

Cadastral Surveys

The origin of the word “Cadastre” is uncertain. Some hold the view that it is originating from the Latin word “**Capitastrum**” which is a combination of the two words “**Capitum**” (head) and “**Registrum**” (register). The meaning of the statement is the “**register of heads**”.

However, modern dictionaries derive “**Cadastre**” from the Greek word “**Katastikhon**” that gives the meaning “**line by line**”. Both these expressions have the hidden meaning that it is a systematic record. i.e. a register maintained regarding certain units according to the serial order.

This is obviously a tax register maintained on the taxable land units. Originally it had been a simple textual record, but was, later, supported by a graphical component that is known as the map or the plan.

In the early days of the human civilisation there was little need for land management or administration. With the growth of competition for available land space, rights and controls over the land started to emerge gradually. Although such concepts were applicable initially to communities, with passage of time they became vested in individuals.

Obviously the early transactions have taken place only on mutual understanding and without written documents. However there is evidence that those were done under a certain amount of publicity. Along with this emerged the necessity to keep systematic records on several sets of information relevant to the purpose. The Bible refers to such a methodical instance of land acquisition.

There are ancient evidence of taxation records extending from 3000 B.C. (Egypt), through 700 A.D. (China) to 1000 A.D. (Chola Empire). Later in Europe number of countries including England and Sweden established such land records. A prominent event is the French Cadastre instituted by Napoleon in 1807 A.D. with a target of surveying more than 100 million parcels. This is how the development of the cadastre gradually took place through ages in the history.