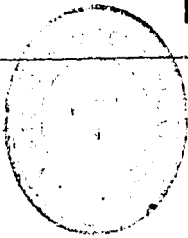


Report on 'Baglan'  
Situation of the  
Non-Brahmin leaders  
Committee

# Report

on Baglan Situation  
of the Non-Brahmin  
leaders' Committee.

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## **Committee:-**

*Mr.* D. S. Jawalkar

„ K. M. Jedhe

„ K. S. Gupte

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To

the Leaders of the Non-Brahmin Party and  
the President of the Meeting held  
on 25-2-29 at Bombay.

In accordance with the Resolution passed at  
the Emergency Meeting held on 25-2-29 in  
Bombay we undertook a tour of Baglan Taluka  
in Nasik District and visited a number of important  
centers including Satana, Nampur, Shembli,  
Brahmangaon, Lakhmapur, Mirgaon, Tahrabad  
and Munzbad.

In the limited period at our disposal we exami-  
ned the situation specially with regard to the 2nd  
Revision Settlement question and we have the hon-  
our to submit our impressions we formed after a  
survey of the condition existent in the Baglan  
Taluka in the following pages:-

Yours faithfully,

POONA

10-3-1929

D S. Javalkar

K. M. Jedhe

K. S. Gupte

# REPORT



The **Baglan Taluka** is popularly supposed to have derived its name from one **Baghad Rajah** who reigned there many centuries ago.

Baglan is described in *Ain-i-Akbari* as a mountainous, well-peopled Country whose chief was of Rathod tribe and who commanded eight thousand cavalry and five thousand infantry, produced apples, grapes, pine-apples, pomegranates and citrons in abundance.

Ferishta found it to have been a prosperous part of the country as the route from the Deccan through Baglan to the Gujarat coast had been a line of a traffic from remote times. At the end of the thirteenth century Baglan is mentioned as a District dependent on Gujarat, bordering on the dominions of Ramdeo the King of Devagiri:-

**Briggs' Ferishta, 1. 327.**

Without going into the details any further it may be mentioned at once that the romance of Deval Devi the beautiful daughter of Ray Karan the last of the Anhilvada Kings of Gujarat lends enchantment to the rugged but picturous hills of Baglan. Even today people are found pathetically reciting the stories of the capture of that unfortunate princess.

In 1639 Baglan was brought under control by Aurangzeb.

According to Tavernier (1640-1660) Baglan was enriched by the passage of the great stream of traffic between Surat and Golkand. The Country was full of banian, mango, moha, cassia, khajur or wild date and other trees. (He had included part of the North-Konkan under Baglan.) There were vast numbers of antelopes hare, and partridges and cows. Sugar-cane was grown in many places and there were mills and furnaces for making sugar. In 1670 the attention of Shivaji was drawn to this Taluka which led to the capture of Saler fort by him.

in 1795 this part of the country came under the control of the Peshwas and ultimately in 1818 after the Peshwas defeat it passed on to the British.

### **Baglan under the British**

Mr. Pedder found Baglan in 1869 to be a district full of hills and streams, the vallies to be narrow and considerably cut up with Nallahs and Ravines. He describes the country bordering on the Malegaon taluka as tolerably open but for some distance near the northern and southern boulderies of the district, and all along the western border to be very broken and hilly. The level lands were confined to a comparatively narrow belt along both banks of the rivers.—Vide R. D. No 507 of 1869 of Survey and Settlement Commissioner N.D.

In his report dated 5-1-1869 Mr. Pedder wrote: "The soil is generally poor, mostly stony or Barad and the average classification is consequently 10m

about annas  $4\frac{1}{2}$  according to the classification of 1868. The hills and indeed the country generally, are extremely bare of trees, but near the rivers there are many fruit groves chiefly of mangoes."

This view is corroborated by the Settlement Officer in his report dated 17-5-1927 in the following terms "The soil throughout is light and most of it is classified very low. The great bulk of it is between 4 annas 1 pie and 8 annas. It is natural that the broken land near the hills should be poor and though the valley bottoms have better soil, there is very little rich black soil. Even the plain round Satana is for the most part of a light and crumbling quality. In the west the soil is hard and brittle; in the east it is inclined to the stiff but breaks up into very fine dust." "The fine mangogroves described by Mr. Pedder are gradually disappearing. We did not notice any new plantations to take the place of the decaying trees.

### **Constitution of The Taluka.**

At the original settlement in 1869 the Baglan Taluka formed part of the Khandesh Collectorate and was composed of the Subha Division and the Abhona and Jaikhed Petas. It was subsequently transferred to the Nasik District. In 1870 it was subdivided into two Talukas Baglan and Kalwan. In Baglan were included 59 Government villages of the original Baglan Subha and the whole of the Jaikhed Petha containing 81 Government villages.

The villages were formed into seven groups and the rates of assesment were.

Group	No. of villages	Rate
		Rs.
1	5	2/2
2	26	2/-
3	43	1/12
4	33	1/8
5	12	1/4
6	11	1/-
7	9	0/12

At the Revision Settlement in 1899 Baglan consisted of 162 villages of which 141 were Government, and 21 Inam. Two of the Government, villages were absorbed into forest. The remaining 139 villages were arranged into four groups with the following rates of assessment:—

Group	No. of villages	Rate
		Rs.
1	26	„ 2/4
2	68	„ 2/-
3	24	„ 1/8
4	21	„ 1/-

The 2nd Revision Settlement Report has been completed and proposals submitted on 17-5-1927 are the following:—

**Note**-( Groups 1 & 2 have been amalgamated into group 1 )

Group	No. of villages	Rate
		Rs.
1	94	„ 2/12
2	24	„ 2/-
3	21	„ 1/5/4

### Climate

The Superintendent, Revenue Survey and assessment, Khandesh in 1869 wrote:-“The climate of Baglan appears to be unhealthy. The whole population of some parts of the district are said to be annually prostrated with fever in September and October.”

There was no improvement in later years, probably because Government paid more attention to the collection and such other matters affecting revenue than to the health of people. We found the following in the Report of the Superintendent Deccan and Gujarat Surveys dated 21st June 1898. “The climate of the Taluka is not healthy except in hot weather. Fever is very prevalent up to January in all parts and where there is irrigation, the climate is feverish to a later time of the year. With all this the Settlement Officer in his report dated 17-5-1927 writes, “stretching from the edge of the Ghats eastwards Baglan has a fresh and delightfully cool climate.” In this “well drained country” statistics show that in the year 1926, 1114 persons were carried away by malaria and other fevers-out of the total deaths which amount to 2233.

The devastating incidence of malaria in this Taluka cannot be too strongly brought out. We have not got the record of persons who actually suffered during that year from fevers but it would be fairly accurate to infer that at least four times the number must have been constantly sick and we can form an idea how appalling is the maiming due to it.



In our tour we frequently met people with enlarged spleens, who may be described as having their bones literally cutting through their skins. The relation of malaria to agriculture is very close and there is every reason to believe that it is mainly this evil which has led to the de-population of the Taluka. The feverish nature of the climate was a very strong reason in the opinion of the Survey and Settlement Commissioner N. D. ( No. 507 of 1869 R. D. dated 28th May 1869 ) against the imposition of a high rate of assessment.

### **Rainfall**

The average rainfall for the last 30 years is 16.48 inches as compared with 21.57 for the 10 years, 1887-96, a decrease of 5.09 inches. For the year 1926 the rainfall was only 11 inches. In June of the same year rainfall was scanty. In July the same conditions prevailed and yet we read in the Report of the Director of Agriculture the astounding assertion—

‘The season on the whole was fairly good Kharif.’ The Settlement Officer however had reluctantly to admit that here had been a number of bad years in the last 30 years.

The soil of the Taluka is mostly light brown and it is a matter of common knowledge that such a soil never gives more than a light crop, and yields nothing at all when the rain fall is scanty.

Curiously enough the Settlement Officer asserts that the result of the crop experiments give an impression that the light land produces comparatively a far heavier crop than better land.

Formerly Baglan was famous for its Kamoda rice. It is the peculiarity of rice that water has always got to be allowed to gather in the field till the ears are out or rather till they begin to ripen. A scarcity of water spoils the crop as the soil cracks and lays bare the roots. Owing to scarcity of rain the people have discontinued growing rice. Mr. Bristo, the 2nd Revision Settlement Officer admits in his Report that the uncertainty of the rainfall has led to a reduction in the area of sugar-cane.

A SURVEY OF THE SITUATION in Baglan with regard to the character of the season from 1899 to 1926 as given by the Director of Agriculture, gives the following results:—

1899. The aggregate fall of the year was only a little above half of the average at Baglan. The season was distinctly poor both for the Kharif and Rabi crops.

1900. Rain during the year was about two thirds of the average at Baglan. The season on the whole was a fair Kharif but a distinctly poor Rabi.

1901. The total rainfall of the year was very much below the usual quantity. The season on the whole was poor.

1903 The aggregate fall of the year was slightly below the average at Baglan. The season on the whole was good for Kharif crops but only moderate for the Rabi crops.

1904. The rainfall of the year was less than three fourths of the average at Baglan. The season

on the whole was poor both for the Kharif and the Rabi crops.

1905. The total rainfall of the year was a little above one half of the average at Baglan. The season on the whole was poor both for the Kharif and the Rabi crops.

1906. There was practically no rainfall from October onwards with the result that the Kharif crops lacked the requisite moisture in the end and were reduced in yield. While the Rabi sowings were retarded in many places and the young seedings withered away for want of sufficient moisture in the soil. The season on the whole was a fairly good Kharif but a poor Rabi.

1907. The total rainfall of the year was only about two thirds of the average at Satana. The season on the whole a poor Kharif and a poor Rabi.

1908. The rainfall during the year was some what above one half of the actual quantity. The season was a moderate Kharif a poor Rabi.

1909. The total rainfall of the year was about two thirds of the average at Baglan. The season on the whole was not much favourable in the Baglan Taluka.

1911. The total rain fall of the year was only two thirds of the average at Baglan. The season on the whole was poor.

1912. The aggregate fall of the year was a little above average at Baglan. The season on the whole was only moderate.

1913. The total rainfall of the year was slightly below the average at Baglan. The crops generally come out well but owing to lack of moisture at times in the season they did not come up to the normal.

1914. The season on the whole was almost fully normal.

1915. The Kharif and the Rabi crops returned almost a normal yield.

1916. The season on the whole was nearly normal.

1917. The season was only moderate owing to the uneven distribution of rains the crops suffered either from excess or deficiency at different periods.

1918. The total rain-fall of the year was much less than even one half of the average. The season on the whole was a failure for both the crops.

1919. The season on the whole was almost fully normal.

1920. The rainfall during the year was about two thirds the average at Baglan. The entire absence of rainfall from October onwards told seriously on the Rabi crops which eventually withered away in many places. The season was thus quite unsatisfactory.

1921. Rabi crops proceeded well in the beginning but suffered in places from lack of moisture later on. The season on the whole was fairly good.

1922. The rainfall during the year was slightly below the average in Baglan. The season on the whole was fairly good in the Baglan Taluka.

1923. There was practically no rainfall from October onwards and the Rabi crops proceeded well in the beginning on the strength of the moisture left by the September rain. They lacked the requisite at the time of maturity and were reduced somewhat in yield. The season on the whole was fairly good.

1925. The rainfall during the year was about the three fourths of the average at Baglan. The season on the whole was fairly good.

1926. The total rainfall of the year was only about three fourths of the average at Baglan. The season on the whole may be said to be a fairly good Kharif but if rain does not occur soon it is feared that the Rabi season may be poor generally.

### **Population.**

**Marathas.** They are the most important element in the population of the Taluka. They are very good cultivators.

**Malis.** They are found in considerable number all over the Taluka, especially in the irrigated part of it. Many of them worship Khandoba and Bahiroba. In honour of the God Khandoba they visit Jejuri in groups. On our way to Baglan we met a party of about 200 people consisting of men women and children and a number of bullock carts. On enquiry we found that they were going to Jejuri to pay their periodical visits.

**Kokanies** are emmigrants from Thana who are found in the Dangs. (Dang denotes the wild

and hilly tracts in Baglan where cultivation of the poorest kind is possible owing to the excessive rainfall and the consequent prevalence of malaria. They are found suffering yearly much from the feverish western climate. Nothing has been done to improve their wretched condition.

**Bhils** seem to have come into the Taluka from the Dangs. They were a strong active race but malaria and the evil of excessive drinking has played a havoc in them. It is interesting to note that in 1869 when the Baglan money lenders were pressing their debtors with the view of gaining a hold of their land armed groups of Bhils went from village to village plundering money-lenders.

**Kolies** are found amongst the hills. They grow hill grains. In 1845 they struck a panic into the Marwari Vanies. Their leader Raghoji gathered a band of Kolies and wandering through the district cut the nose of every Marwari he could lay hands on. The whole Marwari community fled in terror to the district centres.

### **Decrease in population.**

The census figures of 1911 show that the population of the Baglan Taluka was 69056, while those of 1921 give us the figures as 64798. The population of India as a whole has increased but we find that there is a decrease of 6 % in this Taluka. The density of population to the square mile is now 109 persons as compared with 115 at the time of the Revision Settlement in 1898. It was remarked by the Revision Settlement Officer in 1898 the available land fit for cultivation had all been

taken up. Against this we find that 50000 acres are lying fallow at present while the fallows previously amounted to only 15000 acres. This state of affairs may be attributed to de-population owing to epidemic, and, fevers and to migration which in many instances is the only alternative to semi-starvation or at least to scarcity.

**As for Education** the total number of pupils attending schools is 2531 out of which only 127 are girls. Thus only 4% of the total population are found receiving some sort of rudimentary Education. The figures of boys and girls of primary school age in this taluka are not available, but it is clear that the percentage of such as attend the school must be very low.

#### **Health.**

The close relationship between agriculture and the health of the cultivating population is obvious and they react upon each other to a remarkable degree. Economic wastage due to diseases can-not be over estimated. Not that malaria is slaying thousands in this Taluka; but it has been lowering the economic efficiency of many thousands, every year. Sanitation, in any accepted sense of the word, is practically non-existent. The public latrine is often the bank of a stream or the margin of a tank or a well. It has to be admitted that there is a close relation between nutrition problems and the stamina and the general well being of the people. The decrease in the number of milch cattle has resulted in mal-nutrition which in its train has brought on physical in-efficiency and ill-health.

### **Money-lenders.**

The whole of the Taluka is practically over-run by the Marwari, Gujar and Lad-shikka Bannias, money lenders, who are well known as shylocks with a bad name for stinginess and cruelty. Their thrift and greed of gain are proverbial. This class of money lenders never thinks whether his debtor is able to pay or not, but gets out of him what he can, whenever he can. The Ladsakkas are occupying the same place in many villages in Baglan, which the marwaries occupy in others.

### **Business methods.**

The poverty of the soil, the succession of bad seasons during the last 30 years, drive poor cultivators to these money-lenders for advances of grain for seed and for food in the beginning. The money-lenders advance readily small sums of money. Most of them being traders, or shop-keepers, they supply grains or other necessaries of life to the agriculturist, and when the debt accumulates they insist on a bond or the mortgage of the land of the agriculturist. Gradually the cultivator begins to become involved and the money lenders begin to press upon him. The result is that the mass of cultivators become tenants (quasi-slaves) while the money-lenders turn into land-lords.

It is no wonder therefore, that the money-lenders and the Inamdars should possess very large holdings in the Talukas. There are, for instance 179 holders, each of whom possess land from 100 to 500 acres. Again, there are 9 persons in the Taluka each of whom holds more than 500 acres of



land. These 188 persons hold among themselves 36503 acres of land. The Ladsakka, Marwari and Gujar classes of money-lenders are possessed of great wealth. Of these more than 10 pay over Rs.2000as assessment per year. Among these instances may be found who pay more than Rs. 10000 as assessment.

### Co-operation.

Before going into the details of the co-operative movement in this Taluka, it may at once be mentioned that in the present state of the country the moneylender is a necessity. The vagaries of monsoon, the deficiency in the rain-fall and above all, the ignorance prevailing in the masses drive them to borrow and unless something is done to improve their lot they will continue to borrow. The economic servitude having extended to its extreme, and the money-lender's grip being strong it is but natural that there should be a preponderance of Credit Societies in the Taluka. There are at present 42 Co-Operative Societies in Baglan of which 38 credit Societies. The other Societies are:—

Non-credit Society.....	1
Taluka Development Association....	1
Supervising union.....	1
Chambhar society.....	1

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Total.....42

The loans amount to Rs, 129000. The arrears are Rs. 49000, 14 societies have gone into liquidation, out of which 4 have very recently ceased to work.

### Assistance Suits

The number of assistance suits under the Land Revenue Code is as follows:

Year	No. of suits filed	Report on the season general
1923-24	194	The season was on the whole fairly good 1923.
1924-25	135	The season was fairly good on the whole 1924.
1925-26	120	The season was on the whole fairly good 1925.

Thus even in good seasons, the landlords had to institute assistance suits. Does it not show that the rents fixed must be very high; that the tenant-cultivators were unable to pay the rent and that the landlords who in the majority of cases were sahumars had to seek the assistance of courts.

### Shops, Industries etc.

As a sign of prosperity it is pointed out that there are four gins in the Taluka. Apart from the question as to how far it is an index of prosperity of cultivators it may be pointed out that in our enquiry we learned that one of them has been sold at heavy loss by the owner while the owner of another gin had to incur debt owing to his new adventure and is actually contemplating the disposal of the same. Leave alone the case of Steam Power, there is not a single rice husking machine, nor is there an Oil-Engine nor a Pump in the whole of the Taluka.

In the year 1898 there were 72 Oil-Presses and 21 hand-gins while in 1926 there were 69 Oil-Presses and 8 gins only. The only sign of prosperity (if at all it can be called prosperity) is the existence of 8 Liquor shops in the Taluka. It is impossible to give an accurate estimation of the illicit distillation, which we were told was being carried on extensively in the Taluka there being an abundance of Mahura trees in the western side.

The Settlement Officer remarks: "The manufacture of illicit liquor from Mhowra is carried on in practically every villiage." Finding themselves helpless and without any honest means of making a living, heavily burdened with modern taxation, the people driven by desparation and hunger have resorted to this risky business.

We are told by the Settlement Officer that Jajams as industry are made at Lohur, Satana and Nampur. We made anxious enquiries at Satana, and found that there were only half a dozen people engaged in the industry at Satana. He had however to admit that presses for crushing sugar-cane and pans for making joggery are reduced to half as compared with the figures of about 20 years ago. Formerly the rural industries could contribute a great deal towards reducing the heavy pressure on the land. When the cultivators required more money, the best occupation for the spare time was some domestic industry. It is often remarked that the cultivators have

great leisure at their disposal; but it has to be remembered that in these days of organized industries and increasing out-side competition, it is impossible for the small industries to survive, without some assistance from Government the old occupation of the villagers is taken away from them and yet no attempt is made to train them in something else that will supplement their slender means.

### Markets.

There is no Railway in or near Baglan. Satana, the head quarters of the Taluka is 60 miles from Nasik and 66 miles from Nasik-Road Station. It is 33 miles from Lasalgaon and 37 miles from Manmad. In an out-of-the way Taluka of this description, it is natural that villages should depend for their supplies on weekly market. Almost everything required by the people, grain, salt, spices, cloth, cooking vessels, cattle are offered for sale at the weekly markets. The dealers are chiefly Marwaries, Gujarathies and Ladsakka Vanies.

A reference to the Census figures of the Baglan Taluka for the past 30 years shows that the population has decreased to some extent.

1891	1901	1911	1921
65648	64645	69056	64798

It is surprising to find that the sales of all kinds of grains have increased to an enormous extent which lead to an irresistable conclusion that the people are not in a position to raise

food stuffs sufficient, for their use. They are required to buy them at greatly increased prices.

The following will show the comparative increase of sale of grains at weekly Bazzars at a few selected centres.

**Grains such as Jowari, Bajri etc. sold at the weekly Bazzars.**

	1898	1905	1925
Navapur	Rs. 430	Rs. 400	Rs. 600
Sātana	„ 509	„ 700	„ 1000
Mulher	„ 214	„ 300	„ 400
Jeykhed	„ 72	„ 125	„ 250
Taharabad	„ 25	„ 200	„ 350
Dang Saundana,,	8	„ 30	„ 50

Such a state of affairs is sure to lead the people to bankruptcy. It has been found in our enquiry that the Agriculturists every where in the Taluka are sinking deeper and deeper in debt.

Road bridges over nallas and rivers are too generally lacking. In addition to the inconvenience there-by occasioned to the traffic, material damage to the cultivators, cattle frequently results from the strain of dragging heavy loads up the precipitous slopes.

**Market Rates are often misleading**

The agriculturists complain that they do not obtain a fair share of the value of the produce in the market. There are a large number of middlemen (this may be due to some extent to bad communications) who, as a rule are tolerably secure in the enjoyment of their profit margins. Crop failures that may ruin a cultivator inflict no serious

injury to the business of the middle-man. Instances are found where the money-lender acts as a collector of the produce, and it is no wonder that he gets the cultivator into his grip so as to dictate his own prices.

### **Cotton**

It is said that the area under cultivation of cotton is increased. But it has to be remembered that the larger return for cotton due to increase in prices benefits a few middle-men while the grain prices affect the whole population especially the poor.

**Marketing of Cotton:**—The cultivators of Cotton when they take it to a market at Satana or some such centre suffer from the nefarious practices of the middle-men, some of which amount to nothing less than theft.

As soon as a cart approaches the Dalals or Brokers pounce upon it, take the samples (these samples consist of as much as five to eight seers from each cart) and negotiate with the merchants secretly. (it is usually done under a cloth) the sample is regarded as a perquisite of the merchant. When the cart is taken to the ginning factory for weighing, there again the merchants start complaining and claim a allowance in rates, on the protest that the Cotton is not up to sample, or is damp and so on. The poor and ignorant cultivator has under these circumstances no option but to accept the new low rate.

What has been described in some detail regard-

ding Cotton is applicable (with varying degrees) to other articles sent to the market for sale. 26

Thus it will be seen that what is officially described as 'rate' is scarcely the actual rate so far as the cultivators are concerned.

### **Sales, Leases etc.**

The 2nd Revision Settlement Report states:-  
 " Inquiry in individual villagers shows (1) that no good land held by cultivating owners lies waste, but that some land held by Saukers is not cultivated because extortionate rents are demanded. There is some very poor land which is occasionally cultivated but in most years lies fallow and is used for grazing cattle and the Babuls that spring up are used as fuel. Rotation follow is unknown in the Taluka and this land is not cultivated regularly but when convenient and the cultivated state that this occasional cultivation is sufficient to pay the assessment in all years. When asked why they do not relinquish the land they simply laugh. "

The truth about this appears to be that though such land does not yield any profit the villagers are passionately fond of retaining the same as it gives them status in the eyes of the village communities.

The Settlement Officer found the average proportion of land let to tenants to be 34.9 while 4 % was cultivated by hired labour. Even according to the Settlement Report 30 % of the assessment was actually being collected from non-cultivating owners.

Mr. Bristo says :—“ It is surprisingly high figure in an out-laying Taluka with no big towns and no large industries ”

The reasons are obvious. The Taluka is poor and in times of distress the people have got to go to money-lenders who gradually purchase the lands from the cultivators. It is therefore, quite evident that the sale prices of the lands do not represent the true value of the land. They are in most cases the amount written which is generally more than double the amount actually paid plus the accumulated interest on it.

The 2nd Revision Settlement Officer has entered into an elaborate discussion on the question of the amount paid by cultivators to their landlords as rent. According to him the question of the enhancement of the assessment hinges on the point namely that if the land-lord gets an increased share as rent the Government also is entitled to get a proportionate share as land revenue. He obviously proceeds on the assumption that the Government is the superior land-lord. Without entering into the much debated question whether land revenue is rent or a tax it will suffice for our purposes to state that situated as the cultivators are at present. They have got to take up lands for cultivation if not for the profit at least for bare subsistence on whatever terms they could get. It may be theoretically true that rent ought to be a share of the tenants net profit after he has pai



for the cultivation and his own maintenance. But what do we find in actual practice ? To a very great extent the cultivator labours not for profit, nor for a net return but for mere subsistence. The continued impoverishment of the land for centuries, the crowding of the people on the land, the lack of alternative means of securing a living, the difficulty of finding any avenue of escape continue to force the cultivators to grow whatever he can and on whatever terms he can. Considerations such as these lead us to believe that the best test of the productivity of land is not the rent which the tenants are willing to pay for it. One meal is better than none at all. Where his land has passed into the possession of his creditor, no legislation will serve his need; no tenancy law will protect him; for food he needs land; for land he must plead before a creditor, to whom he probably already owes more than the total value of the whole of his assets. That creditor is too often a landlord of a different class, either a Lad-Shikka vani, Marwari or a Gujar; who has no natural or historical connection with the estate and is only interested in the immediate exploitation of the property in his control. In our enquiry we were told that nearly  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the land of the Taluka belonged to the money lenders, either of the Lad-Shikka Vani class, a Marwari, or a Gujar. Selfish interest being their only culture for generations, cruelty and heartlessness are their only possessions. The Settlement Officer has classed the Inamdars and non-cultivating land owners as agriculturists. But

it has to be remembered that these well to-do classes invariably lend money. We refuse to endorse the statement of the Settlement Officer that the best test of the productivity of land is the rent which the tenants are willing to pay for it. The Settlement officer's basis of calculation is not quite correct ; he ought to have taken the annual value i. e. the gross produce minus the cost of production, including the value of labour, actually expended by the farmer and his family on the holding as the basis of assessment. We regret that in the absence of such basis the Settlement Officer should have wasted so much powder and shot in trying to prove by mathematical calculations that the Government is entitled to get the proposed enhanced assessment. We think that the time has come when Government should appoint a Committee to go into the question again. It is not that we are fond of unconstitutional methods but we very much fear that unless something is done by our non-Brahmin members in the Council to move the Government in the directions proposed by us the Bardoli methods will be repeated. If it is true that in 99 cases out of every 100 the assessment is raised as proposed by the Settlement Officer the people of the Baglan Taluka can not be said to be in the wrong in entertaining the apprehension that the so called '*established procedure*' and '*the Government's policy of full personal investigation by the Commissioner*' as described in a news paper report will lead the matter no further.

We found in certain Anglo-Indian news-papers a statement that 'in the ordinary course of events the report of the Settlement Officer was posted at the taluka head quarters for three months and land lords were invited by the collector to lodge their objections. No objections were lodged'- see the leading article of the Times of India dated 9-2-29.

In our enquiry we found that the land holders in the Taluka with Mr. S. G. Shevale, B. A. L. L. B. pleader and a land holder in the Baglan Taluka as their adviser sent in their protest. The objections to the increase were briefly drawn up and on printed forms and copies of the applications were submitted to the Collector, the Commissioner and one to His Excellency the Governor in Council.

### **Summary of conclusions**

There is a tragic contrast between the conditions in pre-British and British Rule. The Subha was studded with gardens, fields smiled with rich crops, mango-trees and palm trees with their high diadems proudly reigned, cottage industries thrived, taxation was light, hundreds of antelopes, hare and peacocks made this Subha their favourite resort, wild, rustic glee like the rugged hills of which the country is made was seen on every face; alas? What is the present condition? All over India population has increased, but in this Taluka it has greatly decreased; owing to excessive pressure on land it has been awfully impoverished; villages are deserted; rainfall has been

always scanty, the fatal clutches of foreign exploitation have stifled cottage industries. The Rayots are groaning under excessive taxation; the half-starved, half-naked farmer presents a pathetic appearance with a ghastly thought of the morrow engraved on his withered face. This once prosperous land is a heart-rending picture of desolation and poverty. To add to the misery liquor shops are playing a havoc.

Taking into consideration all these facts we conclude:—

- (1) The climate of the Taluka is unhealthy and malarial gets a large toll of lives every year.
- (2) Scarcity of rain persuades one to believe that the Reports of the Government Officers about a "fair season" are highly suspicious.
- (3) The Taluka is de-populated which goes to show that the soil is getting poorer and poorer.
- (4) The stamina of the people has gone down. The productivity has suffered.
- (5) There is very little education in the plains (Desh) and none at all in the hilly tracts (Dangs). This fact militates against any increase in the Land Revenue Assessment.
- (6) The pest of money lenders has already fleeced the farmers to the utmost and to make him pay more will be in-human.
- (7) No cottage industry thrives. The only means of livelihood is agriculture.

(8) The agriculturist is exploited by several middle-men. He never gets a fair market price.

(9) Increase in rent to the land lords is no ground for increase in land Revenue assessment.

(10) If there is an increase in the price of agricultural produce, there is also a gradual fall in the productivity of the soil.

(11) In few cases it is possible that by the sweat of their brow the farmers might have increased their profits. But these profits can never be swallowed by any civilized Government, because the result will be that the standard of living of the people will remain where it is. There will be no Nation building but Nation destroying.

(12) Already the taxation is unbearable and an increase in the land Revenue assessment is likely to drive people to desparation.

We are of opinion that any increase in assesement is unjustifiable.

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