

CHAPTER XI
REVENUE ADMINISTRATION
LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

Fiscal History

Details about the early fiscal history of this district are not known but the general pattern seems to have conformed to the agrarian system of ancient India, the salient characteristics of which were the ownership of the soil by the State (which dealt with the cultivator direct), the land revenue ordinarily amounting to one-sixth of the produce (paid either in cash or in kind) and the land being handed down as private property from generation to generation without any fear of alienation provided the taxes were defrayed regularly.

In mediaeval times Sher Shah Sur and after him, Akbar, the great Mughal, put the agrarian and revenue administrative system on a firm and scientific footing which continued, with slight modifications, till the time of the annexation of Avadh (1856). Incidentally it will be interesting to note that Raja Todar Mal, the celebrated revenue minister (first of Sher Shah and then of Akbar), is said to have been born in Laharpur of this district.

The modern fiscal history of the district, under the British, begins with the summary Settlement of 1856, which was made, soon after the annexation, by the first deputy commissioner of Sitapur with the actual proprietors of each village and in the eastern parganas (which then belonged to the Mallanpur district) it was made on the basis of the records of the *kanungos*. No details of this Settlement are available as all the records pertaining to it were destroyed in the disturbances of 1857-58.

In 1858, the then deputy commissioner took up the work of the Settlement afresh. The policy of the government relating to the previous Settlement of 1856, which had been received with hostility, was abandoned and the talukdari system was declared to be the 'ancient, indigenous and cherished system of the country'. The system of assessment adopted, however, was that of the first summary assessment, the demand (amounting to Rs 9,39,897) being fixed at half of the assets of each village computed from the old records of the *kanungos*. Although this demand was light, it was unequal in its incidence. All the old villages of the talukdars were restored to them, but the decision in case of conflicting claims was postponed till the regular Settlement.

First Regular Settlement

Operations began with the demarcation of village boundaries and the preparation of village maps. The next step was the revenue survey which lasted from 1862-63 to 1865-66. Side by side, the Settlement survey (also

known as the *khalsa* survey) was conducted and after its completion, the village records were prepared and the work of assessment proper was begun pargana by pargana, though the cases connected with the Settlement were not closed on till February, 1872.

The assessment work conducted in the three southern parganas of Baran, Mahmudabad and Manwan, revealed that the rents were mainly paid in kind, and as there were constant fluctuations in produce and prices attempts at minute valuation were given up and two rent rates, one of Rs 10 per acre on irrigated and the other of Rs 4 on unirrigated land, were adopted. These were intended to be average rent rates but it was found that they could be treated only as maximum rates. This difficulty was overcome by getting the returns compiled in each village of the area under different crops which were classified according to a table of comparative values, the cultivators also being classified according to their capabilities and the assets of the village being calculated by converting the landlords' returns of produce into money at the current prices. The system, being rough and ready, was of not of much help in actual practice; it was found inordinately excessive and the demand in 104 out of 395 villages assessed had, therefore, to be revised. The result was a reduction of $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent giving an increase varying from 25 per cent in Manwan to 48 per cent in Mahmudabad, on the summary demand.

A fresh system was, therefore, adopted in the assessment of next eight parganas and the work was marked by a more careful computation of rent rates and by the application of a greater variety of rates to a greater variety of soils. The villages were divided into two or more classes in each pargana and ordinarily three rent rates were applied to each class one for irrigated land, one for unirrigated land—good and middling—and third for unirrigated *bhur*. These rent rates ranged from four in Kundri South to twelve in the parganas of Misrikh, Gondla Mau and Aurangabad. The assessment of the five parganas of Sadarpur, Kundri South, Gondla Mau, Korauna and Aurangabad resulted in an increase on the summary Settlement ranging from 19 per cent in the first to 68 per cent in the last pargana. In three parganas—Misrikh, Machrehta and Chandra, the increase was as great as $54\frac{1}{2}$ per cent in the first, $83\frac{1}{2}$ per cent in the second and 117 per cent in the third. The rent rates fixed for Chandra were the same as those applied to Aurangabad and proved to be excessive as they did not take into account the general poverty of the parganas and the indebtedness of the proprietors.

The revision of Chandra was undertaken in March, 1868, resulting in large reductions, the ultimate demand being only 73 per cent in excess of the summary Settlement. The system followed in assessing the remainder of the district was that of classifying the villages of each pargana as good, middling and bad on the basis of information received from the local officials and zamindars or through personal inspection and assigning the soil in each village to three classes, *goind*, *manjhar* and *uparhar*, and finally preparing

