

**LAND TENURES AND LANDED RELATIONSHIPS IN BRITISH
GUJARAT AND BARODA STATE: 1800-1960**

A

SYNOPSIS

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SYNOPSIS

INTRODUCTION

Humans have directed their activities towards the resources of the earth since the beginning of existence. The use of land has always been a subject of study in history and other disciplines. Land plays an important role in state, society and individual life. It touches directly or indirectly various dimensions of human's life whether political, social or economic. The history of use of land can be traced from the pre-historical period when human civilization passes through different stages such as hunting, gathering, fishing, domestication of animals, plantation and agriculture. The beginning of agriculture completely transformed human lives because it encouraged them to attach to the land. Consequently, the land became the basis of all political, social and economic activities.

In India, the land was and still is a symbol of power and authority. It has been the most significant among the means of production in the agrarian economy. A person without land is considered as a person of unprivileged class in society. The ownership over land has been determined by a long period of political, social and economic evolution. For the proper distribution and utilization of land, various land tenures were introduced over the period of time. Land tenure was a system/condition according to which land and its resources were shared between state and individual. Thus, it determined the relationships between the state and its people.

Landed relationships in regions of Gujarat were defined by land tenures which had evolved since the ancient and medieval periods. These tenures hence had continued with certain modifications during the nineteenth and first half of twentieth centuries. They were finally abolished during the post-independence period. The current research is attempting to explore, analyse and describe the evolution of land tenures from origin to its abolition. It is also

attempting to understand the nature of landed relationships due to the changes accrued in the land tenurial system. British Gujarat and Baroda State, the two geo-political administrative divisions of Gujarat, are the target regions of this thesis. These two regions are chosen for the current research due to their historical and geographical potentials. The current research is primarily centered on the socio-economic conditions and changes with special reference to land tenures and landed relationships. This necessitated a comprehensive examination of various facets viz. land tenures, survey settlement, agricultural and tenancy reforms etc., which were continued from the previous times or were newly introduced in both British Gujarat and Baroda State. The policies of the two governments had a ripple impact on the agrarian economy and subsequent landed relationships.

The historical method used in the thesis is a traditional method i.e., the current research is based on a comprehensive examination of both primary and secondary sources which have been sampled, analysed and reviewed. A large number of studies have been carried out which focus on various aspects of the land, peasantry and its administration. The studies on land administration in Gujarat (British Gujarat and Baroda State) have primarily been descriptive, focusing mainly on the types and features of land tenures. These studies are carried out in specific areas or periods and have been successful to a large extent in reconstructing the socio-economic history of Gujarat. However, they have certain lacunas viz., (a) most of these studies are carried out in isolation without tracing the evolution of land tenures since its origin to abolition; (b) the studies have given homogeneous character to types and features of land tenures without taking into consideration of the geographical and time-based variations; (c) there is a gap in the existing literature as discussion on the landed relationships are relatively absent; (d) there exists a lack of comparative study of land tenures and landed relationships between British Gujarat and Baroda State (e) Moreover, most of these studies are Eurocentric in nature as they stressed upon the records of British Government. As a result, the studies reflect

an imperialistic approach discussing the history from above rather than looking at history from below.

The thesis focuses on addressing the aforementioned lacunas and providing a narrative keeping to the central focus on getting better understanding of the changing nature of land tenures and its impact on landed relationships if any in British Gujarat and Baroda State.

MAJOR OBJECTIVES OF CURRENT RESEARCH

1. To trace evolving land tenures in the region of Gujarat and to examine the landed relationships which were forged between state and village community.
2. To analyse whether there were any changes in the land tenures because of the state policy that was revised from time to time in British Gujarat and Baroda state or the fact that at the grassroots level there was a continuity in the pre-existing systems.
3. To examine whether there was any change in the landed relationships that had evolved after the introduction of so called new tenurial policies by British Gujarat and Baroda State.
4. To analyse changes which shaped the land administration in the post-independence period in Gujarat.

OUTLINE OF THESIS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

It includes an introductory description of the current research containing the meaning and concept of the terms such as Land Tenures, Landed Relationships, British Gujarat and Baroda State. It further deals with major objectives of the current research, hypothesis and review of literature.

CHAPTER 2: STATE POLICIES AND LAND MANAGEMENT IN THE PRE-MODERN GUJARAT: A HISTORICAL SURVEY

Since early time in Gujarat, the state enjoyed a share of produce on lands under its control. The main source of state revenue has always been land revenue. It was determined and collected according to various land tenures which had prevailed in Gujarat i.e., in British administrative territories as well as Baroda State and other administrative regions of Gujarat. The tenures determined the evolution and nature of relationships between the state and its people. The chapter includes a historical survey of state policies and land management with special reference to the land tenures and landed relationships in pre-modern Gujarat. It also includes a brief discussion to the formation of British Gujarat and Baroda State.

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

This chapter deals with the nature and evolution of land tenures and emergent landed relationships during the early British period. 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 'changes 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.

CHAPTER 4: COLONIZING LAND AND THE SETTLEMENT OF LAND TENURES IN BRITISH GUJARAT (1850-1947)

The chapter carries forward the debate of ‘change’ and ‘continuity’ after the rule of the English East India Company is abolished and India formally became a part of the British Empire. The chapter in essence deals with the attempts made by the British administration to colonize the agricultural land. It discusses the introduction of various types of reforms. These reforms were termed as ‘Survey’ and ‘Settlement’ which itself was borrowed from medieval rulers. After understanding the tenurial system that had existed before their rule, the British administration introduced many changes. These changes were encompassed in form of Original Survey and Settlement, Revision Survey and Settlement and Re-Revision Survey and Settlement. These include the settlement of various land tenures and their impacts on relationships between state and village communities. These were carried out at various points of time in the 19th and 20th centuries respectively. The chapter gives a comprehensive analysis of survey and settlement and its impacts on agrarian society.

CHAPTER 5: REVENUE FUNCTIONARIES AND LANDED RELATIONSHIPS IN BARODA STATE (1800-1875)

The chapter deals with the nature and evolution of land tenures and landed relationships in Baroda State during the early period. The Baroda State continued with traditional practices of

revenue collection which led to the establishment of relationships between the state and the village communities. Due to a developing administration, the state had to rely on external agencies to meet out its financial and other requirements. Therefore, the state administrative structure was rested on the twin mechanism of the *izaradari* (revenue farming system) and the *potedari* (banking system). The *izaradari* system primarily displayed the functioning of land tenures and *potedari* system explained the culmination of relationships forged between the state and the landed aristocrats. The chapter first focuses upon the *izaradari* system, followed by the description of *potedari* system. Excepting the *izaradari* and *potedari* systems, there subsisted networks of intermediary classes (*bhagadar, narwadar, ankadedar, mulgirasia, matadar, mehwasi, talukdar, watandar* etc.,) within the boundaries of the Baroda State. Therefore, the chapter then contains a description of intermediary revenue functionaries and their relationships with land and peasantry. During the initial period, the state intended only to enjoy the share of produce instead of directly interfering in land administration of intermediary classes. But in the later period, the state attempted to establish a direct relationship with the peasants. Therefore, the chapter lastly deals with the changes made by the state between 1857-1875 and their impacts on agrarian society.

CHAPTER 6: STATE CONTROL AND THE SETTLEMENT OF LAND TENURES IN BARODA STATE (1875-1947)

The chapter carries the narrative dealing with the changed policy of the Baroda State with regards to land tenures after 1875. The major task of restructuring the land revenue administration was carried out after 1875. One of the first changes was the abolishment of *izaradari* and *potedari* system and the establishment of *kacha vahivat* (temporary administration) with an aim to simplify and purify the system of taxation. It was followed by the settlement of alienated lands, reorganization of administrative divisions and fixation of land

revenue. The chapter primarily deals with Survey and Settlement (Original, Revision and Re-Revision) carried out at various points of time in the 19th and 20th centuries. The Survey and Settlement resulted with introduction of the *ryotwari* or survey tenure which was the principal land tenure. Under *ryotwari* tenure, peasants had to pay revenue directly to the government without the intervention of a third party. The other land tenures were also taken into consideration for Survey and Settlement and as a result they become more or less the *ryotwari* tenure. The chapter focuses on landed relationships that developed between the state and the village communities because of the elimination of intermediary revenue functionaries and the settlement of land tenures.

CHAPTER 7: LAND SETTLEMENT, REFORMS AND CHANGING RELATIONSHIPS (1947-1960)

The post-independence is marked by the integration of Princely States. Since multiple tenures that had prevailed in the districts of former British Gujarat and Baroda State therefore it was a challenging task to restructure them. It meant that the new Indian Government had to understand the existing land tenure system and then carry out reforms so that the peasantry would not suffer. Accordingly, the government adopted various measures such as abolition acts and the enactment of laws. The objectives of the new land policy were multifold, firstly to strive for social justice and economic efficiency; secondly a more equitable distribution of land; and lastly a judicious reorganization of agrarian structure. The other purposes of the tenancy reforms were to improve the prevailing agricultural system and occupancy right over the land. These all were instrumental in eliminating the old institutional defects of the agricultural developments. The focus of the chapter is laid on the examination of existing land tenures and their abolition; introduction of new land revenue legislations and tenancy reforms; and

formation of Gujarat State. An attempt is made here to understand landed relationships that were forged as a result of these changes.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

A closer examination of land tenures in Gujarat reveals that probably all the land tenures were originated during the ancient and medieval periods and continued with certain modifications by British Gujarat and Baroda State and finally abolished during the post-independence period. The concluding chapter of this thesis outlines the important points emerging from the discussions in the previous chapters. It highlights the significances and limitations of the present work and future scope in the current field.

APPENDICES

This section contains the statistical and descriptive data documented during the present study.

GLOSSARY

This section explains the meaning of major terms used in current research.

REFERENCES

Both primary and secondary sources have been collected for the current research. The primary sources are available mainly in Gujarat State Archives and Maharashtra State Archives. The sources from other archives have also been consulted according to their relevance. The secondary sources have been collected from various books, articles and other publications. Other avenues of sources such as electronic media including internet sources, newspaper reports, commentaries, doctoral dissertations, charts, maps etc. have also been used as per the nature of requirement. Some important references are mentioned below:

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