

Board of Revenue for Rajasthan

Revenue Administration in Bikaner: Challenges in IGNP Colony Lands

*Address by V.Srinivas IAS, Chairman Board of Revenue to the Revenue Officers,
Collector's Meeting Hall, Bikaner Dated December 7, 2017*

**Member Board of Revenue,
Divisional Commissioner and District Collector Bharatpur,
Revenue Appellate Authority Bikaner,
All Additional District Collectors, Bikaner,
All Sub-Divisional Officers, Bikaner,
All Tehsildars, Bikaner**

I am delighted to be with you in Bikaner today. This city has a very special place in my career, I served in the IGNP from 1993 to 1995. During my long tenure as Additional Area Development Commissioner IGNP, I had the opportunity to travel 50,000 kms in the IGNP command area from Masitawali head to the ShaheedBirbalShakha of the IGNP and over a 100 night-halts in every IGNP guest-house along the canal. The entire team of officials was very driven to develop the IGNP, there was passion, intensity and seriousness of purpose to bring the green revolution to Stage I-Phase II and Stage II of IGNP. It was a huge challenge for Irrigation engineers, Agricultural Researchers, Extension workers, IAS/ RAS officers who worked in Colonization, CAD on the Settlement and World Food Programs.

The IGNP is one of India's largest and most complex irrigation systems, with 15 lac hectares of command lands in the Thar desert. By 1993, the major systems of the IGNP in Stage I – Phase I, the AnoopgadShakha and the Suratgad Branch were fully operational. The Stage I – Phase II distribution systems, the Birsalpur Branch, the Charanwala Branch, Pugal Branch, canal works were complete and CAD works were reaching completion with Colonization Department making land allotments. In Stage II of IGNP, Canal works and Watercourse construction was being taken-up in the Sada and Sultana Distributaries. On the SagarmalGopaShakha and the ShaheedBirbal Branch, canal works were completed but watercourse construction had yet to commence. The terrain was very harsh with high sand dunes, high sand-dunes/ sand storms and most of the canal submerged in sand during summer. One could drive a 100 kilometers from Bikampur to Nachna and not see a single settlement except the IGNP officials.

I had also held charge as Commissioner Colonization which had the largest deployment of Rajasthan Administrative Service Officers that any single Department had at that point. Colonization and CAD activities were at their peak in Chatargad, Pugal, Bajju, and Bikampur in Bikaner district and Nachna, Mohangad and Ramgad in Jaisalmer district. The Settlement Motivation camps held in the IGNP, attended by Colonization, IGNP and CAD officials, were successful in facilitating timely settlement of thousands of beneficiaries who

were allotted IGNP Colony lands. Considering that land allotment targets ranged upto 50,000 hectares per annum by the Colonization department, the challenges faced in creating land rights in the IGNP areas of the Thar desert was similar to establishing a new civilization.

Today, I am happy to see that Colonization Department has transferred the entire Bikaner district lands to Revenue department. The District Collector, backed by his team of Additional District Collectors, Sub-Divisional Officers and Tehsildars has the responsibility to administer the revenue lands of the IGNP. This is a transformational change.

I wish to emphasize on some issues that Revenue Officers must do to be successful in the IGNP.

Familiarity with IGNP:

The SDO's and Tehsildars must visit the IGNP command area. I would advise SDO Chatargad and Tehsildar Pugal who have recently joined their posts, to get familiar with the Birsalpur Branch and Pugal Branch. Try to familiarize yourselves with warabandi practices, irrigation/ CAD department's patwaris and engineers, Colonization department's officials and above all meet settlers who have cultivated and transformed the IGNP. Please try to understand the agricultural practices, the concept of water allowances, crop patterns and challenges. Enjoy the fascinating experience of working in the Thar.

Coordination meetings between Revenue Administration and Colonization Department:

The Area Development Commissioner (ADC) was the coordination authority for the IGNP. The ADC was to convene meetings between IGNP, Irrigation, CAD and Colonization to determine water distribution for every crop season. The ADC post has been merged with Divisional Commissioner. The Colonization has transferred lands to the Revenue Department. Coordination meetings between Colonization-Revenue, Colonization-Revenue- CAD- IGNP-Irrigation are necessary for efficient day-to-day administration.

Temporary Cultivation :

A large number of temporary cultivation cases have been transferred from Colonization department to Revenue department. These cases are being seen in Pugal (250 cases) and Bikampur (136 cases). Temporary cultivation does not confer rights. Temporary Cultivation rules of Colonization department enable permanent allotments to these tenants. That said, Revenue department may exercise due diligence in making such permanent allotments.

Creating Record of Rights in Colony Lands:

Normally Colonization department transfers lands where Jamabandi entries have been made along with the Girdavari and mutation register. That several

colony lands transferred from Colonization to Revenue department do not have Jamabandi records is quite puzzling. The issue should be taken up with the Colonization department in the coordination meeting for a better understanding and appreciation of the problem.

I have taken note of the requests of District Collector Bikaner for filling up vacant posts of Tehsildars, vacant posts of Patwaris. The Board of Revenue is trying to fill these vacancies expeditiously.

On a general note, the Revenue courts must deliver speedy justice, decentralized disposal and transparent systems of disposal. I would advise you to ensure predictability and consistency in court sittings, timely judgment writing and detailed examination of issues as laid down in the civil procedure code. Please focus on cases pertaining to lands of deity, lands of women, lands of scheduled casts/ scheduled tribes and government lands.

Transformational changes in Revenue administration are happening the Revenue administration in Bikaner district. Please accept my good wishes in all your challenging policy endeavors.

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