

KARNATAKA VILLAGE OFFICES ABOLITION ACT, 1961

14 of 1961

[29th DECEMBER, 1959]

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STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS KARNATAKA ACT No. 14 OF 1961 Karnataka Gazette, Extraordinary, dated 29-12-1959 In pursuance of the Government policy of abolition of intermediaries, it is considered desirable to abolish all the hereditary village offices, viz., Patels, Shanbhogs, Kulkarnis and inferior village servants in order to put the Revenue Administration at the point where it touches the people most, in consonance with the modern spirit. Moreover, these offices are a relic of the old feudal system and Government considers that the time has come to abolish them. The present Bill, therefore, provides for the abolition of hereditary

village offices. Sub-clause (3) of Clause 1 of the Bill would enable Government to proceed with the abolition of these hereditary village offices in stages. This is essential because the abolition of these offices and the replacement by stipendiary ones involves large financial commitments and other administrative problems. Clause 4 of the Bill provides for the abolition of all hereditary village offices together with their incidents. It provides for the resumption of all lands granted or continued in respect of or annexed to hereditary village offices by the State and makes them liable to land revenue. Clause 5 provides for the regrant of the resumed lands to the holder of the village offices. Clause 6 of the Bill provides for the regrant of the resumed lands to authorised holders. In order to obviate any hardship caused to persons holding unauthorisedly any land resumed under sub-clause (3) of Clause 4, provisions have been made in Clause 7 permitting Government to regrant resumed lands to the unauthorised holders on certain conditions. Clauses 10 and 11 of the Bill provide for the payment of compensation to the holder of village offices. The other clauses provide for preferring of the appeals against the awards made by the Deputy Commissioner, framing of rules, saving of obligations and liabilities, etc.

1. Short title, extent and commencement :-

(1) This Act may be called the Karnataka Village Offices Abolition Act, 1961.

(2) It extends to the whole of the State of Karnataka.

(3) It shall come into force on such date as the State Government may, by notification, appoint.

2. Definitions :-

(1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires.

(a) "Appointed date" means the date appointed under sub-section (3) of Section 1;

(b) "Authorised holder" means a person in whose favour a land granted or continued in respect of, or annexed to, a village office by the State or a part thereof has been validly alienated permanently, whether by sale, gift, partition or otherwise, under the existing law relating to such village offices;

¹[(c) "Code" means the Karnataka Land Revenue Act, 1964;]

(d) "Deputy Commissioner" means an officer appointed by the State Government in respect of any area to perform the functions and exercise the powers of the Deputy Commissioner under this Act, and where no such officer is appointed, the Deputy Commissioner of the District;

(e) "Emoluments" means.-

(i) lands,

(ii) assignments of revenue payable in respect of lands,

(iii) fees in money or agricultural produce,

(iv) money salaries and all other kinds of remuneration, granted or continued in respect of, or annexed to, any village office, by the State;

²[(ea) "Enfranchised inam" means an inam of which there is proof of enfranchisement as required under the Madras enfranchised, Inams Act, 1862 (Madras Act IV of 1862);]

(f) "Existing law relating to a village office" includes any enactment, ordinance, rule, bye-law, regulation, order, notification, fireman, hukum, vat hukum or any other instrument or any custom or usage having the force of law, relating to a village office, which may be in force immediately before the appointed date;

(g) "Holder of a village office" or "Holder" means a person having an interest in a village office under an existing law relating to such office:

Provided that where any village office has been entered in a register or record under an existing law relating to such village office, as held by the whole body of persons having interest in the village office, the whole of such body shall be deemed to be the holder;

(h) "Inferior Village Officer" means every village office of lower degree than that of a Patel or Village Accountant;

(i) "Notification" means a notification published in the official Gazette;

(j) "Officiator" means the person actually performing the duties of a village office, whether he be a person having a right to perform the duties of such office or a substitute appointed under the existing

law relating to such office;

(k) "Prescribed" means prescribed by rules made under this Act; ³
[(1) "Tenancy Law" means the Karnataka Land Reforms Act, 1961;]

(m) "Unauthorised holder" means a person in possession of a land granted or continued in respect of or annexed to a village office by the State without any right, or under any lease, mortgage, sale, gift or any other kind of alienation thereof, which is null and void under the existing law, relating to such village office;

(n) "Village office" means every village office, to which emoluments have been attached and which was held hereditarily before the commencement of the Constitution under an existing law relating to a village office, for the performance of duties connected with the administration or collection of the revenue or with the maintenance of order or with the settlement of boundaries or other matter of civil administration of a village, whether the services originally appertaining to the office continue or have ceased to be performed or demanded and by whatsoever designation the office may be locally known.

(2) The other words and expressions used but not defined in this Act shall have the meaning assigned to them in the Code.

1. Clause (c) substituted by Karnataka Adaptations of Laws Order, 1973.

2. Clause (ea) inserted by Act No. 27 of 1984, w.e.f. 4-5-1984.

3. Added by Ad. No. 13 of 1978, w.e.f. 7-8-1978.

3. Powers of Deputy Commissioner to decide certain questions and appeals :-

(1) If any question arises-

(a) whether any land was granted or continued in respect of or annexed to a village office by the State, or

(b) whether any person is a holder of a village office, or

(c) whether any person is an authorised holder, or

(d) whether any person is an unauthorised holder, the Deputy Commissioner shall, after giving the party affected an opportunity to be heard and after holding an enquiry in the prescribed manner decide the question.

(2) Any person aggrieved by such decision may file an appeal to

the District Judge of the District within ninety days of such decision and the decision of the District Judge on such appeal shall be final.

¹ [The provisions of Sections 4, 5, 12 and 14 of the Limitation Act, 1963 (Central Act 36 of 1963) shall be applicable to such appeal.]

1. Added by Ad. No. 13 of 1978, w.e.f. 7-8-1978.

4. Abolition of village office together with incidents thereof :-

Notwithstanding anything in any usage, custom, settlement, grant, agreement, sanad, or in any decree or order of a Court, or in an existing law relating to village offices, with effect on and from the appointed date,-

(1) all village offices shall be and are hereby abolished;

(2) all incidents (including the right to hold office and the emoluments attached thereto, the right to levy customary fees or perquisites in money or in kind and the liability to render service) appertaining to the said village offices shall be and are hereby extinguished;

(3) subject to the provisions of Section 5, Section 6 and Section 7, all land granted or continued in respect of or annexed to a village office by the State shall be and is hereby resumed, and shall be subject to the payment of land revenue under the provisions of the Code and the rules and orders made thereunder as if it were an unalienated land or ryotwari land.

5. Re-grant of land resumed under Section 4 to the holder of the village office :-

(1) A land resumed under clause (3) of Section 4 shall, in cases not falling under Section 6 and Section 7, be granted to the person who was the holder of the village office immediately prior to the appointed date (hereinafter referred to as the holder) on payment, by or on behalf of such holder to the State Government, of the occupancy price equal to three times in the case of holders of inferior village offices and six times in the case of holders of other village offices, the amount of the full assessment of such land within the prescribed period and in the prescribed manner and the holder shall be deemed to be an occupant or holder of a ryotwari patta within the meaning of the Code in respect of such land and shall primarily be liable to pay land revenue to the State Government from the appointed date in accordance with the

provisions of the Code and the rules and orders made thereunder; and all the provisions of the Code and the rules and orders relating to unalienated land or ryotwari land shall, subject to the provisions of this Act, apply to the said land:

Provided that in respect of land which was not assigned under an existing law relating to the village office as the remuneration of the village office, an occupancy price equal to the amount of the full assessment of such land in the case of holders of inferior village offices and three times such amount in the case of holders of other village offices, shall be paid by or on behalf of the holder for its regrant.

(2) If, there is a failure to pay the occupancy price under sub-section (1) within the prescribed period and in the prescribed manner, the holder shall be deemed to be unauthorisedly occupying the land and shall be liable to be summarily evicted therefrom by the Deputy Commissioner, in accordance with the provisions of the Code.

(3) The occupancy or the ryotwari patta of the land, as the case may be, re-granted under sub-section (1) shall not be transferable otherwise than by partition among members of Hindu Joint Family ¹[for a period of fifteen years from the date of commencement of Section 1 of the Karnataka Village Offices Abolition (Amendment) Act, 1978.] ²[Provided that such occupancy or the ryotwari patta in respect of land granted to the holder of a village office in an enfranchised inam shall be transferable with the previous sanction of the Deputy Commissioner which shall be granted on payment of an amount equal to fifteen times the amount of full assessment of the land.]

³[(4) Any transfer of land in contravention of sub-section (3) shall be null and void and the land so transferred shall, as penalty, be forfeited to and

Provided that if the person who has transferred the land in contravention of sub-section (3) is not alive, while disposing of such land preference shall be given to the heirs of such person.

Explanation.-For removal of doubts it is hereby declared that in subsection (3), and in this sub-section transfer includes creation of a lease.

(5) Nothing in sub-section (3) shall apply to transfer in favour of

the State Government, a co-operative society and a bank as security for loans granted for improvements of such land ⁴ [or for raising crops on such land] or for buying cattle or agricultural implements for the cultivation of such land.

Explanation.-'bank' means.-

(i) a banking company as defined in the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 (Central Act 10 of 1949);

(ii) the State Bank of India constituted under the State Bank of India Act, 1955 (Central Act 23 of 1955);

(iii) a subsidiary bank as defined in the State Bank of India (Subsidiary Banks) Act, 1959 (Central Act 38 of 1959);

(iv) a corresponding new bank constituted under the Banking Companies (Acquisition of Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1970 (Central Act 5 of 1970);

(v) a regional rural bank constituted under the Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976 (Central Act 21 of 1976);

(vi) the Agricultural Refinance and Development Corporation constituted under the Agricultural Refinance and Development Corporation Act, 1963 (Central Act 10 of 1963);

(vii) the Agricultural Finance Corporation Limited, a company incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956 (Central Act 1 of 1956).

(6) Notwithstanding anything contained in any law for the time being in force, any agreement for transfer of land resumed under clause (3) of Section 4, entered into prior to regrant thereof under sub-section (1), shall be null and void and any person in possession thereof in furtherance of such agreement shall be summarily evicted therefrom by the Deputy Commissioner.]

1. Substituted for the words "without the previous sanction of the Deputy Commissioner and such sanction shall be granted only on payment of an amount, equal to fifteen times the amount of full assessment of the land" by Act No. 13 of 1978, w.e.f. 7-8-1978.

2. Proviso to sub-section (3) inserted by Act No. 27 of 1984, w.e.f. 4-5-1984.

3. Sub-sections (4) to (6) inserted by Act No. 13 of 1978, w.e.f. 7-8-1978.

4. Inserted by Act No. 47 of 1986, w.e.f. 25-11-1986.

6. Re-grant of land resumed under Section 4 to authorised holders :-

Where any land resumed under clause (3) of Section 4 is held by an authorised holder, it shall be re-granted to the authorised holder on the payment by him to the State Government of the occupancy price equal to six times the full assessment of the land and subject to the conditions and consequences mentioned in Section 5; and all the provisions of Section 5 shall mutatis mutandis apply in relation to the re-grant of the land under this section to the authorised holder as if he were the holder of the village office.

7. Eviction of unauthorised holders, etc :-

(1) Where any land resumed under clause (3) of Section 4 is in the possession of an unauthorised holder such unauthorised holder shall be summarily evicted therefrom and the land shall be taken possession of by the Deputy Commissioner in accordance with law:

Provided that no such summary eviction shall be made except after giving the person affected a reasonable opportunity of making representation.

(2) Any order of eviction passed under sub-section (1) shall be final and

(3) The land from which an unauthorised holder is evicted under subsection (1) shall,

(a) if it was granted or continued in respect of or annexed to an inferior village office be regranted to the holder of such village office; and

(b) in other cases be disposed of in accordance with the law applicable to the disposal of unoccupied unalienated lands.

7A. Restriction on transfer, etc :-

(1) No person shall transfer or acquire by transfer for a period of fifteen years from the date of commencement of this section any land disposed or regranted under sub-section (4) of Section 5 or sub-section (3) of Section 7 and any transfer of such land in contravention thereof shall be null and void. The land so transferred shall vest in the State Government free from all encumbrances. The provisions of sub-section (5) of Section 5 shall mutatis mutandis apply to transfer of such land.

(2) Any person who acquires by transfer such land in contravention of sub-section (1) shall on conviction be punished with imprisonment which may extend to six months.]

8. Application of Tenancy Law :-

If any land granted or continued in respect of or annexed to a village office by the State has been lawfully leased and such lease is subsisting on the appointed date, the provisions of the tenancy law for the time being in force in the area in which the land is situate, shall apply to the said lease and the rights and liabilities of the person to whom such land is granted under Section 5, 6 or 7 and his tenant or tenants shall, subject to the provisions of this Act, be governed by the provisions of the said tenancy law.

Explanation.-For the purposes of this section, the expression "land" shall have the same meaning as assigned to it in the tenancy law referred to above.

9. Relief to holder of a village office :-

(1) A holder of a village office abolished under this Act, shall be paid in such manner and in such instalments as may be prescribed,-

(i) in the case of a holder of an inferior village office, an amount equal to the aggregate of the amounts calculated in the manner provided in the following clauses (a), (b) and (c);

(ii) in the case of a holder of any other village office, an amount equal to the aggregate of the amounts calculated in the manner provided in the following clauses (a) and (b);

(a) where the full or a portion of the assessment of the land granted or continued in respect of or annexed to, any village office by the State was assigned towards the emoluments of the holder of such office, six times the amount equal to the difference between the amount of such assessment or portion and the amount of quit rent or jodi, if any, payable to the State Government by the holder;

(b) six times the amount equal to the annual cash allowance or other annual payment of money (not being the rent of land resumed under clause (b) of Section 12 of the Bombay Hereditary Offices Act, 1874 (Bombay Act III of 1874), or a like provision under any existing law relating to village offices) made by the State Government to the holder under the existing law relating to village

offices:

Provided that where the land granted or continued in respect or annexed to a village office is not less than three acres in extent, the sum payable shall be three times the amount specified in this clause:

Provided further that in determining the amount of annual cash allowance or other annual payment of money made by the State Government under this clause, the enhancement in such allowance or money ordered.-

(i) in the Karnataka Area, excluding the Bellary District, by G.O. No. R. 23-77/L.R. 69-42-17, dated 18th October, 1942, G.O. No. R. 3919-4007/L.R. 155-47, dated 24th September, 1947, and G.O. No. RDF III VOA 57, dated 8th June, 1957;

(ii) in the Bombay Area, by G.O. No. G.R.R.D.No. 9790/33, dated 24th May, 1944/ G.R.R.D. No. 5741/45, dated 3rd July, 1948 and G.O.R.D. No. RDF III VOA 57, dated 8th June, 1957;

(iii) in the Hyderabad Area, by G.O. No. (2), dated 8th October, 1949, G.O. No. 2, dated 22nd December, 1949, and G.O. No. RDF III VOA 57, dated 8th June, 1957;

(iv) in the Madras Area and Bellary District, by G.O. No. Mis. 877/Rev., dated 27th April, 1945, G.O. No. 2108, dated 27th September, 1946, and G.O. No. RDF III VOA 57, dated 8th June, 1957; shall be excluded;

(c) six times the cash value of the average of the customary fees or perquisites in money or in kind levied or leviable by the holder of the inferior village office under the existing law relating to such office during the three years immediately preceding the appointed date; and such cash value shall be determined in the prescribed manner and shall not exceed the amount which under the existing law could, on default of payment in kind, be recovered:

Provided that when the land granted or continued in respect of or annexed to the inferior village office is not less than three acres in extent, the sum payable shall be three times the cash value not exceeding the maximum specified in this clause.

¹ [(2) (i) As soon as may be after the commencement of the Karnataka Village Offices Abolition (Amendment) Act, 1967, the Deputy Commissioner shall determine in accordance with such of

the provisions of sub-section

(i) as may be applicable to any holder of a village office, the amount payable in respect of the office which has been abolished.

(ii) A holder of a village office entitled to payment under sub-section (1) may, within such time as may be prescribed or such further time as the Deputy Commissioner may in his discretion allow, apply in writing to the Deputy Commissioner for a copy of the data on the basis of which he proposes to determine the amount payable under sub-section (1). On receipt of such application, the Deputy Commissioner shall furnish the data aforesaid to the applicant and he shall also before passing any order under clause (i), given the applicant reasonable opportunity of making his representation in regard thereto, in writing or orally.

(iii) A copy of every order passed under clause (i) shall be communicated to the holder of the village office concerned.]

(3) Any person aggrieved by the order of the Deputy Commissioner under sub-section (2) may within sixty days from the date of the order appeal to the Divisional Commissioner and the decision of the Divisional Commissioner on such appeal, shall be final.

(4) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-section (1), a holder of a village office abolished under this Act shall not be entitled to any payment under this section, if he is appointed to any stipendiary post in connection with the affairs of the State of Karnataka.

1. Sub-section (2) substituted by Act No. 8 of 1968 and shall be deemed to have come into force w.e.f. 12-9-1967.

10. Inquiries and proceedings to be judicial proceedings :-

All inquiries and proceedings before the Deputy Commissioner under this Act shall be deemed to be judicial proceedings within the meaning of Sections 193, 219 and 229 of the Indian penal Code.

11. Rules :-

(1) The State Government may, subject to the condition of previous publication, by notification, make rules for the purposes of carrying out the provisions of this Act.

(2) Every rule made under this section shall be laid as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of the State Legislature while it is in session for a total period of thirty days which may be

comprised in one session or in two successive sessions, and if, before the expiry of the session in which it is so laid or the session immediately following, both Houses agree in making any modification in any rule or both Houses agree that the rule should not be made, the rule shall thereafter have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may be; so however that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done under that rule.

12. Repeal and savings :-

(1) The enactments specified in Schedule I and any existing law relating to a village office in force in any area of the State of Karnataka so far as they apply to village offices or to emoluments attached to such offices are hereby repealed.

1 [(2) x x x x x.]

(3) Nothing in sub-section (1) [x x x] shall be deemed to affect-

(a) any obligation or liability already incurred by the holder of a village office or other person before the appointed date;

(b) any proceeding or remedy in respect of such obligation or liability and any such proceeding may be continued or any such remedy may be enforced as if this Act had not been passed.

1. Sub-section (2) substituted by Act No. 8 of 1968 and shall be deemed to have come into force w.e.f. 12-9-1967.

SCHEDULE 1

Amendments

SCHEDULE 2

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[See Section 12(2)] [x x x x x]
