

CHAPTER IVTHE CHANGES IN THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM IN GUJARAT DURING 19TH  
CENTURY - CHANGES IN THE RURAL GUJARATINTRODUCTION

In the last chapter, we tried to study the changes which were ushered in the political system of Gujarati society during 19th century by the British rule. In the present chapter and subsequent chapter we will try to locate the changes in the economic system of Gujarat during 19th century.

The scheme of analysis will be as follows:

- I. Examination of change that was brought about in the village economy by the British rule by introducing new system of tenures and by changing the mode of payment of revenue.
- II. Analysis of the changes that were brought about in the class structure of Gujarat society.
- III. Gradual shift in the motif of production and its effects on rural social life.
- IV. Impact of the political and economic measures on the village artisan.
- V. Evaluation of the changes in rural society.

## I

The changes in rural economy of Gujarat were brought about by British Rulers by three significant measures: (1) Introduction of Ryotwari and a few other revenue systems of collection of revenue;<sup>1</sup> (2) Introduction of payment of revenue in fixed cash instead of in kind;<sup>2</sup> (3) Transformation of land into a commodity - a private property - which could be bought, sold, mortgaged, partitioned, etc.<sup>3</sup>

As indicated in Chapter I, Gujarat before its conquest by the Britishers was composed mainly of thousands of self-sufficient villages and a number of towns. Further most of these village communities were paying tribute in the form of revenue to the chieftains or their representatives, jointly, in kind and assessed on the amount of annual actual produce.<sup>4</sup> Further these village communities were of two major categories: (a) poorer village communities inhabited predominantly by tribal populations known as Rani Paraj, and Koli cultivators known as Kali Paraj and (b) relatively more prosperous village communities, composed predominantly of Kunbi cultivators, and called Ujjaliat lok (fair people). Further in village communities, a peculiar customary regulation determining possessing rights over land had developed due to the difference between original inhabitants and migrants, between cultivators belonging to various categories of Kunbi and other types.<sup>5</sup> Similarly peculiarities in customary regulation arose due to the differences arising out of the nature of services performed, viz. services performed to the village community or performed for the chieftains and others.<sup>6</sup>

Another feature of the village communities lay in the fact that they had to confront different categories of tribute gatherers composed of Talookdars, Girasdars, Bhayats, Inamdars, petty chieftains, and vassals of superior kings, Nabobs or Sultans.<sup>7</sup> Further the tribute gatherers also had certain hierarchy within themselves. This complex pattern of tribute gathering was further made more intricate by laws of inheritance whereby the heirs of tribute gatherers would divide the villages or portions of the tribute from the village itself, thus making a very complicated maze of tribute gathering activities.<sup>8</sup> But in spite of the existence of various categories of

revenue collectors, the core of the village life was not disturbed. As mentioned in the Watan Commission Report of 1865, "In Kaira, Ahmedabad and Broach one or two men from each Watan sometimes the heads of the family, sometimes men selected by government were recognised as the principal Desais or officiators. They received the Sukhdi or official stipend, and under the Maratha Government, often formed their districts... The district agency required under the Marathas was in fact supplied by Watandars...But the Watandars did not interfere in the internal management of the villages which was in the hands of the village communities."<sup>9\*</sup>

It was within this complex-intricate system of village communities and the various categories of tribute-gathering network, that British rulers made an inroad and evolved their own land tenure system. Before we examine the nature of tenure systems which the rulers introduced, we will first make a few observations about the ways and phases in which they initiated their new tenural devices.

1. The Gujarat territory did not come under the possession of the British rulers at one stroke. Broach was occupied much earlier than Ahmedabad while Panchmahal was conquered at a very late stage.<sup>\*\*</sup> Hence land tenures were not introduced simultaneously in all parts of British

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\*During pre-British period 5 types of remuneration were given to Watandars for collecting land revenue - 1) Land, 2) Nazarana, and 3) Jivak, the former was a kind of honorary fee, the latter the original official stipend for the support of the family and which had been subdivided in the same way as land, 4) Sukri was an additional grant made for the remuneration of officiating member whose hereditary share had become insufficient and 5) Cash from the government. This was an extra allowance given when the officiators became responsible for the revenues of the district - Records of Bombay Government No. CLXXIV, p.211.

\*\*Broach in 1772, Surat in 1800, Ahmedabad in 1803, Kaira (partly in 1803 and partly in 1817), Panchmahals 1853. (Gujarat Sarva Sangrah, 1887, ed. by Narmad, pp. 363, 369, 370, 371).

Gujarat. By 1860, after various experiments final shape of tenures emerged in Gujarat.

2. With a view to winning support and loyalty of a certain groups of vested interests and also to gain foothold and grip over the processes of the conquered territories, the land tenure policy was not adopted on the homogenous basis, but was pragmatically worked out.\* Mr. Mackay refers to this phenomenon in the following words: "It is calculated that there are at least sixteen different modes of levying the rent in operation throughout the Collectorate (Ahmedabad), three or four of which may sometimes be found to exist in one and the same village, there being some mixture or other in most villages. Such is the account which we have to render of our stewardship, after about thirty years' occupation of the district."<sup>10</sup>

3. The experience of East India Company about zamindari tenures introduced in Bengal, Bihar, U.P. and other East Indian territories from the times of Warren Hastings, and the lessons drawn from these experiments had also caused various controversies, which were furiously discussed when Gujarat was conquered during 19th century.<sup>11</sup>

We will now analyse the features of the land revenue system which was introduced in Gujarat during 19th century.

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\*When Ahmedabad Watandars were accepted on non-service settlement, a sort of gentleman's agreement was made between the government and the Watandars that the latter will have a preferential claim to employment in the public service provided their merits were equal to those of other candidates. It was declared that such a step would, "encourage persons of respectable family and hereditarily connected with the revenue administration, to look upon government service as their natural possession." (Bombay Government Records, CLXXIV, p.284).

Lord Elphinstone framed the fundamental principle of land revenue of the presidency, when he passed a law known as Resolution No.XVII of 1827. The principle laid down was that "all land is liable to pay assessment according to its kind; but if a title to exemption from that payment can be set up under certain rules, it shall be respected."<sup>12\*</sup>

1. The principle had far reaching implications. First British Rulers arrogated to themselves the power to decide whether title to exemption by a class of tributegatherers will be perpetuated or not. <sup>\*\*</sup> Though in the initial phases the British Rulers did permit certain holders exemption from payment of land revenue, but subsequently, by the time of Lord Hastings, it was felt that these holders also should be subjected to payment of revenue. As stated, "The holders of land of this description are at present exempted from all contributions whether to the local police or government...by which they are protected or from the public works from which their estates derive equal benefit with the rest of the community. They are indebted for the exemption either to superstition, to the false charity or ill-directed favours of the heads of

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\*"The principles of the Bombay Settlement, as explained in the Joint Report were firstly, that it was based on the assessment of each separately; secondly that it granted long leases for thirty years; thirdly that it abandoned the basis of produce-estimates and substituted the basis of the value of lands for distributing the assessment... For the purpose of estimating the value of lands, all lands were classed under nine different classes." (Quoted from Joint Report in "Economic History of India, Vol.II, by Dutt Romesh Chandra, pp.44-45).

\*\*The Britishers therefore recognised certain hereditary owners and came to terms with them, while others were without compensation or with very meagre recognition thrown out. (Refer to Bombay Government Records, CLXXIV).

the former government and other men in power and have little personal claim upon themselves for a perpetual exemption from the obligation they owe as subjects."<sup>13</sup>

Thus Elphinstone laid down the basic land revenue principle, 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.

2. The second implication of this regulation was that 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.<sup>14</sup> Thus it was not the village as a whole but every piece of land in the village that was made the unit of assessment.

On the basis of the Regulation of Lord Elphinstone that the new land revenue system was introduced in Gujarat. It was called the Ryotwari system of land revenue. This system exhibited certain special characteristics. We will now examine them.

#### Ryotwari System

1. As the revenue of land was determined by the nature of the soil, the whole soil was divided into 9 different classes according to their quality; the officers fixed the assessment of a district after inquiring into its circumstances and previous history. They distributed the district demand among the villages and fields contained in the district.\*

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\*Mr. Pringle of the Bombay Civil Service in 1824-28 commenced Survey Settlements. According to his assessment the government demand was fixed at 55 per cent of the produce. Subsequently it was found that the measurements were faulty, "the estimates of produce were erroneous, the revenue demand was excessive, and the settlement operations ended in oppression." (The Economic History of India, Vol. II, by R.C. Dutt, p. 37). The first general revenue survey of Bombay Presidency commenced in 1836-37, but it was in 1847 that efforts were made to make the survey systematic and uniform. Under the Bombay Act I of 1865 the rules were codified and which were later on incorporated and known as Land Revenue Code of 1879. (Gujarat Sarva Sangrah ed. by Narmad, p. 387; also refer to Revenue Handbook by Nairna, pp. 101-102).

The owner of each field was then called upon to cultivate his holding on payment of the land tax fixed for his field. "The assessment was fixed by the superintendent of survey without any reference to the cultivator; and when those rates were introduced, the holder of each field was summoned to the Collector and informed of the rate at which his land would be assessed in future; and if he chose to retain it on those terms he did; if he did not choose he threw it up."<sup>15</sup>

When, at the expiry of 30 years (in 1865) a revision survey was made, it was categorically pointed out, that all revised settlements "shall be fixed, not with reference to any special improvements made by owners or occupants from private capital or resources, but with reference to general conditions of the value of land, whether as to soil or situation, prices of produce or facilities of communication."<sup>16\*</sup> This principle was reaffirmed in 1886 Act IV when it was stated, "When a general classification of the soil of any area has been made a second time or when any original classification of any area has been approved by the Governor in Council as final, no such classification shall be

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\*It is worth noting that the wordings "Special improvements made by the owners or occupants from private capital and resources" during the currency of any settlement under the Act created considerable misunderstanding and ill-feeling in the minds of people. The improvements according to the peasants included sinking of new wells, and therefore they presumed that 'results of their employment of private capital in promoting irrigation scheme shall be free from taxation.' But in the revised survey they found that extra cess was levied on wells which were their private property, and felt that the whole policy was illiberal and not befitting the British Government. (Kaira - A District in Fertile Gujarat, 1870, by J.U. Yajnik, pp.33, 41).

again made with a view to the revision of the assessment of such area," and the improvement made by the cultivator will not be taken into consideration while fixing the revenue.<sup>17</sup>

2. The second significant element of Ryotwari system lay in the fact that each assessee of the land revenue was given the power to sale, let, mortgage, and transfer his right over the piece of land.<sup>18</sup> This meant that individual private property in land was introduced, a phenomena hardly known in the pre-British period. The assessee becoming a proprietor of the piece of land was permitted to treat land as a commodity, to be disposed of in the market in the same way as any other commodity. Where assessee was a cultivator of land, this system of proprietary right, gave a death-blow to the customary collective power of the village community, and made a very significant indent upon the joint family property system. It also affected caste system by introducing changes in the position, role and powers of various castes. Further, transformation of land capable of being sold, mortgaged and purchased, also affected the prevalent traditional usages, by means of which only certain groups and castes could have an access to land and its use.<sup>19</sup>

3. Another element of the Ryotwari system which deserves notice is that the payment of revenue was to be made by the ryot in cash and not in kind.<sup>20</sup> The payment of revenue in cash introduced a large number of novel problems in rural society. Every assessee had to secure cash for paying land revenue. It implied that the assessee had to search for sources and agencies which could provide money for the payment. The money could be available either if the assessee could exchange

something for the money.- Crops, household things, land, cattle, implements or the personal services.<sup>21</sup> As the revenue payment was compulsory and further not determined by the actual produce, but on the assessed productivity, the cultivator was confronted with two major recurrent problems. He had to secure cash every year, irrespective of whether the land yielded products or not. Secondly he had to link himself and his economic activities with those who could supply him the required money. Here it may be noted that the need for money in the village did not emerge as a direct result of commercialization of agriculture or growing demand for agricultural produce in the market but it arose from the need of payment of revenue. This need for money thus emerged whether the agricultural products could find market or not.

#### Impact of new land revenue measures

We will now observe the impact of the new land revenue system on certain groups and their inter-relationships within the village community.

1. The British Rulers, with a view to introducing this new system of land revenue collection, undertook a gigantic enterprise of surveying the lands. As indicated earlier, maps of villages were prepared. Every piece of land was placed on these maps.<sup>22</sup> The lands were classified into various categories according to the nature of soil. Detailed stock taking of various other factors connected with soil, agriculture and others were undertaken.<sup>23</sup> The lands were surveyed, survey numbers were given to all lands. Distinction between private lands and common lands used for pasture and other purposes by entire villages were also meticulously worked out.<sup>24</sup> Classification of villages according to the

potentialities of production were also made. And further the settlement about who will be considered the assessee liable for payment of revenue was also fixed.<sup>25</sup> In every district, taluka and village, the survey-settlement was worked out. With a view to facilitating the location of the persons from whom the revenue was to be collected and further with a view to finding out the amount of revenue which was to be realized by the Government, a detailed, exhaustive record of rights and payments was prepared. In the process of working out of records of rights, the Government, further, tried to straighten out some of the complexities, which had emerged due to a chain of customary rights over lands as a result of the grant of land to village officers either serving the village community or serving the Government.<sup>26\*</sup> The Government kept the land of the servants serving the Government rent free, while it imposed revenue on lands of the artisans and others serving the village community.<sup>27</sup>

2. During the process of preparing the surveys of the lands and defining the assesseees who were to be made responsible for the payment of revenue in cash, the British Rulers adopted various criteria to facilitate revenue collection as well as to retain the support of the influential sections of the rural areas. As we have observed earlier

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\*The Government of Bombay appointed in 1865 a Vatan Commission for settlement of rights of the hereditary officers especially Dessais, Amins and Majmudars who were performing the whole of revenue work under the supervision of a Koomarisdar. The main purpose was to find out whether these hereditary officers could be utilized or not. When their services were not required a quit rent was imposed on their lands, and they were allowed to hold them free from any condition of service. In the same Commission, Rao Bahadur Parmanand Parsotandas and Veharibhai Desai of Nadiad were appointed as native members. (Refer to Bombay Govt. Records, No. CLXXIV, 1865).

in this chapter, a large complex chain of various categories of tribute gatherers had emerged in pre-British Gujarat. These tribute gatherers were of different kinds and had acquired the right of tribute gathering from village communities under different circumstances.<sup>28</sup>

The British Rulers created two major categories of assesses with proprietary rights over land. The first category was composed of chieftains, Talookdars, Desais and others who were the former collectors of revenue and tribute gatherers.<sup>29</sup> By making these tribute gatherers who were not direct component of village community as proprietors responsible for the payment of revenue, the British Rulers destroyed the customary hereditary occupancy rights of the inhabitants of the villages. The other category of assessee was created out of the cultivating classes of the village community itself.

The transformation of old chieftains, Girasdars, Inamdars, Talookdars, Bhagdars and others into Ryots with proprietary rights over villages and lands over which they had mere tribute collecting rights, took various tenural forms. (1) Talookdari system in the districts of Virangam, Dhandhuka, Dholka, Sanand and Ghoga in Ahmedabad district and some talook<sup>a</sup>s in Broach district.\* (2) Vanta Tenure prevailing in

\*The distribution of Raiyatwari villages and Taluqdari villages was as follows:-

Tenure	Number of Estates or holdings	Number of villages	Area in acres
Raiyatwari villages	1,284,238	20,118½	28,475,016 (occupied land only)
Taluqdari	530½	530½	1,419,397 (gross area)

(Baden Powell, Land Systems of British India, Vol.III, Book IV, p.251)

certain villages all over Gujarat, North of Tapti. The most important body of tribute gatherers of this type were Garasdars of Rajput and other stock.<sup>30</sup> (3) Mahivasi Tenure in some of the villages in the lands of Mahi river and some parts of Ahmedabad. With a view to prevent the Koli and Rajput chiefs from unruly activities and preserve peace were granted villages nearly free of revenue initially and on the basis of regular lump sum payment to British Rulers.<sup>31</sup> (4) Inami settlements of various kinds like Jagirs given to certain civil and military officers to keep their status, Inams to Government servants in lieu of performing certain services (chakariat), "Pasayata" lands given to servants of village for services performed for the entire village, Inams given to religious bodies (vajifa) and Inams to successors of person who has lost his life for the defence of the villages(haria). All the lands with the exception of 'Chakariat' were turned into Sanadia or held by Sanads (grants) under the Summary Settlement Act and entered in the accounts under one distinctive title of "Jat (personal) Inam Sanadia"<sup>32</sup>.

All the above Tenure systems had one chief feature viz. they made tribute gatherers as proprietors, thus creating a group of non-cultivating proprietary class in agriculture.<sup>33\*</sup> Further, by giving proprietary rights to these groups of people, the customary occupational

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\*Creation of private property right in this group led to various contradictions. The creditors who had given loans to the Talookdars for instance were now hastening to close upon the Civil Courts to sell the Talookdars' landed property in satisfaction of their decrees and the Courts held that it might be sold. The Collector made no opposition. Not only fields but whole villages were put up for auction; and knocked down for a trifle to the creditors or their agents. And yet when creditors applied to the Collectors' registers for an extract of the reversion of a Talookdar's estate and his interest therein the Mamlatdars were instructed to reply that the management merely was in the Talookdars' hands as long as it should be the pleasure of Government to continue it but the Government were absolute lords thereof. In short there was  
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rights of the cultivating peasants were taken away, thereby transforming the entire cultivating classes in villages into tenants of the new proprietary class. The proprietary rights given to this strata of upper caste tribute gatherers creating a category of absentee landlords who had very little knowledge of agricultural processes of production, and who were more interested in collecting their own tribute, had a very depressing effect upon the agrarian production. This class which was not interested in agriculture, but involved itself in conspicuous consumption, in the context of revenue payment in cash it increasingly required more and more money. Thus it slowly came in the grip of money-lenders who gradually acquired control over lands, products, and tenants.<sup>34</sup>

Litigation between creditor, money-lenders and the debtor Garasias became a regular feature in the 19th century. Formerly Garasias were a privileged class against whom creditors had no remedy. The Garasias had no experience of the kind of obligations arising out of signing bonds on stamped paper. "A few sharp visitations of the

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a conflict between executive and practice of courts. (Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government No.CVI, p.14).

Second contradiction emerged because of the potential conflicts which were likely to emerge in the process of partition and inheritance. If the estate experienced some debacle due to the reasons mentioned below the Government could take charge of the estate and also took its management in its hands.

1. When there is a dispute among the sharers or reasons to apprehend danger to the peace of the country or injury to the well-being of the inferior holders.
2. When partition is being effected, pending such partition.
3. On the application of the talukdar himself. Further if a Talukdar failed to pay his Jama his share was generally attached and managed by Government who satisfy the demand for Jama and pay the balance of the income to the defaulter after deducting a sum for expenses of management. (Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government, No.CVI, pp.8-9).

civil process intimidated them into needless liabilities. When summoned to the courts they either ignored the summons to their own discomfiture or compromised matters with their creditor at a monstrous sacrifice. Money-lenders became the terror of the district. Bond was heaped upon bond until the original transactions were lost in a maze of chickenery."<sup>35</sup> It was also mentioned in the Report on Talukdari Alienation of Ahmedabad District that "There is a large area of land held by the Savkars, and to a small extent by the Talukdars in contravention of the Gujarat Talukdari Act and the Land Revenue Code. Thus 3700 acres of chakariat or village service lands are in possession of the mortgagees and for which no proper service is rendered and 12,200 acres are in possession of the Mortgagees in contravention of Gujarat Talukdari Act."<sup>36</sup> This reduced the power of the Talukdars, Rajputs, Kathis, Garasias and others and increased the power, influence and position of the newly emerging money-lending castes composed of Baniyas, Marwaris and a small section of other castes and communities.<sup>37</sup>

Thus we can observe that by recognising the non-cultivating old tribute gathering strata as proprietors of land who were assigned the task of payment of revenue, the British Government initiated a qualitative change in the traditional village community of Gujarat.

3. Along with abovementioned tenures, which bypassed cultivators and made tribute gatherers into proprietors, the British Rulers unlike in Bengal and Eastern India, introduced a principle of making separate peasant cultivators as owners of land, and made them responsible for payment of revenue, the amount determined by the quality and kind of soil.<sup>38</sup> This innovation also cut across the collective traditional

background of village community. The Ryot-owner could sell, mortgage and transfer his portion of land and agricultural accessories to anybody (including an outsider) who could provide money for payment of revenue. This phenomena broke the customary regulations which prevented the outsiders to come in the village and take possession of land, thus generating a fissiparous tendency among the members of the joint family, due to the fact that members of the family could now dispose of their own piece of land for money and thus dislocate the economic foundation of joint family. It further affected the customary rigid inter-relations between various castes. The customary obligation of castes among themselves wherein each caste performed certain duties and received certain services or received share from the village produce could now break down. The village community was losing its command over individual peasants as a result of the deprivation of its right to pay revenue jointly on the basis of entire village.<sup>39</sup> As every cultivator was made individually and directly responsible to the Government for paying revenue he was now forced to become free from the customary regulation and forced to search for securing money from outside. Thus his share of land, assets, produce and even his person slowly started getting linked with this new external group not bound by the obligations of the traditional community. Further, the linking up of each cultivator to a new category of revenue collecting officers and an introduction of a new category of moneyed group also weakened the traditional cohesion in the village community and upset the inter-relationship among various castes.

The Government in the process of transforming cultivator into proprietor, and saddling responsibility on him for the payment of

revenue made it a condition that proprietary right could be enjoyed so long as the cultivator could pay the revenue.<sup>40</sup> It led to another significant development in traditional cultivating groups. The weaker section of the cultivating classes, who could not afford to pay the revenue in cash, were deprived of land and transformed into tenants or land-labourers. Further the payment of revenue in cash and fixed not on the produce but on the potentiality of produce created another situation in village communities. The peasants during lean years or years of crop failure were forced to pay the revenue in cash. This compelled them to borrow money from some supplier of money. Thus even a section of the relatively superior cultivators also were brought into the orbit of indebtedness and in the grip of money-lenders.\*

The hardship of the peasant was enhanced because of certain legal measures of the Government. In 1876, the Government by enacting The Revenue Jurisdiction Act took away the Jurisdiction of Courts of Justice in matters of assessment and made the settlement officers absolute. This measure of the Government was scathingly criticised by Mr. R.C.Dutt in following terms. "The private citizen in India is permitted by British ~~laws~~ Government and by British laws, to seek redress against the Government itself in impartial Courts of Justice. But the millions

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\*While describing the conditions of Kaira, a district in Gujarat, Mr. Yajnik refers to the hardships resulting out of the new revenue system. "In directly managed holdings of which the rent was payable to Government, the Ryots found the burdens too heavy to bear. In Nurwardar's villages also the records of those times bear witness to the miserable condition of the proprietary body and to the constant disputes which arose on account of the non-payment of the Government demand. Processes of Civil Courts, sales of lands or shares of estates and confiscation of moveable and immoveable property belonging to the Nurwardars were the features of the time." (Kaira, a District in Fertile Gujarat by J. Yajnik, pp.16-17).

of the peasant proprietors of Bombay and of Madras subject to an enhancement of the State-demand at each Revision Settlement, are debarred from seeking justice in courts or before any independent tribunal, against the blunders or the undue severity of the assessing officer."<sup>41</sup> The Land Revenue Act of 1879 contained no adequate provision to limit the state demand. The result was as shown by the Hon. Gokuldas Parekh, a Member of the Legislative Council of Bombay that among the large class of cultivators in Gujarat who own holdings of five acres and less and are unable to grow rich rice, the value of their out-turn is not sufficient even in ordinary years to enable them to meet the Government demand, the cost of tillage and the maintenance expense of their families and cattle. Even a large proportion of the cultivators, holding up to ten acres are unable to get out-turns sufficient for the payment of the cost of cultivation and maintenance.<sup>42\*</sup>

The hardships of ryots were all the more increasing because of the recurring famines in India and Gujarat. It was remarked in one journal that, due to the recurring famines, it was very difficult for the peasant to survive. In ordinary days the peasant could take loan from the money-lender and could work on his fields. But due to the failure of crops in 1900, the money-lenders knowing full-well that the loan is not likely to be repaid, refused to give money to the peasant. Thus he was to suffer from both calamities.<sup>43</sup>

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\*It has been remarked that for the first time in the legislative council the native members under the leadership of Sir Pherozshah Mehta staged a walk out when the amendment to the Land Revenue Code of 1873 which empowered the Government to do away with the right of alienation of the ryot and to grant land forfeited to the Crown on such terms and for such period as Collector might prescribe was passed. (Arvachin Gujarat nu Rekhardarshan, Part II by H. Parekh, p.227).

Having described the nature of changes resulted due to the introduction of the new tenural system and transforming land into a commodity, we will now observe the consequences of these developments.

## II

### SLOW CHANGE IN THE STATUS OF CERTAIN GROUPS IN VILLAGE COMMUNITY

The first major change in the status of certain groups in village community occurred as a result of evolving direct relationship between the ryot and the Government revenue officer. The new land revenue system, with its own agency of revenue collection affected the status and role of all old traditional revenue collecting as well as administrative groups composed of Chieftains, vassals, Girasdars, Inamdars, Desais, Vatandars and others. The new Revenue Officers appointed by the new Government like Talatis, Mamlatdars and Collectors acquire a new significance. As observed by Ballhatchet, "British revenue policy in Gujarat had weakened the position of Girasia Chieftain in three main respects. In the first place from 1811 onwards the Collectors steadily persevered in the task of persuading them to abandon the right to levy their traditional dues upon Government villages and to accept instead a guaranteed payment by Government of an equivalent amount from its treasury."<sup>44</sup> The Second blow came to these chieftains from the Government Regulations of 1814 whereby village accountants were appointed in every village with a population of 1000 and more, to prepare Khardas and land registers.<sup>45</sup> Further if the Garasias had more than one village at his command he had to appoint a headman who was responsible to Collector. The third blow came to the traditional

tribute gatherers' status due to the judicial policy of the British Rulers. The money-lenders were empowered to go to Court for enforcing returns of both premium and interest. The chieftains, Garasias and others belonging to higher traditional rank were forced to appear in the court, were also severely punished if they disobeyed the summons of the Court and were tried and sent to jail for non-payment of loans.<sup>46</sup>

Thus the British Rulers deprived the hereditary tribute gathering group of the revenue collecting power in areas where the system of direct collection of revenue from the cultivators was introduced. It further deprived this class of their political powers in those areas where they were transformed into proprietors, paying land revenue to the Government and thereby reducing them to the level of ordinary citizens, and subjecting them to all the penalties for violation of contracts formulated by law.\* Thus the British rulers reduced the political, social and economic significance and status of this group, thereby replaced a new politico-administrative class of officers in place of the hereditary status group. Similarly Bhats and Charans who used to stand as a security against government revenue in pre-British days also lost their power and means of earning livelihood under the new politico-administrative set-up.<sup>47</sup>

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\*Formerly weaker Talukdar was able to protect his property from the encroachments of stronger neighbour, by granting land to the Brahmin if boundary dispute occurred. The neighbour will not lodge a complaint due to religious scruples. (Report on Talukdari Alienation of Ahmedabad District, p.8).

In the same manner, the new system of revenue collection gave a severe blow to the status and position of 'Desais'. As observed earlier, under the new mode of assessment, "every holder of land attended before the stipendiary officer of his sub-division. In the cultivators' presence, from the books of the village accountant, the amount of land held and the rent paid by him in the previous year were ascertained... The cultivator received from the sub-divisional officer a written statement of the agreement."<sup>48</sup> Thus the 'Desais' as agents between Government and the cultivator were redundant. This was the ruin of the Desais.<sup>49</sup>

Thus either the Desais were eliminated as tribute gathering representatives of the Government or were transformed into pure proprietors with only economic rights and obligations of private owner depriving them of all their other politico-administrative judicial and other powers.

From 1821, the Collectors were informed that as the office of 'Desai' had lost much of its original use, and as the influence and power of desais had been abused in revenue matters their functions as agent between the government and ryots, when dormant were not to be revived, and when existing were to be allowed to fall gradually into disuse. Their local knowledge however was still to be made use of and the Collector was to avail himself of their services in settling boundary disputes, in arbitrary disputes regarding succession of land, and in similar duties.<sup>50</sup>

Previously referred, Vatan Commission made a survey of hereditary officers in Kaira, Ahmedabad, Surat and Broach districts. The Commission suggested to dispense with their services and terminated their

hereditary emoluments which were made in lieu of their services.<sup>51</sup>  
Henceforth their services were not to be taken for granted. They had also to stand the same test as any other person, aspiring for revenue job.\*

With regard to the office of the hereditary district accountant (Mazmudar) "it was the anxious desire of Government to establish or to revive and to maintain it in a state of efficiency. The duties of these officers were carefully laid down in an annexed memorandum. In all cases the emoluments of the office of mazmudar were to be left to the family, which enjoyed them, but the duties were to be entrusted to one member, to be selected by Collector, and in case none of the family should be fit for the duties the Collector was to appoint a deputy till a fit member appeared."<sup>52</sup>

In short the settlement with Desais or revenue agents of the pre-British land systems by freeing them from the performance of any service because Government now directly dealt with the cultivator and retaining the services of accountants also affected the village social frame work. The Desais in Kaira district, e.g., were predominantly belonging to castes such as Nagar Brahmins and Khedawal. The Ahmedabad Desais belonged to Baniya, Brahmakhatri, Brahmin and Patidar castes while Majmudars were belonging to the Brahmkhattris, Baniya and Vadnagar Brahmins.<sup>53</sup> In Surat the Desais were predominantly of the Anvail Brahmin castes.<sup>54</sup>

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\*It is useful to note that Surat Desais were not happy with this decision and continuously sent petition to the Government for the redress of their grievances.

The shift in the influence of a person was now also dependent upon the education which the person took. Thus for example a Brahmin Desai's son if availed himself of higher education and as previously stated was to be preferred if qualified, secures a position in the administrative ladder as Talati or Mamlatdar. Thus the economic, educational and political forces were interlinked. It was declared in the report of Vatan Commission, "Many of them (Vatandars) seem intelligent, well-educated and there have been and still are numerous instances of their holding responsible revenue and judicial appointments. And they will for the future have inducement to educate their sons, so as to fit them for the higher grades of Government services since they will be sure to obtain admission to employment."<sup>55</sup>

The only significant point to be noted is that qualification, more particularly, education or efficiency, rather than the hereditary status given by birth, became the determinant factor in the appointment of jobs.

Similarly the traditional powers of village headman or Mukhi were also reduced under the British Rule. His powers were now clearly delimited and defined and "were" most trifling compared to what Patels etc. often exercise under the Native Government.<sup>56</sup>

The emergence and growing significance of the post of a paid Government employee called "Talati" also was a novel feature of British Rule. The office of Talati introduced a new power centre at village level which upset the status of a number of traditional groups.

In short the introduction of New Revenue System affected the economic and social relationship in traditional village community. It weakened certain economic and social groups and evolved and generated

a condition for another category of economic and social groups to acquire significance power and control over economic political and social life of the village community.

2. The second major change which affected the traditional village relationships was the measure of transforming land into a commodity.

(a) This measure gave a blow to the traditional association of ownership of land with agricultural castes. It enabled the non-agriculturist groups to penetrate into the heart of village community and thus introduce an alien element in it. The new class of investors and purchasers of land was qualitatively different from the old class of revenue collectors or tribute gatherers. The old group had no entry into the internal web of relationships of the village community. That group only laid claim to a share of the produce and that to from the entire village community. This group never developed an organic relationship in the separate pieces of land or were not fused in the internal property structure of the village community.<sup>57</sup> Further as the tribute was gathered in kind the cultivating classes or the village servants never required except for some extraordinary reasons cash in the form of liquid money. The new class of investors penetrated into the property structure of the village community and got organically linked up with land either as new proprietors of the land or as creditors having right to as a mortgagee over the land and its produce in lieu of providing the new money need of the agriculturists.

(b) The Britishers by allowing land as a security for the borrowing of money and demanding cash for revenue compelled the cultivating classes to borrow money from the money-lenders and traders for

the payment of revenue. Even Talookdars, Garasias and others who were also compelled to pay revenue in cash and further who were being linked up with new monetized urban economy needed more and more money for their consumption and other luxury goods. They also secured money on the basis of security of their land.

The rapid process of sale, mortgage and alienation of land of cultivating class and its control by moneyed classes or by a small section of the richer peasant groups, generated a qualitatively new development in rural areas.<sup>58</sup>

This transfer of land takes on alarming proportion in various districts. As reported in the Gazetteer, "Transfer of land takes place in one of the three ways (a) land is relinquished by cultivators or sold by Government on account of the failure on the part of the holder to pay his rent, (b) land is sold under the orders of the Civil Courts and (c) land is transferred by voluntary sale or by mortgage."<sup>59</sup>

Though it is difficult to provide an accurate picture of these land transfers in all the districts we can get a glimpse of the dimensions of this developments from various Gazetteers, Settlement Survey Reports and other records. The increasingly growing process of land transfers is recognised by all these documents, e.g., the Broach Gazetteer indicates that in 1867, 5938 acres of land transfers were recorded while in 1874, there were 16,087 acres of land transfers.<sup>60</sup>

The Gazetteer of Surat which records only the land which was transferred by voluntary sale or by mortgage indicate that the total acres transferred by sale in 1866 was 1491 acres while in 1874 it rose to 4000 acres.<sup>61</sup>

The same story is indicated by the Gazetteers of other districts and talukas.

The papers relating to Revision Settlement Surveys regarding all the Talukas of various districts of Gujarat give very exhaustive tables with regard to sales, mortgages and leases of lands that took place during later years of 19th century. All of them point out how the land as a commodity was experiencing change of hands during this period.<sup>62</sup>

Some of the evidences show that the land was passing from cultivating to non-cultivating strata and from feudal proprietors to money-lending trading classes in Gujarat.

The following two tables given by Broach Gazetteer indicate the types of cultivating groups of persons who sold their lands in 1874.<sup>63</sup>

Cultivators	Landholders or hereditary officers	Headman	House business	Service	Culti- vators
1018	17	1	21	142	837

Out of the 399 non-cultivating buyers following was the distribution.

Professional men (30 pleaders and 1 doctor)	-	31
Traders (2 cloth dealers, 2 oil sellers, 1 stamp vendor and 83 merchants)	-	88
Money-lenders	-	246
Religious beggars (8 worshippers and 9 religious mendicants)	-	17
Artisans	-	11
Government bought land	-	4
Unaccounted	-	2
		<u>399</u>

The menace of the money-lending class over the cultivating groups found its acutest manifestation in Deccan Riots of 1875, which compelled the Government to take measures to protect Ryots from their increasing grip. Regulations of money-lending groups, which were initially introduced in Deccan were subsequently extended to Gujarat. The Regulations put certain restrictions on money-lenders such as prohibition of acquisition of land beyond a certain limit, preparation of proper accounts, and agreement deeds, restrictions on the rate and amount of interest to be charged and others. However, these restrictions remained more on papers. The growing need of money for revenue, interest on loan, and even consumption, accelerated the growth of indebtedness and evertightening grip of the money-lenders. This phenomenon which started its manifestation in 19th century became an acute and ever growing problem of peasantry not only in Gujarat but all over India. The story of twentieth century including the period after independence is a story of this ever expanding problem in agrarian area.

It should be noted that the money-lenders predominantly belonged to certain specific castes and sub-castes. In Broach, e.g., they belonged to Baniya, Bohras, Brahmins and Kunbis.<sup>64</sup> In Surat they belonged to Baniyas, Marwadis, or Anavil or Bhatela Brahmin castes.<sup>65</sup> In Ahmedabad they were of Baniya, Brahmin, Bohra and sometimes Parsi communities.<sup>66</sup> In Kaira they were of Brahmin and Patidar castes,<sup>67</sup> while Panchmahals they belonged to Kunbis and Bohra groups.<sup>68</sup>

In short the transformation of land as a commodity generated far-reaching changes in the village community affecting the quality of relationships in the village economic and social system.

## III

GRADUAL SHIFT IN THE MOTIF OF PRODUCTION: THE CASE OF COTTON

Another significant change which was introduced in the village economy by British Rulers on account of their political and economic policies was production for market and profit in place of production for subsistence.<sup>69</sup> As indicated in the chapter on Pre-British Gujarati Society unlike other areas, Gujarat due to its peculiar coastal position had developed certain town handicrafts and trade in connection with textiles. This had created a market for cotton from agrarian areas. Some of the villages in the vicinity of towns had started producing cotton for supplying the requirement for these town handicrafts. However, the demand was small, due to weak non-machine technological base of production as well as due to a small select urban market. The town handicrafts produced essentially costly consumption goods for a restricted market of richer strata.<sup>70</sup> The East India Company, which entered India as a trading company initially encouraged this trend by creating wider demand for Indian goods. Surat and Broach were exporting more and more finished goods outside, even threatening the emergence of textile industry in Great Britain. However by the time Gujarat was captured by British Rulers the ruling class in Britain had successfully inaugurated industrial revolution and textile industry of Manchester needed massive quantities of raw material for feeding its gigantic production.\* To buttress the Manchester industry, Britishers slowly destroyed the town handicrafts in India by various means and transformed it as a raw material supplying

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\*A more detailed discussion on this problem follows in the subsequent chapter.

hinterland for its growing industries.<sup>71</sup> This approach developed by the British Rulers had twofold impact on Gujarat Economy. It ruined town handicrafts in Gujarat forcing these ruined artisans towards villages for employment and subsistence. It on the other hand generated a new type of demand for the raw cotton.\* The Gujarat which was relatively in a better position for growing cotton and other commercial crops could meet this new demand. We find that during 19th century the production of cotton increased considerably. In fact, large tracts of land in Broach,<sup>72</sup> Viramgam,<sup>73</sup> Sanand,<sup>74</sup> Bardoli,<sup>75</sup> Surat Chorasi Taluka<sup>76</sup> and many others were slowly switching on to production of cotton. This shift from production for subsistence to production for widening market was further accelerated by a number of other factors. The growing need for money by cultivating classes for revenue payment and other purposes oriented their attention to grow these crops which would fetch money. Production of cotton having monetary potentialities was attractive and thus led the cultivators to grow this crop. As indicated by Settlement Resurvey Reports in some of the areas like Viramgam and other districts nearly 61 per cent of the land now was subjected to cultivation of cotton. "Cotton has now become the great alternate crop to all the cereals in dry-crop land."<sup>77</sup> The trading classes started penetrating the villages to secure more and more of this commodity for transferring it to certain trading centres.\*\*

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\*It was mentioned in the House of Commons' Reports of 1830, 1831,<sup>on</sup> Indian Industries that the best Indian cotton was grown in Gujarat and Cutch. Indian cotton was first imported into England in 1790 and American cotton in 1791. (Dutt, R.C., Economic History of India, Vol.I, p.195).

\*\*It was mentioned in the Broach District Gazetteer, "Since the introduction of railway (1861) and since Broach has become a field for investment of European capital, the course of its cotton trade has considerably changed. Cotton is now brought in one or two ways, either by the local agents of Bombay firms, or by the owners of the ginning factories in Broach." (Bombay Gazetteer, Vol.II, p.429)

They introduced ginning and pressing machine in some centres to purify and pack cotton and push it to Bombay from where it was transported to England.<sup>78</sup> The introduction of railways also assisted in extending the cultivation and marketing of cotton.<sup>79</sup> The accelerated need for cotton in England during the period of American Civil War (1861-64) when cotton from America could not reach England, had generated a new way of demand, leading to the famous share craze in Bombay and Gujarat. We will refer to this phenomena in our discussion about changes in urban economy. Further the Government with a view to bring about necessary purity, refinement and uniformity in the cotton required for complex cotton spinning and weaving machines of England, encouraged some research schemes and extended some facilities for this purpose.<sup>80</sup> Further, the growing capital which was developing from the trade and money-lending and the relative cheapness of labour created by growing impoverishment in the villages, and the expanding production of cotton created condition for even starting a new spinning and weaving mills in Bombay and Gujarat. This further accelerated the demand for cotton.\*

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\*The following statement provides a vivid picture of the growing commercialization of agriculture and increasing importance of cotton:

12. "The line of Railway now in full work connects the Virangaum Districts with Bombay, the North-West Provinces, the Punjab and Kathiawar and a new line is in course of construction connecting Virangaum with Mehsana on the Rajputana line. Within the district there are five railway stations and the new line will add two more. Virangaum itself, is not only the most important grain market in the district but has also become a great centre for the cotton trade; there are now working in Verangaum 4 ginning factories, 2 full presses and 1 spinning and weaving factory and one of the Bombay merchantile houses has already established a European Agency for the purchase of cotton of which exports are very large... Truly as the collector says 'Railways have brought gins and factories and traders with them'; and cotton of which the cultivation has risen to nearly half of all cultivation 'forms the staple wealth of people.'" (Papers relating to Revision of Settlement of the Viramgam Taluka of Ahmedabad District, p.59).

Thus during 19th century the process of commercialization of agriculture had slowly started.

Slowly with the demand for new commercial crops like oil seeds, particularly groundnut and tobacco the agricultural production for market developed still further.

We will close discussion in this section by brief reference to growth of food and other crops. The need for grains and other food crops in England also gave an incentive to trading classes to requisition food crops from villagers in lieu of money advances and thus bring them out from village subsistence to wider web of market.<sup>81</sup> The growth of transport like Railways and others which linked up various parts of Gujarat and Gujarat with various parts of India also extended the scope of trade in food and other commodities. A number of centres operating as grain markets started emerging in Gujarat. A perusal of the weekly fair for instance in Surat point out, "Wanias and Marwaris regularly and frequently attend those fairs offering for sale a variety of piecegoods, clothes, crockery, cutlery, cooking utensils, seeds, bangles, native ornaments, pepper, ginger, tobacco and other articles of general consumption. The neighbouring villagers attend bringing with them garden produce, wood and grain."<sup>82</sup>

In short the economic and political measures adopted by British Rulers and the consequences thereof generated another change in village community. The production for wider market was increasingly destroying the old traditional subsistence basis of village community. In the context of the peculiar circumstances in which the produce was being thrown in the market, the shift from subsistence to market had adverse effect on smaller farmers, tenants and the vast bulk of tribal agriculturists while benefitting money-lending classes and a small section of the prosperous larger farming class. This generated changes in the position and interaction of various strata in village community.

IMPACT OF THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC MEASURES OF  
BRITISH RULERS ON THE VILLAGE ARTISANS AND OTHER SERVANTS

It is extremely difficult to precisely indicate the changes that took place in the position of artisan classes and village servants, as no exact observations on the conditions of these classes are available. We shall have to satisfy ourselves by observing the changes as indirectly revealed and could be logically deduced from the effect of some of the forces which operated in the village community as a whole.

The reciprocal relations which existed and which maintained a stability among the cultivators and artisans during the pre-British period were affected by the new land policy of the British Rulers.

The village artisans were holding 'pasaita' land in the pre-British days, in lieu of their performance of services for the needs of the villages. Due to the new land system introduced by the British 'pasaita' land was continued to them only on payment of a quit-rent.<sup>83</sup>

Further, like any other land-holder, the artisans also had to pay revenue in cash to the Government. Thus the artisans also got involved in the net-work of market operations. In order to meet the Government demand for revenue in cash, they had to sell their product in the markets, if they wanted to keep land in their possession.

There were certain other forces also which affected the conditions of the village artisans. For instance, in the case of weavers, as a result of changes in the demand from cotton piece goods to cotton, his economic activities were adversely affected.<sup>84</sup> The cotton growers, instead of spinning cotton at home and giving it to weaver, for weaving, now sent the raw cotton to the market or to the money-lender or the trader. Due to the influx of cheap machine-made cloth, his position

as producer of textiles was becoming redundant. With the development of communication and increase of weekly and other markets, traditional village self-sufficiency was disturbed. A perusal at weekly fairs held in rural areas of Surat in 1876 point out that out of 16 markets in 11 markets coarse cloth was significant article for sale.<sup>85</sup>

Similarly, the carpenters and blacksmiths whose services were confined to the making and mending of agricultural tools, were also affected by the new economic forces.<sup>86</sup> On the one hand when a villager required a cart to be made or a house to be built he had to be paid in cash.<sup>86</sup> Further those carpenters, blacksmiths or ironsmiths who could migrate to cities, were able to improve their conditions but if they remained in the villages their condition was unenviable because of the growing competition of machine-made cheap goods.<sup>87</sup>

In short, with the deprivation of collective control of the village council, the introduction of a new political administrative machinery directly controlling every individual for revenue as well as law and order, the shift in the payment of revenue in cash and by individual, rather than in kind and jointly by village, slow commercialization of agriculture and freeing agricultural classes from local customary obligations, the conditions of artisans must have experienced a profound transformation. The role of various artisan classes must have also experienced a change. <sup>with</sup> The customary security and assurance in the village community gone, the artisan class was either reduced to a peculiar unstable category persisting more as a ruined unemployed group or compelled to change <sup>its</sup> ~~their~~ occupation by transforming itself into cultivating or agricultural working class.<sup>88</sup> A section of it was pushed to towns or other areas where the group felt the possibility of

of employment.\* This opportunity being relatively small the condition of artisans became precarious and pressed on the only occupation viz. agriculture.\*\*

We will conclude our observation about the changes in the conditions of artisan class in 19th century by recording the very pertinent observation of Prof. D.R. Gadgil.

"The village today possesses the same equipment of artisans as before. The change then whatever its nature or extent has not been revolutionary - but the direction of change is definite. The tendency has not been towards the abolition of the dues and services outright but the customary dues are now playing a much less important part in the income of the artisans than they used to do. The same holds good as regarding the plot of land that the hereditary artisan hold. Its importance too has diminished. Again the artisan has become today more ready to migrate. All these are signs of dissolution of bonds which once held the community close together."<sup>89</sup>

#### V

#### EVALUATION OF THE ECONOMIC CHANGES IN RURAL GUJARATI SOCIETY

Having surveyed the different measures introduced by the British rulers in rural Gujarat, we will now briefly point out the limitations of these measures.

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\*We will be referring to this point in a subsequent chapter of Economic Changes in Urban Society.

\*\*In 1840 Sir Charles Trevelyan in his evidence before the House of Commons Select Committee remarked, "We have swept away their manufacturing; they have nothing to depend upon but the produce of their land." (Quoted in The Rise and Fall of East India Company by Ramkrishna Mukherjee, p.340)

1. The Ryotwari system which altered the entire land relationships was not applied uniformly. As we have observed other systems like Taluqdari, Mevari, or Vanta were permitted to survive. In order to get the support of the Taluqdars or Girasdars, they were permitted to maintain their traditional method of taking the revenue in kind,<sup>90</sup> or taking the revenue from the whole village as in 'Narvadari' or 'Bhagdari', systems.<sup>91</sup> As mentioned in the Gazetteer of Ahmedabad District, "The custom or 'dharo', signed both by landlord and tenant forms part of the records of every village."<sup>92</sup> Thus a rival land system was permitted to survive, not for its intrinsic utility, but for the sake of placating a group of land owners.<sup>93</sup> Of course it may be mentioned here that gradually the ryotwari system of land settlement was gaining predominance.

2. The second limitation arose out of the nature of assessment of land revenue. The rate of assessment was so heavy that there was general feeling in the people of Gujarat that the Government desired to take as much as it could leaving the population permanently poor and indebted.<sup>94</sup> As Mr. Dutt mentioned: "The East India Company had so far regarded India as their estate, and had sought to derive from it the utmost possible land revenue in disregard of ancient rights and customs."<sup>95</sup> Further the assessment or the revision of assessment of land revenue to be paid by the cultivator, was made without consulting those on whom the burden was to fall. The cultivator had no right to appeal to any independent tribunal. This created very bad feelings amongst the rural population. Thus, as a result of the revised assessment which was commenced in 1866, the rates were increased to enormous

levels.\* Further, the provision that revenue assessment could be increased only if an increase of produce results due to improvements made by the state, led to lot of misinterpretation. For example, in Kaira district when the garden produce increased as a result of the wells sunk by the cultivators the Government demanded their share of profit. This interpretation was resented not only by the Gujarat cultivators, but <sup>even</sup> by some of the European officers who could see the obvious injustice of the approach.<sup>96</sup> Major Prescott remarked at one place that "we draw all we can out of Gujarat, do not expand one shilling in works of irrigation and tax wells besides."<sup>97</sup> Thus a premium was put on improvement of agriculture. Mr. Yagnik has in this connection remarked: "It is notorious in all parts of the presidency(Bombay) that agricultural improvement in Government villages is practically at a standstill, except in cases where pressure of population and sheer necessity has compelled the landholder sorrowfully and grudgingly to spend his own money, well knowing that his improvement will only result in a heavier burden being imposed on him at the next period of settlement."<sup>98</sup>

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\*Following is the rate of increase in different districts of Gujarat.

District	Revenue realised in the year before revision (£)	Revenue demanded in consequence of the revision	Percentage of increase
1. Ahmedabad	87,310	109,294	25.2
2. Kaira	131,678	151,843	15.3
3. Surat	55,278	61,066	10.5
4. Panchmahals	11,043	11,193	1.3

(Bombay Administration Report for 1898-99, Appendix II)

3. The third limitation arose out of the land being made into a commodity, saleable in the market. In the context of the poor conditions of the cultivator, this feature along with the machinery of Court and its intricacies resulted in the most calamitous results. <sup>Sighar Haber</sup> ~~Mr. Forbes~~ describes this phenomenon in the following words: "The most bitter indignation was often excited by the judgement, ejection and other acts of the Court, which though intended only to do justice between man and man, yet frequently depopulated villages undid ancient families, pulled down men's hereditary and long-possessed houses over their heads, and made the judges hated and feared by the great body of the people, as practicing severities in the recovery of private debts which none of the native governors, however otherwise oppressive either ventured to do or thought of doing."<sup>99</sup>

This uprooting of the cultivator without any means of alternative occupation led to the ruination of the peasantry. The moneylending groups began to exercise their full power in village life.

4. The fourth limitation arose out of the ruination of the artisan groups. The cash nexus disturbed the traditional balance of the relationship between artisan classes and cultivating classes. Further due to the limited opportunity of switching on to new jobs, the traditional caste matrix of the village got a further lease of life. Though there was shift in the influence of upper castes, in the sense that instead of Rajput or Kshatriya castes, Baniyas gain predominance, however the artisans' castes or what Ramkrishna Mukherjee describes as 'producing castes' due to ever aggravating agrarian crisis, had either to take out an existence from their deteriorated vocation, or to be

agricultural labourers.<sup>100</sup> Thus, though the foundation of caste system viz. village community was very fundamentally affected by the British land policy<sup>due</sup> to the colonial character of foreign rule it did not result in the elimination of the caste system, but resulted in caste dovetailing itself to class relationship.

In short, British land policy on the one hand transformed very basically the agrarian social structure, but as it<sup>was</sup> introduced to subserve the needs of the foreign ruling group, it generated certain distortions in the system itself.

Having described the rural society in 19th century, we will now analyse the changes that were brought about in the urban social structure.

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