

CHALLENGES IN REVENUE ADMINISTRATION IN PALI DISTRICT

V.Srinivas¹

**District Collector Pali, All Additional District Collectors, All Sub Divisional Officers,
All Tehsildars**

I am delighted to be with all of you today, in a district where I had served as District Collector 2 decades ago and Secretary in-charge a decade ago and I have very fond memories of my years of service here. Pali is a very important District for Revenue Administration in Rajasthan with high visibility and huge responsibilities. The District is quite unique for Marwar with 2 lac hectares of irrigated area.

I have reviewed the progress achieved by the District in various aspects of revenue administration and I share with you some of the challenges that I have identified where focus is required.

Revenue Administration

There has been a significant expansion in the revenue administration in District. From 4 SDM offices and 8 Tehsils, the district currently has 10 SDM offices and 10 Tehsils. By this expansion, the Government has taken revenue administration to the grass roots. Sub-Divisional Headquarters in Rohat, Sumerpur, Rani, Raipur, Desuri and Marwar Junction are aimed to provide speedy justice and redress grievances at the Tehsil level. That said, an inverted pyramid has emerged in the Revenue Administration with 10 SDM's supervising the work of 8 Naib Tehsildars. On return, I will request the Registrar Revenue Board to try to fill up the vacancies at Tehsil level in the coming days. Court work in the Sub-Divisions of Pali, Rohat, Sumerpur, Raipur, Rani, Desuri is below the prescribed norm of 300 revenue suits. At the same time, there is a heavy pendency in the traditional sub-divisional headquarters of Sojat and Jaitaran. I wish to impress upon the SDM's of Bali, Pali, Sojat and Jaitaran, the need to conduct court work for 3 days in a week, Monday-Wednesday 10.30 am to 1.30 pm to cope with the heavy workloads. In other sub-divisions, atleast 2 days/ week should be devoted to court work. What we now see as small pendency in the new SDM offices can rise very steeply in the coming months if disposals are not according to norms.

¹ Address to Revenue Officers of District Pali by V.Srinivas Chairman Board of Revenue dated August 21, 2017 at Committee Room Collectorate Pali

Revenue Litigation

Pali has always had very high revenue litigation.

Cases u/s 91 of Rajasthan Land Revenue Act: I have observed that there are over 14500 cases were registered and disposed-off by the Tehsildars in the kharif season. This is perhaps the highest number of encroachment cases in a single district. Considering that appeals are filed in all cases where imprisonment is being ordered, the District Collector's Court as the First Appellate Court receives a large number appeals u/s 91 Land Revenue Act. I also notice that a very large number of 2nd appeals are pending with the Board of Revenue for Rajasthan. The Revenue Department has issued circulars for according gair-khatedari rights in certain cases of encroachments. The applicability of the Revenue Department's circulars to the encroachment cases being registered in Pali may be examined.

Reference cases in pursuance of High Court Decision in Abdul Rehman vs State of Rajasthan: There are 575 references made by District Collector Pali to the Board of Revenue for Rajasthan which are under consideration of the Board of Revenue since 2006. Summons need to be served in these cases. The Board of Revenue has launched a major campaign for disposal of these pending cases. I would seek your support for disposal all pending cases in this particular matter by March 31, 2017.

Cases under Land Ceiling Act: Pali has a number of important land ceiling cases. Some of the important cases have been decided in recent years under the land ceiling act. The land acquired by the State in ceiling cases is high value land and it may be ensured that the land is adequately protected from encroachments as it is very near the Bali city limits. The SDM's who are not adequately proficient with the Land Ceiling Act must sit with the ADM (Land Ceiling) to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Act. The District Collector may review the pending cases and identify on a holistic basis the claims being made by the State in Pali district.

Revenue Campaign and Digitization of Land Records

I would like to place on record my appreciation for the good work done in the 2017 revenue campaign. 1.5 lac cases have been decided in the revenue campaign. The computerization of land records has meant that copies of revenue records could be given on a timely basis. I also notice the innovation that revenue suits were decided in the revenue campaign and some villages becoming litigation free. The disposal of mutations and other applications under the Land Revenue Act is also impressive.

The Digitization of Land Records has ensured timely updation of Jamabandis in the district. Except for 6 Jamabandis, record writing / updation has been completed in all 355 Jamabandis. The modernization of tehsil record rooms is also progressing well.

General Administration

I have always been a firm believer in night halts and inspections. The senior officials in District Administration must conduct timely and effective inspections of subordinate offices to ensure efficiency and disposal. The District Collector's Court should preferably function for 3 days in a week, from 11 am onwards. Night halts at ADM level must be enforced. The current data indicates almost nil night halts which is unacceptable. The inspection of Tehsils and Sub-Collectors should be taken up on a timely basis as per the annual calendar drawn up by the Sadar Kanungo. SDM's must inspect Explosive Magazines and review timely renewal of arms licenses. These are necessary for safety and security of the larger population.

Election Preparedness

I joined as Collector Pali on January 3, 1998, 20 days before the conduct of General Elections 1998. Conduct of a general election/ assembly election is a highly process driven exercise. In 1998, it was still manual ballot and no central paramilitary forces were deployed. Yet I remember that it was a text book election where every procedure laid down in the Representation of People's Act 1951 and the Model Code of Conduct was followed. The electoral process has become more streamlined in recent years, with significant expansion of voter identification cards, timely revision of electoral rolls, deployment of central para-military forces for security purposes, mapping of vulnerable polling stations and introduction of electronic voting machines.

Pursuing the cause of Land Reforms

I always had a deep and abiding interest in Land Reforms – the Rajasthan Tenancy Act, the Rajasthan Land Revenue Act and the Rajasthan Land Allotment Rules as also in Ceiling cases. Pali District offers the unique opportunity to handle revenue litigation in all its complexities. It's a unique opportunity for learning the core issues concerning land in rural India. I wish each and every one of you all success in your challenging policy endeavors.

Jai Hind.

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