



RESEARCH PAPER

Governance and Security: Codification and Utility of Security Camping Grounds during the British Empire in Undivided Subcontinent

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ABSTRACT

The instant research revolves around the utility of the military camping grounds for governance and security of the Empires. The history of military camping harks back to the times of Alexander for consolidation of his Empire, it was followed by the Muslim, Hindu and Sikh dynasties and the British Empire in the Subcontinent. The author utilized the techniques of secondary data collection like literature review and study of policy documents. For analysis of collected data, the author adhered to Correlations and Conduct Regression Analysis and Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) to plunge onto a two-pronged finding. Firstly, the military camping strategy really proved to be a key to success for various Empires. Secondly, this strategy was most practiced by the British in India but snowballed into a debate on nature of state land of these camps. The author, recommends out of court settlement for this predicament for progressive federalism in Pakistan.

KEYWORDS British Empire, Governance, Government of India Act 1935, British Military Camping Grounds, Security

Introduction

Agglomeration of efficient governance and strong security revealed to be a sine-qua-non for stability and consolidation of the states, empires and dynasties. Among the stratagems employed to secure their dominion and protect their lands from external and internal threats, great empires and dynasties ensured untarnished shield of defence. For this mission, various dynasties improvised their security systems with the establishment of the camping grounds, the sort of mobile military units motivated by the vision to find, hunt and eliminate the perilous elements. Started in the age of Alexander, a renowned military leader of the Greek Dynasty, the technique of deploying the military camps touched the culmination in the British rule in the Subcontinent. From facilitating strategic mobility to the vision of amplifying logistical efficacy, these military encampments have exerted an indelible influence on the security sector of the British Empire. Foremost amongst the benefits of military encampments is the orchestration of strategic mobility, facilitation of governance, promotion of peace, and elimination of security threats and encouragement of popular confidence building. Therefore, Sited wisely across expansive terrains of India, these encampments have, in epochs past of the British Age, expedited the expeditious deployment of military forces to nascent flashpoints, thereby consummating the potent projection of power and quelling incipient waves of insurrections. By dint of this strategy, being very cost effective and convenient, the British Governance became an unchallenged authority in the Subcontinent in its time. Ipso facto, the mere presence of these fortified bastions struck fear into the hearts of those ready for insurrections and external aggressions alike. Therefore, this psychological resonance actually bolstered the image of invincibility of the British security, thus giving great support stable and good governance in India. However, this governance of military camping sites unleashed a debate between the federal and the provincial governments of Pakistan that, who between the Central Government and the Provincial Government actually was the owner of the state lands of those British era

encampments? Both the Federal and the Provincial Governments have presented their own logics and facts, based on reason and history. Ergo, it should be depicted without hesitation that there is a dire need to place this predicament at the progressive mechanism of alternative dispute resolution.

History of Military Camping Sites

Establishment of military camps, for the purpose of ensuring security and defence against the foes, is not a new strategy. This governance-art of deploying the military, for the errand of security on the critical flashpoints, has remained strategy of militaries of all he ages. We shall now immerse into the history of military camping grounds, also shown in the chart drawn below, as practiced by various dynasties and civilizations of deployment of military camping grounds.

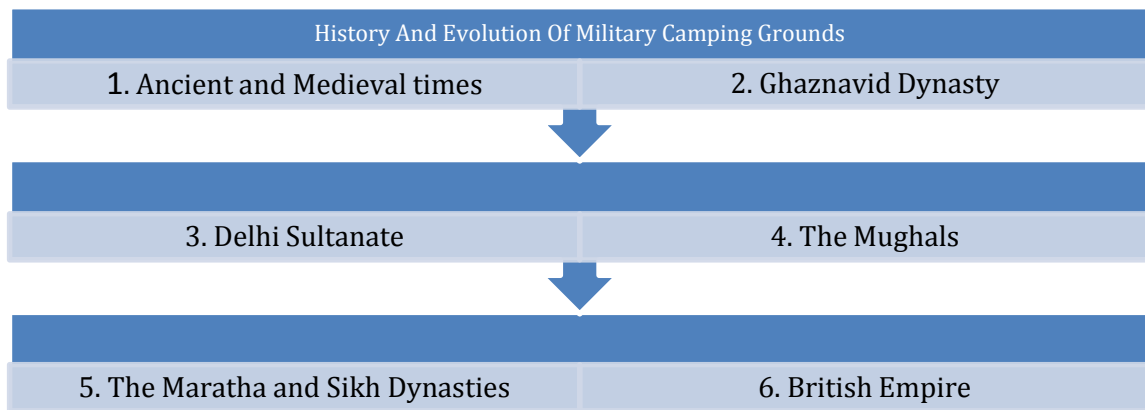


Figure 1: History of Military Camping Grounds

Ancient and Medieval History

Firstly, Alexander, a famous general of 4th Century BCE and a pupil of Aristotle, brought the Greek Civilisation to the highest minaret of glory due to his excellence in military skills (Bosworth, 1993). In all his famous military victories, he used the strategy of establishment of temporary military camping sites to annihilate the foe armies. These camping grounds, were utilized for the purpose of proper military organization, sustenance of forces, battlefield planning, driving out all misunderstandings among the military personnel and effective communication. In the Battle of Issus, Alexander established a fortified camping site in present day Turkey before the inception of battle against Darius III, the king of Persia. In the Siege of Tyre, conquest of Babylon and tough campaign in India, Alexander made his military camping sites for security and facilitation of his army before the attack on opponents. These military camps not only worked as military planning zones before the battles, but also proved to be the bastions of defence for consolidation of control over the conquered land. In the history of Islamic conquests, the battle of Babylon (Akram, 1977) in seventh Century, a furious military engagement with the Byzantine Empire, witnessed the strategy of placement of military camping site for more than six months.

The Ghaznavid Dynasty Camping Strategy

Based in Ghazni, Afghanistan, the Ghaznavid Dynasty spearheaded multiple military invasions on India (Roos-Keppel, 2020). During such campaigns, the Ghaznavids, established a lot of military camping sites for the purpose of territorial expansion and political control. During his campaigns of the Punjab, Sindh, Northern India, Gujrat, Eastern India and Khyber, Mahmood Ghaznavi established various military camps in Lahore and Multan, in Sindh, in Bihar, in Gujrat, in Bengal and Khyber respectively. To clinch, Mahmood Ghaznavi utilized these military camping sites for military planning, strategic maneuvering and swift movements to support his operations.

Delhi Sultanate Camping Mechanism

In the days Delhi Sultanate period (13th to 16th century A.D), the Muslim rulers adhered to formation of military camping points for the deployment of armed forces to consolidate their power and to deter the foreign threat of invasions. In the famous first and second Battles of Tarain in 1191 and 1192 respectively against Prithviraj Chauhan (Khan, 2009), the Ghurids established military camping sites for their defence. In the Battles of Chandawar and Meerut and military operation in Deccan, the Ghurids established several military camping sites, shaping the region's political and territorial dynamics during that era.

The Mughals and Camping Art

The trend of military camping sites however gained a pendulous momentum during the reign of the Mughal Empire (16th to 19th century). These camping sites, working as mobile military and security units, not only gave impetus to new territorial expansions but also contributed generously to the consolidation of the Mughal Empire. The Mughal monarchs conducted multiple campaigns across subcontinent (de la Garza, 2016), and used the strategy of establishing military camps for execution of such operations. Babur, the founder of the Mughal Dynasty, used the strategy of camping sites in the famous Battle of Panipat in 1526 for strategic planning. Puissant Mughal Emperors like Akbar and Aurangzaib established military points in Golconda in the Deccan campaign. Akbar, in the siege of Fortress of Chittorgarh, established military camping site in the area. In The Second Battle of Panipat in 1556, the Mughals established military camping sites to defeat their enemies. The strategy of deploying armies on flashpoints saw the pinnacle during the Mughal Wars against the Marathas, the Sikhs and Ahmad Shah Abdali's invasion.

The Marathas and the Sikhs Camping Policy

The Marathas used the strategy of deploying military in camps against the Nizam of Hyderabad, against the Mughals and against the British. Similarly, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the ruler of Sikh Empire, engaged in campaigns to consolidate control over the Punjab region. He, too like the Marathas, established military camps in the North Western Frontier in Anglo-Sikh Wars and in Kashmir during his rule. It is an irrefutable fact that both the Maratha Empire and the Sikh Empire displayed their martial prowess and achievements. For the duo, the establishment of military camps was integral to their strategic military planning, reconnaissance mechanism, troop organization, and successful execution of military operations, contributing to the history and legacy of both empires during their respective periods of power.

The British Era: Culmination of Military Camping

The crescendo of military strategies in the Sub continent ascended the meridian during the British colonial era (Peers, 2013). The British Government, in the Indian subcontinent, by virtue of establishment of military camping sites ensured best security strategies against the contemporary standing menaces to their colonial control in the form of burgeoning uprisings and xenophobia-driven-ambushes. The British Government, therefore established multiple military camps along with many cantonments across the region to house troops, conduct training, and manage their military operations (Bhatia, 2008). The British Government made following cantonments and military camping points for their defence in the Subcontinent:

i. Cantonments and military bases: The British constructed Rawalpindi Cantonment, Lahore Cantonment, Multan Cantonment, Peshawar Cantonment, and Sikandarabad Cantonment in modern India.

ii. Camping grounds: These camping grounds really provided great support to the British Government Army: Meerut, Jullundur, Sikandarabad, the camping site in Mhow, Madhya Pradesh, Ferozepur, Pune; Deolali Camp in Maharashtra, Ambala, Solapur and Kamptee.

Utility of Military Camping Grounds

As seen in the figure 2, the camping grounds had great utility for the security and governance sectors of the British

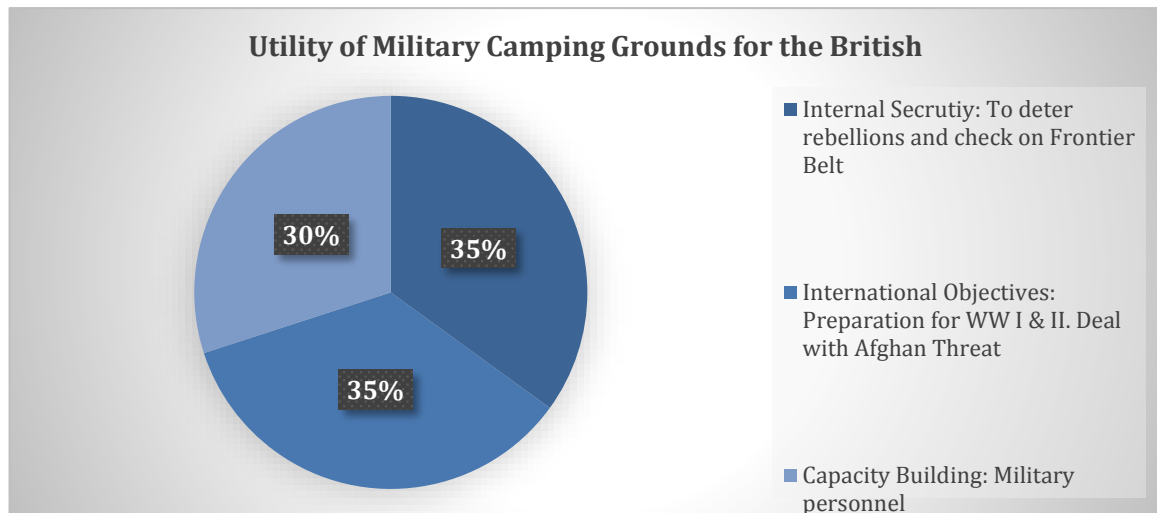


Figure 2: Utility of Military Camping Grounds for the British

1. **The Sepoy Mutiny of 1857:** The British used their military camps to suppress the rebellion (Freedom War) of 1857, caused by the indigenous people of the Subcontinent. These military points provided great vantage ground to the British to reestablish their control (Bhatia, 2008).

2. **Suppression of Frontier Campaigns:** The British had very well organized military camps in the Frontier region to suppress the smoldering embers of conflicts along the north-western frontier and tribal belt.

3. **Capacity Building of British Indian Army:** As the British Empire became an unchallenged authority of its time (Bhatia, 2008), it had limited foreign threats but internal perils, ranking out of anti-colonial aspects. For this purpose, military camps were used for training and equipping the soldiers of the British Indian Army, playing a crucial role in maintaining order of the Empire. These Military camps provided accommodation for the British and the indigenous Soldiers.

4. **Strategic Outposts:** Most of the military camping sites were in those areas, marked with great geo-strategic and security significance. These military camping points, after very careful security analysis, were placed near to key trade routes, administrative centers, potential outbreak zones and transportation hubs. Hence, the British, in order to project their power and to maintain law and order, established these military camps on such strategic locations.

5. **Infrastructural Development:** It is an untarnished fact that the British era really transformed the Subcontinent governance and development in the shape of infrastructural development, telegraph communication and construction of roads and railways (Bhatia, 2008). This however was driven by an agenda to facilitate the response time of the law enforcing agencies at the face of incipient wave of anarchy and internal threat. For construction of all that, military camping grounds proved really fruitful. These military camps further provided security to British officials and officers during their movement and

transportation. The Military camps also used to provide logistic support to the Royal Army in the shape of storing supplies, facilitating troop movements and organizing transportation.

6. Combating the Peril of the World Wars: In the times of World War I (1914-1918) and the World War II (1939-1945) the British Government incepted multiple military camping grounds, driven by the vision to employ, train, develop and deploy the military personnel among the indigenous Indians to support the British suzerainty in the global wars.

7. The Afghan Threat: The threat of Afghanistan, after the first two Anglo-Afghan Wars, virtually loomed like the sword of Damocles over the neck of the British Government. Therefore, the British Army made military encampments on all crucial flashpoints, abutted by the North-Western Frontier belt.

8. Display of Military Prowess: The British, with the vision to display their military prowess, established military camps to hoist the flag of authority and power. Those military camps served as the red zone for the aggressors in the Empire and provided the utility of devouring the potential rise of the locals against the British suzerainty. In fact, these units morphed into the bases to quell the elements of dissent and disorder in the Empire in India.

9. Reconnaissance and Intelligence: The Military camps were the fortresses of intelligence and reconnaissance activities, necessary for the maintenance of law and order in the British Empire. Those camps allowed the British to keep an eye on all recent developments and trends of security in the Sub-Continent.

10. Deterring External Threats: The ascendancy of the British Prowess in the World did not result in their laxity. They constructed military camping points near to the strategic locations to deter the infiltration of the foreign foe.

Feasibility of the Camping Sites:

In today’s Pakistan and India, the British Government established hundreds of military camping sites (Bhatia, 2008). Those sites provided the British with the utility to serve strategic, tactical, logistical, military and administrative purposes for safeguarding its security interests. The British Government made both the military camping sites and cantonments, based on the nature of their military formation, targets and element of time. The camping sites virtually played the role of mobile cantonments for the defence of the British. Due to following advantages the British really adhered to formation of the military camping zones:



Figure 3: Benefits of Military Camping Grounds for the British

1. **Flexibility:** The Military camps during the British time were actually mobile in nature, flexible enough to swiftly change the position of deployment for the mission to quell revolt, to spearhead a military campaign and to defeat anarchist elements in the Empire. That abrupt change of location was not possible through permanent cantonments. The military camps proved really useful for tactical moves against any unruly element.

2. **Reduced Initial Costs:** Establishment of the military camps was quite favorable for the British as it really required very limited infrastructural costs in comparison to the mammoth construction costs needed in the permanent cantonments.

3. **Adaptability:** Military camping, in essence, allowed the British to adapt to changing security situation and operational needs, in dissonance with the long-term commitment associated with permanent cantonments.

Drawbacks of Camping Sites

The camping sites, despite provision of manifold utilities to the British Government, were not devoid of some serious drawbacks. These challenges were the following:



Figure 4: Drawbacks of Military Camping sites for the British

1. **Logistical Challenges:** However, the camping sites unleashed some serious problems for the British Government. The camping sites, being the temporary arrangements, were devoid of proper infrastructure for storing supplies and supporting large military forces beyond a certain limit of time, leading to potential logistical predicaments. Those camps lacked the stability permanence, thus adding hurdles to efficient administration, supply-management, and troop-organization.

2. **Limited Facilities:** The Military camps, really lacked basic facilities of long term accommodation of the troops. In the camps, the soldiers were not provided proper facilities for training, dietary arrangement, sports or recreational infrastructure, rehabilitation centers, medical facilities and development opportunities.

3. **Less Institutional Development:** The temporary nature of camping sites, actually limited the establishment of puissant institutions, strong communication networks, and much needed community interactions that cantonments, on the other hand could provide. Unlike the permanent cantonments, those military camping sites were devoid of all those utilities that were necessary for long term military deployment such as administrative

buildings, adequate infrastructure, barracks, training fields and hospitals. Permanent cantonments, on the other side of the picture gave impetus to popular development, civil safety, trade-facilitation and efficient governance. Still, it should be depicted with no qualms that those military camping sites provided such military and tactical services that as could not be achieved by virtue of establishment of cantonments. For law and order, public safety, protection of the British rule and governance- development the British camping grounds played pivotal role.

Governing Authority of the Camping Sites

After the creation of Pakistan and India, a debate snowballed into an issue that who actually should be the owner of the camping sites? Whether the camping grounds, formed in provinces, belonged to the regional units or those camping sites belonged to the Federal Government. This debate is quite logical as during the British Era the Sub Continent saw the legal revolution in which hundreds of new laws were framed by the British Parliament. Unlike the times of the Ghaznavids and the Sikh Dynasty, the British-ruled-Subcontinent witnessed the heyday of rational-legal and structural administration. In that British time, the concept of segregation of private and state land came into existence. The State land was administered under the provisions of Colonization of Government Lands Act 1912 (The British Parliament, 1912) whereas the private land was administered under Land Revenue Act 1887(The British Parliament, 1887). For the purpose of greater national objective either the land, used for the military camping sites, was state land or the private lands were acquired, in the former case the relevant laws were incorporated in the form of Colonization of Government Lands Act 1912, while in the later scenario the legal effect could take place through implementation of Land Acquisition Act 1894(The British Parliament, 1894). Once the lands were taken in possession by the British Military that were either to be mutated, if the lands fell in the agricultural zone under Land Revenue Act 1887, or to be registered, if the lands were in the urban areas under the provisions of Registration Act 1908 (The British Parliament, 1908). The issue in hand is that after the Government of India Act 1935 the Subcontinent saw the dawn of unprecedented federal system, with strong central government as well as the puissant provinces. This implies that the lands utilized for the camping sites must be the property of the provincial governments of the then undivided India, given under special contract to the Federal Government since the Land Acquisition Collectors were custodian of the state land under their provincial jurisdictions. Whereas the proponents of strong federal subjects advocate that since Defence was a federal government subject of the British the Federal Government must be the owner of the lands of the camping grounds. These lands must be acquired by the then British Military from the provincial governments. We shall now discuss this important debate in detail.

Nomenclature of the State Lands

In the Subcontinent, the state lands provided a threefold- nomenclature, owned by or belonging to the government, in the title column of the revenue records. Those three types of state land were the following:

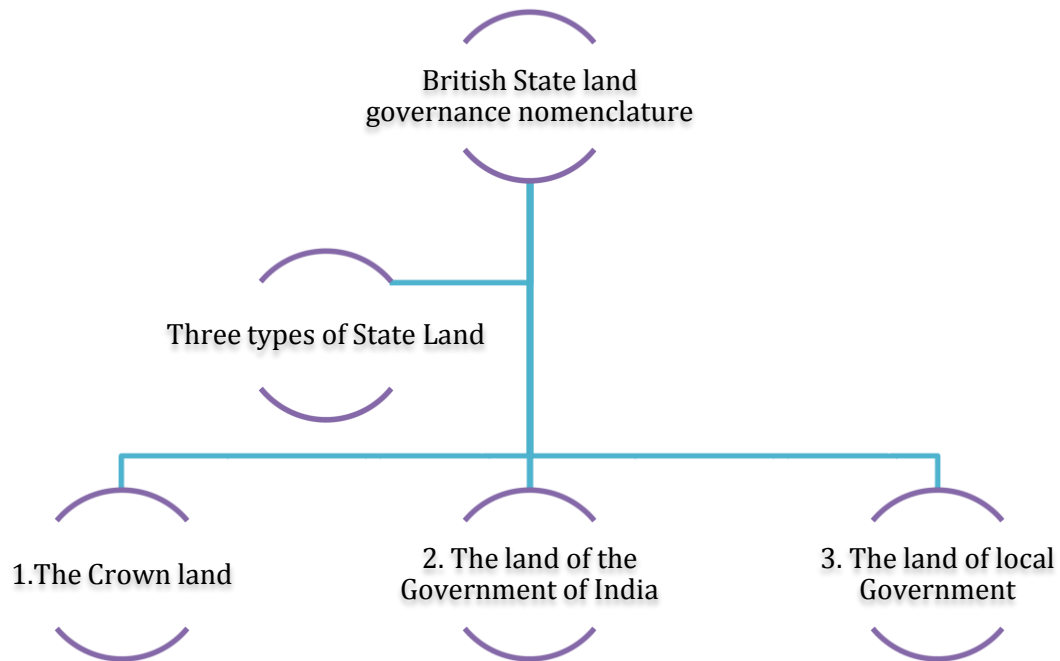


Figure 5: Nomenclature of the State Land in the British Era

- i. Sarkar Daulatmadar (the Crown land):
- ii. Sarkar (the land of the Government of India).
- iii. Sarkar-e-Maqami (the land of local governments)

It is quite interesting to note that at the time of the British regime in the Subcontinent, there was no concept of the Provincial Governments. However, provincial governments saw their inception with the promulgation of the Government of India Act 1935. Since the Act of 1935 was federal in character it empowered the provincial governments by virtue of providence of more powers and much needed governance subjects. Moreover, the British Government provided certain pieces of lands to the Royal military for the purpose of establishment of the camping grounds, the federal force representing the federal subject. Those camping grounds were retained by the Governor General, the Federal office-bearer.

Camping Grounds in Codified British Record

The Camping Grounds, as enunciated earlier, were used for the purpose of security and consolidation of the British Empire. Those camping grounds in the revenue record of the British Government were included in two categories of Crown Land (Sarkar Daulatmadar) and Land of the Government of India (Sarkar). In both the cases, there was no column of the provincial government land in revenue record at that time. In the possession column of Periodical revenue record register (called as Jamabandi) of 1905-1906, the camping grounds lands remained under the possession of the Federal Government of British India. That ownership of the camping grounds lands by the Federal Government remained unchallenged till 1934-1935.

- i. 1935 Act and status of lands

With the epilogue of the Government of India Act in 1935, the ownerships of a number of lands belonging to the federal camping grounds were shifted to the local Government. Similarly, with the inception of provincial autonomy caused by 1935 Act, many lands of the camping grounds were transferred or mutated to the Punjab Government. This eventually resulted in the change of ownership of the lands of the military camping grounds

from the Federal State land to the Provincial State land afterwards in the revenue record i.e. Periodical Record Register (Jamabandi).

ii. The legal debate continued:

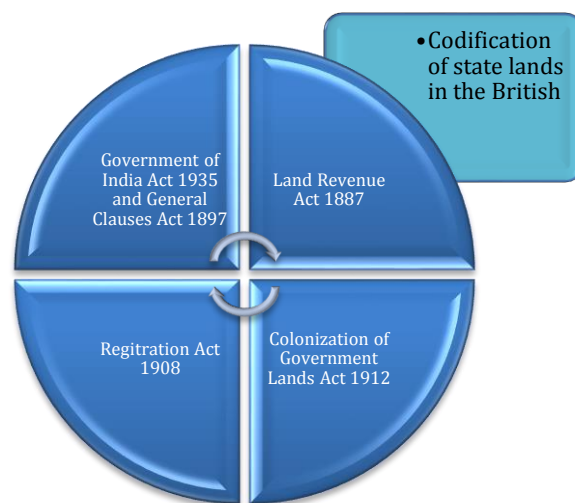


Figure 6: Codification of State Lands by the British Government

Soon after the inception of Pakistan, the provinces of the Punjab, erstwhile KPK, Sindh and Balochistan declared the lands of camping grounds as provincial state lands and mutated the same in the revenue columns under the head of provincial state land (Government of Pakistan, n.d).

a. Stance of the Federal Government: The Federal Government says that the term as mentioned in the nomenclature of state land as Sarkar Daulatmadar (the Crown land) connotes the state land of the Federal Government. As such lands were for the purpose of defence and internal security which were entirely federal subjects at that time.

The proponents of Federal Government associate the term Sarkar Daulatmadar' with 'Sarkar' which connotes the Central Government at the time before the inception of the Government of India Act 1935. This point was further corroborated by the High Court Sindh (Sindh High Court, n.d) that the term Government (Sarkar) as mentioned in the General Clauses Act (The British Parliament, 1897) connoted Government of India. Moreover, this school of thought drives its strength from the legal adage or principle that "possession is nine/tenth of law" (Rains, 2014) and (Draxes, 1976) as the Federal Government has been the occupant of the said lands since the British times. It further enunciates that the term Sarkar Daulatmadar (The Crown Land) is crystal clear in expression, manifestly connoting the Central Government. It also declares that the Central Government is always superior to Provincial Governments if conflict of interest arises (The US Congress, 1787) between the two. The Federal Government is of the view that before the promulgation of the Government of India Act 1935 (British Parliament, 1935) the Government of India had a unitary form. Ipso facto, there was no such thing as the properties belonging to the Provinces. It further argues that, those properties fell under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of State-in-Council, a primarily federal in nature. The Federal Government quotes sections 127,172 and 175 of the Government of India Act, 1935 (British Parliament, 1935) which state respectively that:

- Section 127 stipulates "The Federation may, if it deems it necessary to acquire any land in Province for any purpose connected with a matter with respect to which the Federal Legislature has the power to make laws"(British Parliament, 1935)

- Section 172 enunciates “All lands and buildings which immediately before the commencement of Part III of this Act were vested in His Majesty for the purposes of the government of India”(The British Parliament, 1935)
- Section 175 elucidates “ the grant, sale. disposition or mortgage of any property vested in His Majesty for the purposes of the government of the Federation or of the Province as the case may be”

Into the bargain, the Federal Government, resorting to Paragraph 7.42 of the Punjab Land Records Manual, 1935 (British Parliament, 1935) enunciates that all lands falling under the category of state land before the promulgation of Government of India Act 1935, were placed in revenue column of simply federal state land after the village common land column.

b. Stance of the Provincial Governments: The provinces are of the view that the term Sarkar Daulatmadar (the Crown Land) connotes the state which meant the provinces. The provincial Governments quote the term Sarkar Daulatmadar (the Crown Land), as mentioned in the Punjab Land Revenue Act of 1887(The British Parliament, 1887) where the word State Government defines the Government of Punjab, thus the term, according to them means state government. Moreover, the Provincial Governments take support from the communication of Financial Commissioner in 1939 on further categorization of the state lands (Financial Commissioner, 1939). This order of Financial Commissioner enunciated that the word ‘Sarkar’ in the revenue record should be changed into either the Central Government or the Provincial Governments. In this way, the lands belonging to the Central and Provincial Governments should be placed under either of the category based on category (Financial Commissioner, 1939). The Provincial Governments also present logic that the Section 172 of Government of India Act 1935 was annulled by the Governor General’s order in 1947(Governor General,1947) and the article 221 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan 1956, the Government of India Act 1935 itself was abrogated in Pakistan(The National Assembly, 1956).

iii. Synthesizing the views:

It is known to all and sundry, as corroborated by uncontroversial revenue records that the majority of Camping Grounds remained in possession of the Federal Government till the promulgation of the Government of India Act 1935 (British Parliament, 1935). The camping grounds, being extremely important for the law and order and state security, were made by the British Government. Their possession however, remained with the Central Government as there was no concept of federalism in the Subcontinent until the promulgation of the Government of India Act 1935. Although, it is crystal clear that the Act provided the federal form of Government, with assured provincial autonomy. In this way the Provincial Governments after the introduction of 1935 Act started making their claims over such lands used by the Federal Government. If we coalesced together the facts brought to light by both the Federal and the Provincial Governments, it should be depicted with no qualms that a legal battle has now snowballed, with providence of logic from either sides. Ipso facto, there is a dire need of time to have an out of court settlement, based on dialogue and logic between the federal and provincial governments to avoid any inconvenience.

Conclusion

It is axiomatic in summation that, for great empires, the establishment of too many cantonments for the purpose of security required heavy financial resources. Thus, from the times of Alexander to the reign of the British, the world saw the application of the defence technique of military encampments, which actually not only proved highly mobile in nature but also allowed strategic maneuvering at the eleventh hour. The advantages of military encampments, sprung up for the British security revealed to be manifold, weaving a rich tableau of strategic advantages for the empire. In addition, by virtue of the orchestration of

strategic mobility for the fortification of logistical tenacity, for the inculcation of discipline, for the dissemination of psychological influence and for the cultivation of patriotic verve, those encampments have left an indelible mark upon the mosaic of imperial history of the British in the Sub continent. The economic grandeur of the British Government, marked with good governance and the heyday of development, was the result of the unfaltering security and defence of the Empire. These military camps really helped the British government in dealing with the waves of various insurrections and looming threats. More interestingly, with the introduction of new laws for governing India gave inception to categorization of state lands into three categories: the Crown Land, the Government of India Land and the Local governance lands that however did not include the provinces as at that time the flag of unitary system was hoisting in the undivided India. With the promulgation of the Government of India Act 1935, the Subcontinent basked in the sunshine of provincial autonomy, resulting in the introduction of the concept of provincial government state land. That delegation of power to the provinces resulted in the change of formation of the revenue records and provided specialised columns for entries of Central and Provincial Government State lands, fanning the flames of a controversy that who was the owner of those state lands: the Central or the Provincial Government? Each party has its own logic and points for corroboration of facts.

Recommendations

Springing up of the debate between the ownership of the state lands of the military encampment during the times of the British Age, a debate has taken effect after the inception of Pakistan. In this way, for smooth transactions and resolutions of every kind of syndromes in revenue record issues, there is a dire need to ensure out of court alternative dispute resolution to save time and energy of the government of Pakistan.

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