitted to sell her husband's *wazifa* land after she presented valid evidences to government.¹²⁶

¹²⁰ Kharod, N. G. (1957). A71

¹²¹ Gordon, R. G. (1917). Vol. I. 253

¹²² Poona Daftar means the government records of the Maratha administration covering the period of eighty-eight years from 1729 to 1817 but with a blank of seven years from 1757 to 1763. The records of this seven years were destroyed by the Mughal.

¹²³ Gordon, R. G. (1917). Vol. I. 253-254

¹²⁴ Kharod, N. G. (1957). A72

¹²⁵ In Bharuch District, *wazifa* (akin to *inami* lands) were granted by Mughals to their *wazirs*, governor, alomoner almoners, priestly family or religious scholars such as *pirs*, *fakirs*, *syeds*, *shaikhs*, *gazis*, *girzadas*, *hakims*, *maulanas*, *vaidya* etc. The *wazifadars* had enjoyed their *wazifas* as proprietary rights. They were free to dispose their lands. They could mortgage as well as sell it.

¹²⁶ Hans, R. K. (1987). 68-69

During the period from 1800 to 1850, British Government had modified and carried out the old system in which settlement made at first with the local revenue functionaries and then directly with the *ryots*. The annual or tenurial settlements were made for three to five years. The assessment was based on high prices which resulted with increase in general indebtedness of the *ryots* and large area of arable lands went out of cultivation.¹²⁷ According to Baden Powell, “the early revenue management in Bombay was un-instructive. It was an utter failure, both in the Gujarat districts and in the Dakhan.”¹²⁸ In fact, it cannot be said that the early revenue management was un-instructive because it had been clearly showed the various attempts were made by local officers to introduce a ryotwari system by gradually supplanting the old system of village or farming system of land revenue settlement.¹²⁹ As far as the relationships between landholders and peasants under different tenures is concerned, it was mostly discriminatory. The right of the tenant cultivators remained precarious.¹³⁰

It can be said that, the colonial policy was riddled by its own contradiction. On one hand it subverted the traditional system but on the other hand consciously attempted to continue it through political and legal means. The earlier system based on survey assessment continued and after 1851 a new and complete Survey and Settlement was introduced in British Gujarat.

¹²⁷ Srinivas, K., Awasthi, A., & Vaidya, M. (2017). 244

¹²⁸ Powell, B. H. (1892). Vol. III. 208

¹²⁹ Srinivas, K., Awasthi, A., & Vaidya, M. (2017). 244

¹³⁰ Mackay, A., & Robertson, J. (1853). *Western India; Reports Addressed to the Chambers of Commerce of Manchester, Liverpool, Blackburn, and Glasgow*. London: Nathaniel Cooke, Milford House, Strand. 71