

## BOARD OF REVENUE FOR RAJASTHAN

### **WORKSHOP ON IMPROVING FUNCTIONING OF SDO COURTS IN RAJASTHAN DATED MARCH 16, 2018**

*Address of V.Srinivas, IAS Chairman Board of Revenue*

Members of the Board of Revenue,  
Senior Advocates of the Rajasthan Revenue Bar Association,  
Distinguished Colleagues,

It is my privilege to extend a warm and hearty welcome to our young Sub-Divisional Officers to the Board of Revenue for the first of the 4 workshops on Improving Functioning of SDO Courts in Rajasthan. In 2018, we have 18 IAS officers serving as SDO's in Rajasthan. It's a huge talent pool that needs to be sensitized on the critical importance of Land Reforms in India so that when they take over the onerous responsibilities of District Collectors in near future, they are in a position to provide leadership to deliver justice to a large group of rural population, protect vulnerable groups like Women, Deity, SC/ ST Tenants and common lands.

The Sub-Divisional Officer Court as a Trial Court is the most important institution of governance in revenue administration at the cutting edge level. We are at the zenith of our expansion with nearly 300 SDO Courts, one for every Tehsil. We are also facing very high case-work with the SDO's of Alwar and Bharatpur having over 2500 cases. The highest pendency is with SDO Court Tijara with 5089 cases. Over 4.8 lac cases are pending in SDO Courts, an average case load of 1600 cases/ court. The RAA Courts have 1.8 lac, 1<sup>st</sup> appeals, and the Board of Revenue has 63000, 2<sup>nd</sup> appeals. There is an explosion of Revenue litigation in Rajasthan which can only be addressed with considerable seriousness of purpose and intense commitment to excellence in Court work. The steel frame of Indian administration has been built on an ethos of high functional efficiency, quality and individual leadership at field level

Following my visits to 16 Districts of Rajasthan, I was keen to address several areas like quality of judgment writing, predictability and consistency of Court sittings, cordiality in interactions between the bench and the bar, digitalization and felt that a workshop of this nature would be the best way forward.

This is the first time that the Board of Revenue has reached out to Sub-Divisional Officers of Rajasthan to make a concerted effort to clarify the legal positions and outline its expectations. The workshop has 4 listed agenda for discussion – Organization of Court Work, Important Judgments on Salient Provisions of Rajasthan Tenancy Act and Rajasthan Land Revenue Act, Interactions between Bench and the Bar, and Digitalization. We have invited the senior advocates of the Rajasthan Revenue Bar to address our young colleagues on these issues in addition to the Members of the Board of Revenue. I am grateful to the senior advocates of the Rajasthan Revenue Bar for their willingness to participate and guide us in this endeavor. The Senior Advocates that we have with us today, are men who have served as amicus curae in the Board of Revenue when I was a probationer and SDO, and their names have appeared in hundreds of

reported decisions of the Rajasthan Revenue Digests for past several decades. We will benefit from their experience.

In the early 1990s when I served as an SDO in Rajasthan, there were legends like B.N.Yugandhar and S.R.Sankaran who had devoted a large part of their careers to the cause of land reforms still in service. The Board of Revenue had T.Srinivasan and C.K.Mathew as Members. Rajasthan hosted a number of national conferences on Land Reforms wherein the Chief Minister would often discuss the various provisions of the Rajasthan Tenancy Act and the Rajasthan Land Revenue Act. There were Committees constituted by Government with SDO's as members to examine the specific provisions of Rajasthan Tenancy Act and rewrite several provisions. The issues that face the tenants in Rajasthan remain critically important even after I have 70 years of constitution of modern Rajasthan. Whenever I interact with T.Srinivasan and C.K.Mathew, I find their enthusiasm for file reading and judgment writing immense as also their understanding of the complexities of revenue litigation across districts. It incumbent on me to pass the great legacy that I have been part of, to contribute to institution building of the Board of Revenue and the subordinate courts, particularly the trial courts at the level of SDOs.

Great strides have been made by India under the Digital India initiative. The Board of Revenue has contributed too, with the First Digital Revolution in Revenue Courts administration being implemented with the Digital Rajasva Mandal being implemented in mission mode and the Rajasthan Revenue Courts Grid where 909 subordinate courts have been operationalized on RCMS software. Today's deliberations represent critical value additions for your nascent careers to provide improved justice delivery systems in revenue courts of Rajasthan and one day be recognized as the officers who stood up for the cause of simplifying the litigant's journey in revenue courts.

Jai Hind.

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