

from the Government Treasury. The first and the last are not to be found in each district. There are many districts in which the Mahars have no *Inam* land and no cash allowance. It is only the second, namely, the *Baluta* which is found all over the Presidency and forms the principal mode of remuneration to the Mahars. The number of such villages is by no means small. In Belgaum District there are 317, in Bijapur District there are 543, in Dharwar District there are 572 and in Sholapur there are 463 villages in which there are no lands and in which the main source of income is *Baluta* to be collected from the villagers. The same is the condition in the Thana, Kolaba and Ratnagiri Districts. This list of villages wherein *Baluta* is the only source of remuneration to the Mahars is not a complete list. But from the data available it is clear that while in some villages the Mahars are mainly dependent upon *Baluta*, in other villages they are entirely dependent upon it for their remuneration.

43. With regard to the *Baluta* as a mode of remunerating the Mahars, I would like in the first place to draw Your Excellency's attention to the vicious character of this mode of remuneration. The Mahars are Government servants, Government takes service from them; but for their remuneration Government refers them to the villagers. Such a system of treating Government servants will be deemed to be very strange, if not disgraceful. The practice is certainly unbecoming to any Government which calls itself civilised.

44. This vicious system of *Baluta* results in stark injustice to the Mahars in the matter of their remuneration. Government takes into its calculation the payment of *Baluta* by the villagers to the Mahars in fixing the total remuneration of the Mahars. But it is the universal experience that the Mahars never get the *Baluta*. The reason is obvious. The relations between the Mahars and the villagers are never cordial. There is no village where there is no conflict between the Mahars and the villagers. Often it happens that the relation between the Mahars and the villagers remain friendly and the Mahars work for the whole year for the villagers as well as for Government in the hope that they will get their *Baluta* from the villagers. But something happens just at the

harvest season which creates strained relations between the Mahars and the villagers, with the result that the villagers refuse to pay the Mahars their *Baluta*. Coupled with their natural desire to evade the payment of *Baluta* is this state of enmity between the Mahars and the villagers which is a feature common to all villagers in the Presidency and which is responsible for the failure of *Baluta* system. The result is that the Mahar works in the hope of getting the *Baluta* but never gets it. The Mahar has no power to compel payment of *Baluta*. He is a minority in the village and is entirely dependent upon the village. In this conflict it is he who has to suffer. What makes this injustice so unbearable is the conduct of the Government officers, who take service from the Mahars, but who never help them to recover the *Baluta* from villagers. There is provision in law whereby the Revenue authorities have power to convert the *Baluta* into cash payment and recover the same from the villagers along with the land revenue and pay it to the Mahars. But a large majority of the Government officers have consistently refused to use these powers to relieve Mahars from this injustice for the fear of annoying the villagers.

45. The *Baluta* system at one time applied to all the village-servants. It applied to the Patil and the Kulkarni as well as to the Mahars. But Government discontinued the *Baluta* system so far as the Patil and the Kulkarni were concerned from the year 1844 and substituted in its place the system of cash payment from Government Treasury. The reason given was that the Patil and Kulkarni might—by force of the authority they possessed—recover from the villagers more than their quota of *Baluta*. If this reason was a good reason for abolishing the system of payment through *Baluta* to the Patil and the Kulkarni the reason for not applying it to the Mahars is a better reason. If the Patil and Kulkarni were strong enough to recover more the Mahars are too weak to recover any. Government seems to have considered only the interests of the villagers. They have never considered the interests of the Mahars. If they had, they would have abolished so precarious a system of remuneration as *Baluta* for the Mahars as well or would have made some provision for securing prompt payment of the *Baluta* to the Mahars. It is wrong for Government to have left the Mahars to be paid by a third party

like the villagers between whom and the Mahars had no direct contractual relation exists and at the same time not prepared to exercise any pressure to see that payment is made by the third party.

46. The question is, therefore, pertinent. The Patil is not asked to depend on *Baluta*. The Kulkarni, while he was a village servant, was also not made to live on *Baluta*. Why then is the helpless Mahar alone asked to serve Government and look for the payment to the villagers with no legal means open to him for its enforcement? It is time that Government did justice by taking the responsibility of remunerating the Mahars on its own shoulders.

47. As to the cash payment as a source of remuneration, the sums fixed by Government as remuneration to Mahars are the paltriest that can be conceived of. They were fixed somewhere about 1869. Remunerations of other Government servants fixed in those days have since been increased considerably from time to time. In fairness and justice to the Mahars it cannot be denied that an increase in their remuneration is long overdue.

II. INCREASE OF DUTIES OF INFERIOR VILLAGE SERVANTS.

48. The Government of Bombay have passed Government Resolution No. 7420/33 of the Revenue Department dated 13-9-1938 containing a list of duties to be performed by Mahars, Mangs, Vethiyas in this Presidency which impose upon them an intolerable burden and which it is impossible for these Watandars to bear. The duties prescribed in the Government Resolution came in for a good deal of angry criticism in the Haregaon Conference. The Resolutions passed in the Conference, which are appended to this Memorial, state the objections of the Inferior Village Servants to the duties prescribed by Government.

49. The contention of these Watandars is that they should not be called upon to perform duties listed at item Nos. 1, 3, 5, 9, 13 and 19 without payment of extra remuneration in the form of daily wages of not less than annas eight whenever they are called upon to perform these duties. In this I am sure, there is justice on their side. I have received several complaints from the Watandars of this Province that the Village and the Taluka

officers require the Watandars to render private service to them, such as taking a private chit to distant village, under the pretext that such service also falls under one or other of the above mentioned items. In this connection, I further beg to state that almost all Government Officers are paid Travelling and Subsistence Allowances whenever they go outside their headquarters and, therefore, it is in the fitness of the things that these Watandars, who are also Government servants, should also be given proper allowance whenever they are asked to go outside their village to compensate them for the extra expenditure they have to incur.

50. With regard to Duty No. 2 mentioned in the Government Resolution referred to above, these Watandars say that it should be confined to call the *Khatedars* by "*Bataki*" or "*Davandi*" and should not be extended to running several times after the recalcitrant *Khatedars*. In this connection, I may bring to Your Excellency's kind notice that in several instances the Watandars have to expose themselves to the risk of being assaulted and entangled by the recalcitrant *Khatedars*. In order to avoid all such contingencies, the only solution is the one proposed above.

51. With regard to Duty No. 7 mentioned in the Government Resolution referred to above which compels the Watandars to give to the village officers information about births and deaths in a village, they claim exemption. For the reasons stated below these Watandars should be exempted from doing this duty and the persons concerned should be compelled to give information of births and deaths to the Village Patil as is done in all Municipal Areas. Sometimes the Watandars boycotted by the so-called touchable villagers and are not allowed to enter the village, In such cases, it becomes impossible for the Watandars to get the necessary information, especially about births and deaths in the village and the Watandars, in consequence, are punished with a fine for no fault of their own.

52. Duty No. 15 of the said Resolution calls upon the Watandars to remove unclaimed dead bodies. In my opinion this is a duty to be discharged by the Police. The Watandars, therefore, should be exempted from performing that service.

III. CONCLUSION

53. In conclusion, I beg to state that the grievances referred to in this Memorial are crying for redress. I have no complete information regarding the amount of *Judi* so far recovered from the Mahars. From the figure relating to Nasik district which have been supplied to me it appears that in the Nasik district alone the amount of *Judi* levied on *Maharki* lands so far under the new policy comes to about Rs. 2,201-4-11 per year. This has produced a great tension and I am afraid that if the grievances are not redressed the *Watandar Mahars* may go on a strike as per last resolution of the Haregaon Conference. I had advised them to suspend action in the hope that Government will alter their policy and do justice to them. But nothing has so far been done. I, therefore, request Your Excellency to treat this question as urgent and redress the wrong which is being done to these Watandars by the new policy launched by Government. If the Mahar Watandars affected by this policy go on a strike or come in conflict in the matter of the recovery of *Judi* by attachment of their property which I hear is going on in some places, the responsibility thereof will be on Government alone, inasmuch as the Mahar Watandars will have ground to say that they have tried to get their grievances redressed by constitutional means and failed.

54. I would respectfully urge that the policy adopted by Government in dealing with the Inferior Village Servants should be suspended. The issues involved are very large and controversial. They cannot be settled by the executive action of Your Excellency's Advisers, however competent they be. They can be settled only by the vote of the Legislature after all sides had the opportunity of putting their case. This is not possible now owing to the suspension of the Legislature. But the question is an old one and can wait for its solution. I am sure that the Mahars and other Inferior Village Servants will prefer to wait for a just and agreed solution.

‘RAJGRIHA’ DADAR,
HINDU COLONY,
BOMBAY - 14
14th July 1941

I beg to remain,
Yours Excellency's
most obedient servant,
B. R. AMBEDKAR.

APPENDIX I

Resolutions Passed at the Haregaon Conference

Resolution No. 1 :-

This Conference of Watandar Mahars and Mangs, Vethias and other Inferior Village Servants strongly protests against the policy of enhancing *Judi* on Mahar Inam lands recently brought into operation in the Province under which an addition to the *Judi* out of all proportion has been made on already poverty-stricken Watandar Mahars and Mangs and demands that the same policy be withdrawn immediately and the levy made thereunder be cancelled inasmuch as the said policy is contrary to the underlying principles of the Hereditary Village Offices' Act and is also harsh and unjust.

Resolution No. 1 A :-

This Conference resolves that the G. R. No. 7420/33, R. D. dated 13th September 1938, containing a list of duties to be performed by the Mahars and Mangs imposed an intolerable burden which it is impossible for the Watandars to bear. This Conference is of opinion that these Watandars should not be called upon to perform duties listed as item Nos. 1, 3, 5, 9, 13 and 19 without the payment of extra remuneration in the form of daily wages of not less than annas eight whenever they are called upon to perform these duties.

Resolution No. 1 B :-

This Conference is of opinion that these Watandars be exempted from discharging duty No. 15 for the same is in the opinion of the Conference the duty of the Police.

Resolution No. 1 C :-

This Conference is of opinion that the duty No. 2 should be confined to call villagers by *Bataki* and not be extended to running after several times after a recalcitrant villager.

Resolution No. 2 :-

This Conference is of opinion that the *Maharki Watan* be commuted on the same principles as were made applicable to the

Watan of the village servant useful to the community by Mr. Gordon in 1863 and they be relieved from the obligation to render service to the Government and the village community.

Resolution No. 3 :-

This Conference wishes to bring to the notice of Government that there are innumerable villages in the Presidency where the Mahars are compelled to render the services free of cost. The Conference further asserts the necessity and urgency of Government assuming the responsibility for ensuring the payment of remuneration to the Inferior Village Servants. The Conference takes this opportunity to warn Government that if no steps are taken within six months in this direction, this Conference will be constrained to advise such Mahars to refuse to render any services to Government.

Resolution No. 4 :-

This Conference recommends to the Government to appoint a Committee consisting of the Representatives of Watandar Mahars in the Provincial Legislature to revise the orders of the suspension and fines passed by the Revenue Officers of this Province and give effect to such order in accordance with the decisions of this Committee.

Resolution No. 5 :-

This Conference authorises the members of the Scheduled Class in the Bombay Legislative Assembly to wait upon His Excellency the Governor of Bombay to represent the grievances of the Watandar Mahars and the Mangs expressed in this Conference.

Resolution No. 6 :-

This Conference appoints a Committee of the following gentlemen to give necessary effect to the Resolutions passed by the Conference and further this Conference empowers the Committee to advise and take such action as may be necessary in furtherance of the object of the resolution.

APPENDIX II

Extract from the Proceedings of 23rd Backward Class Board Meeting held in the II Advisor's Room, Secretariat, Bombay, on 7th June 1940 at 11 a.m.

Resolution No. 6 :-

This Board strongly protests against the policy enhancing Judi on *Mahar Inam* lands recently brought into operation in the Province of Bombay under which an addition to the Judi out of all proportion has been made on the already poverty-stricken Watandar Mahars, Mangs and Vethiyas and demands that the same policy be withdrawn immediately and the levy made thereunder be cancelled as much as the said policy is contrary to the underlying principle of the Hereditary Village Offices' Act, and is also harsh and unjust. Mr. B. K. Gaikwad's proposal No. 2 was discussed and adopted with slight modification as Resolution No. 7. As regards the rate of payment of daily allowance, it was suggested that a Mahar or Vethiya should be given a daily allowance of annas 6 whenever he is sent out of his village to perform Government duties.

(Mr. B. K. GAIKWAD)

Resolution No. 7 :-

This Board resolves that the Government Resolution No. 7420/ 33 of the Revenue Department, dated 13-9-1938, containing a list of duties to be performed by Mahars, Mangs, Vethiyas, impose upon them an intolerable burden which is impossible for these Watandars to bear. This Board is, therefore, of opinion that these Watandars should not be called upon to perform duties listed at item Nos. 1, 3, 5, 9, 13 and 19 without payment of extra remuneration in the form of daily wages of not less than annas six whenever they are called upon to perform these duties.

- (a) The Board is of opinion that Watandars be exempted from discharging duty No. 15 as it is, in the opinion of the Board, a duty that should be discharged by the Police.
- (b) The Board is of opinion that No. 2 should be confined

to call the Khatedars by “Bataki” or “Davandi” and not be extended to running several times after recalcitrant *Khatedars*.

- (c) The Board is of opinion that the Watandar Mahars, Mangs, Vethiyas be exempted from discharging duty No. 7 and the persons concerned should be compelled to give information of births and deaths to the Village Patil as is done in all Municipalities.

(Mr. B.K. GAIKWAD)

Resolution No. 8 :-

This Board wishes to bring to the notice of Government that there is innumerable villages in the Province of Bombay where the Mahars, Mangs and Vethiyas are compelled to render Government services without any remuneration.

This Board, therefore, strongly recommends to Government that no services should be demanded from the Inferior Village Servants without giving them proper and adequate remuneration.

APPENDIX III

Inferior Village Servants
Duties of
GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY
REVENUE DEPARTMENT

Resolution No. 7420/33

Bombay Castle, 13th September 1938.

Government Memorandum, No. 7420-F/33, dated the 27th

January 1938 to the Commissioner,

<u>N. D</u>
<u>C. D</u>
<u>S. D</u>

Letter From the Commissioner, N.D., No. W. T. N. 1062, dated the 25th February 1938.

Letter From the Commissioner, CD., No. W. T. N. 2/27, dated the 22nd March 1938.

Letter From the Commissioner, S.D., No. W. T. N. 860, dated the 26th April 1938.

RESOLUTION :—Requests have frequently been made to Government to have the duties of Inferior Village Servants useful to Government defined so that they may know exactly what is required of them and not be made to render personal services to Government officers. Orders have been issued in paragraph 5 of Government Circular Memorandum, Political and Reforms Department, No. 1581/34, dated 25th August 1937, that no personal service should be accepted by Government servants without payment. The statement attached hereto describes the duties of the different classes of Inferior Village Servants.

2. The Oriental Translator to Government should be requested to translate the Statement into Gujarati, Marathi, Kanare and Urdu and to furnish the translations to the Manager, Government Central Press, for printing. The Manager should supply-printed copies of the translations to the Collectors in accordance with their requirements, which should be communicated direct

to him within one month of the date of this resolution. Copies of the printed translations should be supplied to every Talati and Patil. A copy should also be placed prominently in every village *chavdi*. In villages where there are no *chavdis* the copies should be displayed in some other public place.

3. The cost of printing the translations should be debited, for the purpose of press proforma account, to the head "25 General Administration."

By order of the Governor of Bombay.

M. J. Desai,

Deputy Secretary to Government.

Accompaniment to Government Resolution, Revenue Department, No. 7420/33, dated 13th September 1938

STATEMENT SHOWING LISTS OF THE DUTIES OF
DIFFERENT CLASSES OF INFERIOR VILLAGE
SERVANTS

Duties of Mahars, Dheds, Vethias, Bhangis and Madhavis

- (1) To carry Government remittances to the Sub-treasury.
- (2) To call the villagers at the *chavdi* to pay Government dues.
- (3) To carry the village *daftar* to and from the taluka kacheri.
- (4) To keep a watch on government money and office records at the village and on property attached for recovery of Government dues.
- (5) To take Government *tapal* to and from the taluka office and to take Government post officers on tour, where there are facilities for transport.
- (6) To accompany village officers and touring officers at the time of crop and boundary mark inspection, and to show roads to officers and other travellers.
- (7) To take news of births and deaths to village officers.
- (8) To carry distrained moveable property to the village *chavdi*.

- (9) To summon persons on whom notices, etc., are to be served and assist the Police Patil in serving summonses issued by Magistrates, Police, etc.
- (10) To carry chains and cross-staff, plane table and other instruments of the measurers to the field for Government work.
- (11) To accompany the Police Patil and Police at the time of the night round where there are no *jaglyas* appointed to do the work.
- (12) To publish Government orders in the village by beat of drums.
- (13) To take impounded cattle to the kacheri for auction when necessary.
- (14) To assist the vaccinator in collecting children for vaccination.
- (15) To help in the disposal of unclaimed dead bodies found in a village and to help the police in the removal of dead bodies for *post-mortem* examination wherever called upon by the police to do so.
- (16) To help the Police Patil in case of accidental deaths and fires and outbreaks of epidemics and epixootics.
- (17) To report movements of members of the criminal tribes and criminals and to assist the police in investigation of and prevention of the commission of crimes,
- (18) To keep guard over prisoners in the Police Patil's custody.
- (19) To set up camp offices in the village.

Duties of Ramoshis or Ravanias and Vartanias

- (1) To be present at the chavdi at the time of the collection of the land revenue.
- (2) To accompany Mahars or Dheds carrying remittance to the taluka headquarters.
- (3) To render assistance to Government officers on duty in the village for Government work.
- (4) To watch property attached for recovery of Government dues.

- (5) To call villagers in the collection season when necessary.
- (6) To do a round at night and help the police in patrolling on night duty in the arrest of criminals, in the detection of crime and at the time of inquests on accidental deaths.
- (7) To assist in the prevention of the commission of thefts and other offences.
- (8) To report the movements of criminal tribes and notorious criminals to the Police Patil and about criminal offences and accidents, etc.
- (9) To carry the daftar of village officers.
- (10) To assist the village officers at the time of the recovery of land revenue.
- (11) To accompnay the village officers at the time of the crop inspection.
- (12) To Keep guard over persons in the custody of Police Patil.

Duties of Chaugulas and Naikwadis

- (1) To carry the daftar of the village officers.
- (2) To assist the village officers at the time of the recovery of the land revenue.
- (3) To accompany the village officers at the time of the crop inspection.
- (4) To keep the village *chavdi* clean and light the lamps there.

Duties of Jaglyas

- (1) To keep watch at night, to find out all arrival and departures, to observe strangers and to report all suspicious persons to the Police Patil.
- (2) To trace a thief by footsteps.
- (3) To assist the police in the investigation of crime.
- (4) To accompany remittances from the village to the taluka.
- (5) To accompany village officers at the time of crop and boundary marks inspection.

Duties of Talbadas and Kolis

- (1) To clean the *chavdi* by sweeping and cowdunging it and to light lamp in it.
- (2) To assist village officers in the work of crop and boundary marks inspection.
- (3) To make *bandobast* when Government officers camp in the village so far as the public duties of these officers require it.

Duties of Samadis or Walikars, Talwars, Holkars and Ugranis

- (1) To help the village officers in the collection of Government revenue.
- (2) To help the Police Patil in serving summonses, etc., issued by magistrates and the police.
- (3) To keep watch over the village records and public money, or "*Muddemal*" in cases when there is occasion for it to be done at the village.
- (4) To escort the remittances of treasury or money to the taluka or mahal sub-treasury.
- (5) To carry the post of the village and touring officers from place to place where there are no other facilities for its transport.
- (6) To do night patrolling in the village.
- (7) To keep guard over prisoners in the Police Patil's custody.
- (8) To show the way to touring officers from village to village where there are no roads, at walking pace, to the minimum extent necessary to give adequate directions.
- (9) To report information about births and deaths to the Police Patil.
- (10) To call villagers to the village *chavdi* when they are required for Government work.
- (11) To accompany village officers and other officers on field inspections.
- (12) To assist vaccinators in collecting children for vaccination.

- (13) To carry village records from village to taluka and *vice versa*.
- (14) To assist village officers when on tour in the village in the performance of their public duties.
- (15) To keep the village *chavdis* clean.
- (16) To set up camp offices in the village.

Duties of Barkers

- (1) To keep the village *chavdi* clean.
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