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History

THOMAS MUNRO A PIONEER IN REVENUE ADMINISTRATION IN MADRAS PRESIDENCY

KEY WORDS: Ryoths, ceded, Nizam, Munro, Bellary, governor, presidency, Madras, Bentinck

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ABSTRACT

Sir Thomas Munro, a prominent civilian and military officer in the East India Company. He served with his regiment in the fierce battle against Hyder Ali (1780-83A.D.) and later by Tippu Sultan (1790-92 A.D.) against the rulers of Mysore. In 1800 A.D. he was appointed in charge of the districts assigned by the Nizam of Hyderabad to Lord Wellesley, the British Governor, in lieu of payment to the Auxiliary Force. The districts thus abandoned by the Nizam are called ceded districts. The ceded districts consist of 37 talukas which provide an income of Rs 9 lakh per annum. Munro distributed these taluks to the southern taluks of Bellary district to his subordinate collectors. Munro proposed a plan of a permanent farming system for the seeded districts, which was likely to be extended to other districts as well. Under the plan, the existing estimate under the Farmer Settlement would be reduced by 25%, with further relief on land irrigated by machinery. Munro realized this and proposed in 1807 to estimate one-third of production. Bentinck identified Munro's knowledge of the then governor's revenue administration as virtually "unequal in presidency". The Madras government also accepted the justice of Munro's proposal, but was unable to implement it because the Court of Directors did not support him. Bentinck was also fired as governor. In October 1807 Munro resigned and returned to London. Munro returned to India and became the Governor of Madras.

INTRODUCTION

Sir Thomas Munro, a prominent civilian and military officer in the East India Company, was born on 27 May 1761, the son of Mr. Alexander Munro, a prominent businessman in Glasgow. His mother was Stark. Munro received his education at a grammar school and from the University of Glasgow. He was distinguished for his gentle and generous nature with the presence of great personal courage and mind. He initially wanted his father to enter the business, but in 1789 A.D. he was assigned to the infantry cadetship in Madras. He served with his regiment in the fierce battle against Hyder Ali (1780-83A.D.) And later by Tippu Sultan (1790-92 A.D.) against the rulers of Mysore. He was chosen as one of the four military officers on behalf of Bara Mahal, a part of the territory captured from Tipu. He continued in those responsibilities for seven years and learned the principles of survey and land valuation. This knowledge helped him in introducing the new land solution and implementing it throughout the Madras Presidency. In 1799 A.D., after the last fall of Tippu Sultan, he was given the task of restoring peace in Canara.

Munro in charge of Ceded Districts

In 1800 A.D. he was appointed in charge of the districts assigned by the Nizam of Hyderabad to Lord Wellesley, the British Governor, in lieu of payment to the Auxiliary Force. The districts thus abandoned by the Nizam are called ceded districts. These include Bellary, Anantapur, Kadapa and Kurnool districts of the Madras Presidency. Munro served as chief collector of the ceded districts for seven years from 1800 to 1807 A.D. He was assisted by four subordinate collectors - John Ravenshaw, James Cochran, Alexander Stadert and William Thackeray. It was during this time that he introduced the agrarian system in the said districts.

Effect of Munro' Administration on Ceded Districts

By the time the Seeded districts were transferred to the British, their situation was very deplorable. Robberies and extortions are common. There was no proper solution and the collection of revenue was entirely entrusted to the landlords, the polygamists, who waged destructive struggles in their area with the help of their armies. Managing such areas was therefore not an easy task, but Munro managed to raise and manage the situation on par. The ceded districts consist of 37 talukas which provide an income of Rs 9 lakh per annum. Munro distributed these taluks to the southern taluks of Bellary district to his subordinate collectors. He set up his headquarters in Anantapur. In the ceded districts Munro found that all the land belonged to the government and that revenue was collected from the ryoths through intermediaries, i.e. sarsildars, amildars or talukdars and village elders. The

farms were in the final stages of the harvest season when he was about to impact his first revenue settlement. So Munro instructed his assistants to continue the old policy and to settle the work of collecting revenue from the ryoths with the above intermediaries. At the same time he recommended a pay rise for Revenue Servants to enable them to work efficiently and honestly. In August 1801, at the beginning of Munro's second income year in the ceded districts, he ordered his assistant collectors to settle the land directly with each cultivator who had paid the lease to the government. Estimation is controlled by both land quality and cultivator condition. Revenue varied from 2/5 to 3/5 of production. Settlement should be annual in the early years. Munro suggested three methods to follow when making such a solution:

- (i) settlement with all the villages in a district and subsequently individual settlement with each resident in each village;
- (ii) Preparation of the village settlement of a village and then its individual settlement before moving to another village and
- (iii) starting by settling separately with each person in a village and then village settlement with their rent. The first of these methods is preferred over the other two.

Land Survey in Ceded Districts

The survey of the seeded districts began in June 1802. The survey is divided into two parts: (i) the measurement of land area and (ii) the actual cash rent estimate in each field. Detailed written instructions were given to everyone involved in the survey and the work was carefully inspected at each stage. While Munro was pushing for a survey for the agrarian settlement of the ceded districts, in other parts of the Madras Presidency, the permanent settlement system of Bengal was introduced.

Munro's Plan for permanent Roytwari Settlement in Ceded Districts

Munro proposed a plan of a permanent farming system for the seeded districts, which was likely to be extended to other districts as well. Under the plan, the existing estimate under the Farmer Settlement would be reduced by 25%, with further relief on land irrigated by machinery. This relief should be provided for all contingencies and no more will be allowed for bad crops or common type failure.

Principles of Ryotwari Settlement

The principles proposed by Munro Permanent Rhythmic Solution are as follows:

1. The settlement must be peasant.
2. The amount of settlement should be reduced or increased according to the area of land under cultivation
3. 25% discount on total land in survey rate assessment
4. An additional reduction of approximately 8% to 33% should be allowed on all lands irrigated by water collected from wells or by machinery from rivers.
5. Every Ryoth shall at the end of each year be free to throw a portion of his land or to occupy as much as is appropriate to his circumstances, but shall not be allowed to choose whether to throw or occupy, but to take or reject proportionately. Good and bad lands shares together.
6. As long as the rent of the land is payable every right should be regarded as the full owner of the land and should be free to allow the tenant to rent it out and sell it as he pleases without any hesitation.
7. No relief should be given in the general case for bad crops or other hazards. If the defaulters' property or crops that do not do well from the land fail, the village where they occur should be liable for an additional 10% on the rent of the remaining rights.
8. All unoccupied land shall be in the possession of the Government and any portion thereof which may be further cultivated shall be added to its rental public revenue.

Thus Munro proposed a non-mediated land settlement between the government and the Ryoths. Ryoths must be the owner of the land, who can sell or buy the land according to his ability. Ryoths are allowed relief in the event of crop loss and a 25% reduction in the survey rate on all lands and a reduction of 8% to 33% on all lands irrigated by wells and rivers. Income can be increased depending on the growth of land under cultivation. This is likely to increase government revenue on the land. At the same time the Ryoths are also free to profit from the land in case of increased production. According to Munro a peasant settlement has many benefits.

These are discussed below:

1. It is much simpler than the zamindari settlement because there is no mediator in the agrarian system and the relationship between the government and the rights is direct.
2. It produces a quarter and more law abiding population after the establishment of those who own large estates.
3. It is considered to be the best to promote the industry and promote the products in the country as it will create more employers.
4. The Ryoths had the opportunity to own his land and then improve it as tenants to the landlord.
5. Cultivation failure becomes less frequent by allowing income to increase or decrease each year and agricultural reserves grow faster. Fluctuations gradually decrease as the Ryoths become richer.

Munro's Proposal for Reduction in Land Tax

The survey lasted for five years. All types of land are measured except hills and rocks. All fields are entered. The survey is complete. The result of the survey on its completion is that the actual cultivable land area in the seeded districts is estimated at 32,03,850 acres and the cultivable land is estimated at 1,20,66,923 acres. The estimated area under uncultivated area is 18,52,955 pagodas and the total estimated area of cultivable area is 39,54,417 pagodas. Munro estimates that 45% of GDP is in demand, which is more than the country's total economic rent. Munro realized this and proposed in 1807 to estimate one-third of production. Bentinck identified Munro's knowledge of the then governor's revenue administration as virtually "unequal in presidency". The Madras government also accepted the justice of Munro's proposal, but was unable to implement it because the Court of Directors did not support him. Bentinck was also fired as governor.

Munro's Resignation

In October 1807 Munro resigned and returned to London. In 1808 the Board of Revenue decided to experiment with village leases in place of the Ryotwari settlement. Munro welcomed the victory in London with open arms. The Board of Revenue also commended him in writing in 1808, we believe, noting that the vast territory and revenue gradually diminished from confusion over the revenue anniversaries of this Presidency was not less than 11990419. Star pagodas can be collected regularly and at length with the relief of just one farmer twenty-two cash payments.

Renewal of Village Leases in Ceded Districts and their Effects

As soon as Munro left, village leases were introduced in the Said districts. It was thought that the villages would accept the leases as an entity, but as the expectations were high the leases were simply taken by speculators, the tenants were destroyed, the rights fell into poverty and the villages returned to the government. In Rayadurgtaluka alone, half of the Ryoths emigrated, many of the elders fell into poverty and many of them were sent to jail. Substantial ryoths in support of village agriculture are now undiscovered.

Realization of the British Government of the importance of Munro's Proposal

In the meantime, the permanent settlement reached between 1802 and 1805 with the ancient landlords, polygars and patriarchs showed signs of failure. Adverse season, overestimation, management error and extravagance are the reasons for its failure. As a result, many estates are in arrears within 10 years. The government has found 2 ways to pay these arrears. - (i) they have to attach these estates and maintain them for a few years and (ii) put these estates up for sale. In many cases they followed the previous course, but in most cases they had to resort to the next course. Thus by 1814 some of the oldest and most owned estates in Rajahmundry, Chingilput and Salem districts had been auctioned off and in many cases purchased by the government itself due to lack of proper bidders. The Court of Directors watched the affair with alarm. The state lost its legal revenue permanently through a permanent settlement. The Ryoths were left to the oppression and exploitation of the landlords. Graduation regulations have failed to protect the ryoths of growers. Under these circumstances all- the British Government, the Court of Directors and the Board of Revenue were convinced that the interests of the state as well as the interests of the agrarian classes could best be obtained only in the agrarian system. The system relies heavily on Munro's experiment in the Seeded Districts and his official report. In the same year, Munro returned to India and became the Governor of Madras. He was delighted to see his system working successfully for most of the presidency. The Court of Directors also commended his efforts in these words, saying, "It is important that our servants introduce and establish a farmer's settlement on the principle on which such settlements come into force. . We want to provide them with the best practical hints and tips from the official reports of Thomas Munro so keep up the good work. On June 15, 1815, Munro was promoted to the rank of Colonel. In 1820 the Board asked the Collector of Vizag to adopt the policy of Ryotwari on his estate. In 1822, Munro approved his earlier proposal to reduce the assessment in the Seeded districts and granted relief to other districts as well. In 1823, the Board directed that a similar system be introduced in Palakonda, Mongol, Belgaum, Kurupam and Merangitaluks. Many question the legitimacy of this method and say it violates the rules and regulations registered by the government with the landlords. In response, Munro stated that "the government has the right to change and improve the conditions of the people from time immemorial to formulate such regulations as may be necessary for the advancement of experience or for the advancement of human affairs." His bold arguments silenced the opposition. The system was also introduced in some estates affiliated and maintained by collectors or placed under the Court of Wards. In 1827, Munro wanted to return to his homeland, but he died of cholera while touring the

divided districts. In 1833, six years after his death, the board recommended to the government that a riot system be introduced throughout the estate. The government board agreed to the proposal.

CONCLUSION

Munro served India for about 47 years from 1780 to 1827 A.D. He last died in India. Among the British colonial administrators in India, Munro was an exception. Although he was a foreigner, he cared about the Indians, he was a just and kind and talented ruler. His military victory elevated him to the rank of Colonel. His experiment in the land system showed his administrative talent as well as his concern for the well-being of the rights. He worked hard to implement his Ryotwari system and to extend it to other parts of the Madras Presidency and his name is associated with the Ryotwari system. Subsequently, the agrarian system was also introduced in the Bombay Presidency.

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