

BOARD OF REVENUE FOR RAJASTHAN

IMPROVING THE JUSTICE DELIVERY SYSTEM IN REVENUE COURTS

Address of V.Srinivas IAS, Chairman Board of Revenue to the Rajasthan Revenue Bar Association on assumption of charge dated October 6, 2017

**Distinguished Members of Board of Revenue,
President and Member Secretary of the Rajasthan Revenue Bar Association,
Senior Advocates, Government Counsels,
Members of the Rajasthan Revenue Bar Association,
Senior Officials of the Board of Revenue**

It gives me immense pleasure to address you today, on assumption of charge as the 47th Chairman of the Board of Revenue for Rajasthan. I am grateful the Rajasthan Revenue Bar Association for organizing this meeting in which so many of you are participating.

The Board of Revenue is amongst Rajasthan's greatest institutions with a historical legacy dating back to 70 years. Several Chairmen have led this Institution with great poise and dignity. As I step into the hallowed portals of the highest Revenue Court of Rajasthan, I am overwhelmed by 3 decades of memories. I first came to the Board of Revenue in 1990, as a 23 year old, an age when idealism and enthusiasm for public service pervaded me. My interactions with the then Chairman Board of Revenue gave me insights into the Land Reforms of the 1990s.

The contribution of the senior advocates of the Rajasthan Revenue Bar to establishing and sustaining the Board of Revenue's formidable legacy has been significant. I have grown up reading the case laws in which many Senior Advocates whom I see in the audience today have appeared and contributed to improving the Justice Delivery System.

Shri Yagyadutt Sharma

Shri Purna Shankar Dashora

Shri Bhawani Singh

Shri Onkarlal Dave

These Senior Advocates have significantly enriched the legal profession in the Rajasthan Revenue Bar. They have appeared as *Amicus Curie* in several Larger Bench cases resolving complex interpretational issues. I salute your yeomen services to the Nation. I see many young

V.SRINIVAS IAS

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advocates in this conference hall today, all of whom seem enthusiastic to pursue a life-long career in the Rajasthan Revenue Bar, which augers well for the long term sustainability of the Board of Revenue for Rajasthan.

Distinguished Members of the Bar, it takes a lifetime of knowledge assimilation to reach the position of Chairman Board of Revenue for Rajasthan. Land reforms became the centrality of my initial career years as I strived for improved justice delivery armed with the provisions of the Rajasthan Tenancy Act and Rajasthan Land Revenue Act. I worked as a Court, a field officer leading revenue campaigns, conducting night halts, interacting with Patwaris and Tehsildars for the cause of better Revenue administration. My knowledge of land reforms in Rajasthan have been honed by postings as Sub Divisional Officer at Bhilwada and Nimbaheda, Colonization Commissioner at Bikaner, and District Collector at Pali and Jodhpur. Adhering to Court timings, reading files before coming to the bench and writing timely court judgments was a passion that I developed in my early years which I maintain to this day.

The litigant remains the centrality of the Board of Revenue. Improved Justice Delivery systems have to be the priority area for governance in the Board of Revenue. In the past 85 days when I have held additional charge of the post of Chairman of the Board of Revenue, I have had an opportunity to study the litigant's journey in Revenue Courts quite closely. Providing timely justice depends on the collaboration between the Bench and the Bar. In my tenure as Chairman Board of Revenue, I would strive to maintain the cordiality in relations between the Bench and the Bar. I would also seek to ensure punctuality in court timings, emphasize on procedural fairness, consistency in interpretations of revenue laws and timely judgment writing. I would be happy to sit on the bench every day, all 5 days of the week listening to your eloquence and erudition to ensure high quality work.

I have studied the functioning of the Boards of Revenue in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh – all of which were established during the British Raj. Of these Boards, the Board of Revenue for Rajasthan is the largest Board in terms of number of Members. For some reason, we also seem to have very high levels of litigation. This could be due to 2 reasons – the quality of mutations and partitions being done by Tehsildars/ SDOs and demarcation of holdings in the field by Patwaris is resulting in disputes necessitating redressal in higher courts.

The Government has recruited 3000 new Patwaris in October 2017, and I would advise the Patwar Training School at Tonk to closely monitor their training curriculum so that gaps are not left. I had visited the RRTI and met Tehsildar trainees. The quality of new recruits offers hope for improved revenue administration in the coming years.

I recognize that currently revenue cases being instituted on a monthly basis far exceeds the cases being decided, adding to the cumulative case-loads the Institution is carrying. Our technological modernization needs remain significant. The manual system of handling 65000 court cases is barely able to cope with the rigors of modern day revenue court administration. The Digital Rajasva Mandal – which represents the First Digital Revolution in Revenue Court Administration in India is a significant step forward in transparency and litigant friendliness.

In a major step forward, the Board of Revenue for Rajasthan has started placing judgments online. This would be augmented by implementing a campaign on reference cases and revision cases. The number of reference cases being heard in the benches has increased to 50-60 cases/ day from 15-20 cases/ day. Nearly 7000 summons notices were served in the Reference cases filed in pursuance of the High Court judgment in the Abdul Rehman case. I have also asked the Board administration for improving the classification of cases and identify cases for bunching. The judicial section of the Board has identified 14000 cases for bunching where cross appeals have been filed. There are some procedural delays in issue of decrees in cases where judgments have been pronounced. These 300 cases have been identified and will be pursued. It shall be my constant endeavor to put in place a more improved court management system on the lines of the e-Courts project implemented in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India and High Courts.

To conclude, let me thank the President and Secretary of the Rajasthan Revenue Bar Association for organizing this meeting today. New beginnings always offer hope for a better governance model. It shall be my endeavor to contribute to institution building efforts at the Board of Revenue for Rajasthan. I seek your support in this challenging policy endeavor.

Jai Hind.

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