

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

Francois Martin in the year 1699 adopted the financial regime initiated by the Dutch (during the 6 year occupation of this territory), from whom the French, East India Company obtained the rights of sovereignty over Pondicherry, though the French were here since 1673. As a result, in the place of Indian Kings or the Dutch. France became the sole proprietor of all the lands in Pondicherry.

Lands at that time were farmed out to renters. The renters, in turn leased to the ryots under “Adamanam” for “Varam” or “Thirvai” (Thirvai is fixed rent, Varam system – ryots cultivated for the farmer or the menter.)

In the year 1826 (October 26th) the French after they re-occupied Pondicherry (in 1816) an “Ordannance Royal” was issued. By this ordinance, the lands were to be perpetually farmed out to the Europeans enjoying all the rights of the French Citizen on condition that the land should be brought under cultivation.

The farmer with the help of the Ecrivain (Karnam / VAO) had to draw a contract (Patta) ryot wise indicating the extent of lands cultivated, tax due, share due to the ryots etc.

In the year 1828, the earlier ordinance of 1826 was repealed and another ‘Ordannance Royal’ was promulgated on 07-07-1828 to regulate the ownership of lands and collection of land tax. By this ordinance, the lands in Pondicherry region were divided into four categories.

- 1) Lands over which the Government / French had given away the right of ownership i.e. primarily the dwelling sites in Pondicherry town, manias in villages, lands given by Indian Princess or by the French for any specific service lands of the temples etc.
- 2) Land given to private persons retaining the right of ownership as “Adamanam” For these lands, taxes at the rate of 32 to 48 of average value of scrops were imposed.
- 3) Poramboke lands which could be sold be tender or on auction assigned with or without rent.
- 4) Lands, which do not come under other three categories, considered as public property.

The land tax was collected based on the “Payemache” (Old survey register with details of landowners, survey number, area in local measurements). Originally prepared in the year 1806, modified in 1830 for Bahour and Villianur, modified in 1818 and 18600 for Pondicherry and Ozhukarai.

Later on, a detailed survey “Cadastre” was ordered in respect of the lands in all the regions of the French regime and various land records were prepared.

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| Pondicherry | - | 1889 – 1910 |
| Karaikal | - | 1912 – 1920 |
| Mahe | - | 1929 – 1932 |
| Yanam | - | 1887 – 1890 |

Plan parcellaire - Village map

Tableau synoptique – a register showing the nature of lands (wet, barren), classification ownership (Patta / Poramboke) in serial order of survey number and corresponding payemache number, area (local and metric).

Matrice Cadastral – a register prepared pattadar wise for each village, were prepared and Surveillants du Domaine maintained these.

In the year 1970, the Pondicherry Settlement Act and Rules were passed and based on it fresh settlement operations were started in December 1971.