

6th – RURAL ADMINISTRATION



There are more than six lakh villages in India. Talking care of their needs for water, electricity, road connections, is not a small task. In addition to this, land records have to be maintained and conflicts too need to be dealt with. Large machinery is in place to deal with all this. In this chapter we will look at the work of administering the rural area.

Administration: The function of a political state in exercising its government duties is called administration. Administration in rural areas involves many aspects. Some of them are as follows:

- Construction of public facilities; like road, drainage, check dams, drinking water facilities.
- Implementation of welfare schemes; like MNREGA.
- Settlement of disputes
- Maintenance of land records
- Collection of land revenue

Settlement of disputes: Areas of the police station: Every police station has an area that comes under its control. It also has to ensure peace and harmony in the area. Police stations are present for every village. Particular police station usually covers many villages. All persons in that area can report cases or inform the police about any theft, accident, injury, fight, etc. It is the responsibility of the police of that station to enquire, to investigate and take action on the case within its area.

Station House Officer (SHO): A police station is headed by the Station House Officer. In other words, the SHO is the in-charge of the police station. The SHO registers complaints. Complaints are usually registered in the form of an FIR (First Information Report). After registering the FIR, the SHO sends a constable to investigate the scene of the dispute or crime. The SHO may try to take help of the Gram Panchayat or village elders in finding a solution. The SHO can also go to the court to reach a solution.

Land Disputes: the most frequent cause of dispute in rural areas. It often happens that a person forcibly tries to occupy someone else's land. Some people are socially and economically more powerful in a village than some other people. The powerful person may try to grab the land of a less powerful person. In such a situation, people from the SC's/ST's and OBC's are usually at the receiving end. Sometimes, land disputes can also arise among people of the same caste.

Maintenance of Land Records

Measuring land and keeping land records is the main work of the patwari. The patwari is known by different names in different states- in some villages such officers are called lekhpal, in others kanungo or karamchari or village officer etc. we will refer to this officer as patwari. Each patwari is responsible for a group of villages. The patwari maintains and updates the records of the village.

The map and the corresponding details from the register on the next page are a small part of the records kept by the patwari. The patwari usually has ways of measuring agricultural fields. In some places a long chain is used.

The patwari is also responsible for organizing the collection of land revenue from the farmers and providing information to the government about the crops grown in the area. This is done from the records that are kept, and this is why it's important for the patwari to regularly update these.

The main duties of patwari are as follows:





- a. The maintenance of record of the crop grown at every harvest.
- b. The keeping of the record of rights to a plot up to date.

Farmers may change the crops grown on their fields or someone may dig a well somewhere, and keeping track of all this is the work of the revenue department of the government. Senior people in this department supervise the patwari's work. All states in India are divided into districts. For managing matters relating to land these districts are further sub-divided. These sub-divisions of a district are known by different names such as tehsil, taluka, etc. At the head is the district collector and under her are the revenue officers, also known as tehsildars. They have to hear disputes. They also supervise the work of the patwaris and ensure that records are properly kept and land revenue is collected. They make sure that the farmers can easily obtain a copy of their record and students can obtain their caste certificates etc.

Advantages of land record:

- a. Information about current owner of the land
- b. The total area of the land
- c. Crop grown in that land
- d. Any other facility on the land
- e. Boundary of the land

Land Revenue: Since the times when the early kingdoms and empires flourished in India, land revenue has been a major source of revenue for the government. The government charges some tax for the land holding on an annual basis.

At the district level, the Collector heads the Revenue Collection System. The District Magistrate is also called Collector because of his association with the Revenue Collection System

A New Law: (Hindu Succession, Amendment Act, 2005)

In the new law sons, daughters and their mothers can get an equal share in the land. The same law will apply to all states and union territories of the country. This law will benefit a large number of women.

For example Sudha is the eldest daughter of an agricultural family. She is married and lives in a neighbouring village. After her father's death Sudha often comes to help her mother with the farming work. Her mother has asked the patwari to transfer the land and enter her name along with the names of all the children in his record. Sudha's mother confidently organizes the farming with the help of the younger brother and sister. Similarly Sudha also lives with the assurance that if she ever has a problem she can always depend upon her share of the land.

Some of the public services which are available in rural areas are as follows:

Medical healthcare facilities: Some villages have small hospitals, while some villages have bigger hospitals. Villages where no hospital is present are served by Healthcare Workers.

Schools: Government schools are present in many villages to educate the children of nearby areas.

Milk Society: Milk societies have been established by milk cooperatives. The milk society works as a collection centre for milk. The milk is then sent to the processing plant of the cooperative.

Anganwaadi Centre: Anganwaadi centres have been established to serve poor children. Such centres especially work as crèche for children. Children are given free meals and some basic medicines to poor children.

