Prior to the advent of the Britishers, the land revenue administration of the Nilgiris was treated under three heads, firstly that of the hill tribes or the inhabitants, secondly that of the settlement of Europeans and thirdly that of the revenue survey. The cultivators viz., the Badagas and the Todas, the Kotas, the Irulas and the Kurumbas came under the first heading. Among these inhabitants Badagas and the Kotas were the permanent swidden cultivators and the Irulas and the Kurumbas were the intermittent cultivators. On the other hand, the Todas are unique in the position of the grazing tribe

In the first stage, forest and other lands were loosely defined and the use of land practically unrestricted. Rent was not paid. In 1843 the collector of Coimbatore wrote a letter to the Board of Revenue, in which the hill tracts of the district and the monopoly of the forest produce were framed out.

Immediately after its cessation from Coimbatore District, the settlement of its revenue was entrusted to Major McLeod the principal Collector of Coimbatore and Malabar. The object of Major McLeod's settlement was to rectify the evils of Tipu's revenue system. Because Haider Ali Tipu's father, had abolished
the ancient system of division of produce and had introduced a fixed money assessment on the cultivated lands of each village. Amildars were appointed for the collection of revenue. Tipu increased the number of the amildars and decreased the area entrusted to each. He required the cultivators to pay for all cultivable lands, whether cultivated in the year or not. The result was that the ryots became terribly impoverished and when the district came under the Britishers rule most of them were heavily in arrears. In 1799 by the treaty of Seringapatam Nilgiris formed a part of the Dannyakankottai taluk of Coimbatore district. In the same year Major McLeod's first settlement was begun. It was based upon the accounts of Vijayanagar rendered by the Karnams/Maniagars. But all the accounts were inaccurate and false and Major McLeod proposed to the Board of Revenue to appoint trained surveyors. After their appointment all the arable lands of each village were measured. The project was approved and its operations began in North Coimbatore in March 1800 and were completed in March 1801. The area of each field was recorded, the cultivable area was distinguished from the non cultivable whether waste or grass or occupied by water courses etc.

The assessment of each field was noted, also the name of the holder or holders and the character and legality of the tenure and other particulars were considered necessary for the completeness of a revenue
register. The surveyors were employed to classify the lands according to their fertility after full discussions with the heads of the Villages.

Subsequently the lands were assessed by the collector according to a fixed scale, which provided twelve grades of assessment for dry and four for wet and garden lands.

The first revenue collection of Coimbatore was carried out by the orders of Garrow, Collector of Coimbatore in or about 1805. In 1820 John Sullivan conducted rough survey of the cultivated lands on Nilgiris Hills. The first systematic survey was taken after the orders from the Court of Directors in 1843. It was completed in 1847 and the proper assessment was made and the revenue was collected regularly.

Bhurty system

Bhurty system was one of the methods of assessment which prevailed during the British Raj in the Nilgiris. It was also called shifting system. Under this system a ryot was allowed to hold tracts as much as five times more than the extent shown in his patta and for which he paid assessment in Kind or cash. The ryot benefited by this system. According to this system, without payment the ryot took the plots, for cultivation. But the hill cultivators were poor and ignorant and so the state allowed them to posses a tract or tracts five or even ten times greater in
extent than the portion for which they actually paid assessment, and which was shown in their annual 'patta' (The document given by government to the occupiers setting the land they hold and the assessment payable upon it). The 'patta' was regarded not merely as entitling its holder to cultivate the plot specified but also permitting them to shift from one place to another. Bhurty system was necessary for the upliftment of the poor cultivators. By adopting the Bhurty system the depleted soil was easily enriched. Deep ploughing, application of manure and rotation of crops also improved the soil fertility.

This system had some defects also: It was more complicated due to the system of joint family holdings, but it was suitable for the individuals to develop their property. There was no proper survey or demarcation because the assessment of the land had been done by the village headman or some of the other local officials. When ryots did not hold the land, they could easily influence other people to say that the area was their bhurty land. Some areas or tracts occupied by the Badagas were only thick forests which had never been cleared for cultivation, and thus the shifting system was not useful for agricultural progress.

The defects of the bhurty system were discussed by the Board of Revenue and they recommended that the shifting system should be stopped. If the ryot failed to pay his assessment, his rights to the land would
lapse, but if the ryot paid the revenue regularly he had the privilege to sell the land according to his wish. Government decided to abolish the bhurty system. The rates of assessment were lowered on an average of 25% in order to compensate the ryots for the withdrawal of the bhurty concession, and the system was abolished in the year 1864 by the then Colector M.Grant.

Ayangrass and Grazing patta

Before the abolishing of the Bhurty system another Scheme of revenue system called Ayangrass and grazing patta was introduced. It was introduced in Coimbatore first and then in the Nilgiris. According to this Ayangrass system the ryot was required to declare a certain portion of his holding i.e. one fourth of the original assessment. He could not hold more than one fifth of his regular holdings. Another scheme was grazing pattas. Under this scheme the ryot had been granted inferior lands known as "Parava Pilluvari" of grazing privilege, which allowed extensive areas to be held as grazing land on a very low assessment. The pasture land was required for cultivation by one ryot or another and that ryot had a privilege to occupy the grazing land.

This system also had some minor defects i.e. no definite survey and settlement had taken place. Some time the privileges of the hill cultivators were restricted in their grazing rights. But the defects
of the grazing patta were discussed in the Board of Revenue. The government did not like to accept the small payment, because the Badagas as the main cultivators of the hills did not take up the land permanently for improvement. So the government decided to collect payment from the pasture.

**Revision of the assessment**

Hence the collector of Coimbatore Mr. Thomas and the Board decided to revise the assessment in 1865. The Badagas were allowed to hold an acre of land without payment or assessment. For the compensation of the loss of shifting system the assessment was reduced to 15 percent. Special consideration was shown to the cultivators by the Revenue collectors. Grazing privilege was restricted but the supply of manure was limited. The existing assessment was to be reduced by 25 percent so as to provide against crop failure and want of productivity and the balance was to be fixed as the share of the state. The reduction of revenue was estimated at Rs. 1900 because the government found out that the total cultivable land was 18,857 acres and the uncultivable land 11,055 acres totalling 29,912 acres. These reductions amounted on an average to about 25 percent. 6 annas per acre was the assessment rate. Rs. 20,560 was collected as revenue from the total area of 57,925 acres in 1876. But the government fixed an area of 29,912 acres for the revenue collection.
The results of the government was sent to the secretary of the state for approval. In 1863 Charles wood gave the approval. Measuring of revenue was adopted. As a result the condition of cultivators was improved.

**Arrondisements**

Mr. Grant who had succeeded Mr. Thomas as the Collector of Coimbatore, was entrusted with the carrying of the settlement into effect. He stopped the shifting system and introduced new scheme of settlement called Arrondissement or Parishes. He limited his settlement to the arrondisements which he termed the Todanad the Mekanad and the Paranginad. The majority of the lands have been roughly demarcated. The demarcation was practically useless. But the Badaga holdings were doubled by this scheme.

Revenue accounts were shown practically and periodically. So, the government and the cultivators were benefitted by this scheme. The Scheme also had some defects, as the lands were not demarcated properly. Unassessed land also was cultivated, and it remained untouched.

**Settlement of the Kundahs**

In order to rectify the defects of the previous settlement scheme, Grant introduced another new scheme which was called "Kundahs". This scheme was
brought to Coimbatore district from Malabar in 1860. Under this scheme lands were classified into "Kotto cadoo" and Errucadoo. The ryot received a patta for the use of plough or hoe, the former had the privilege to pay 1 to 1-8 and for the latter 4 to 8 annas. The plough using land was called errucadoo. Kottacadu patta was issued to the ryot for one or more hoe and he used his implements whenever he needed. Consequently the ryot cleared the forest for cultivation. They left the land which had already been ploughed. Rough survey was taken. Lands were classified according to the productiveness of the Soil and assessed at five new rates. The total area of 1220 acres was assessed of which 118 acres was classified as first class, 43 second class, 606 as third class 299 to 154 acres as fourth and fifth class respectively.

The cultivator and the government were benefitted by this scheme, the former by reduction of assessment and the latter by an increased revenue. Hill sides and Valleys, forests and shrubs were cleared, false claims to the lands were swept away. The system existed for a long time in the village of Kinnakorai.

Settlement with the Todas

Todas were the early occupants of the plateau, and they were the landlords of the hills. They were not aware of the value of the ownership of lands
Sullivan was the first man who strongly advocated the revenue settlement of the Todas. Their main occupation was grazing of buffaloes.

The settlement of land with the Todas was declared in 1843. The Todas had an absolute right in their Mands or village sites and the right to occupy the land for pasturing. Captain Ouchterlony made a survey of the Hills. It was found that the Todas received 'gudu' from the Badagas and Kotas more or less according to the season, and the condition of the cultivation.

'Gudu' was demanded at a specified rate from time immemorial. Todas had paid annually a light pasture tax for about 190, Balla (i.e. 4 acre of land) 2 Cantira fanams (4 annas 8 paise) for each buffalo. They enjoyed the right of pasturing. They had an effective mode of collecting the gudu from Badaga villages. Buffalo Kraals (a circular enclosure in which cattle were penned at night surrounded by a rough stone wall) were used by the Badagas for cultivation.

Private individuals especially the Britishers bought land from the Todas. They paid assessment for their occupation. At the same time the Todas paid assessment for pasture. Jenma tenure or Janmam right which prevailed in Malabar was transferred to this plateau. This right was also possessed by the Todas.
Property rights of the Todas were informed to the court of Directors, and discussions went on in 1843. The court desired to give security against the interference of other settlers in enjoyment of their Mands\textsuperscript{18}. Pattas issued to each mand three ballas (i.e. 11.46 acres) of land. This arrangement was made during the time of Lushington. Grant obtained permission for the additional allotment of nine bullas (34.38 acres). All the lands were used for grazing but leasing the lands to Badagas and others (Britishers) were checked in 1882.

"The Public are cautioned against the purchase of patta lands granted to the Todas for grazing purpose such land cannot be sold by the Toda communities or individuals in whose names the pattas are issued"\textsuperscript{19} as the notice was sent by the J.W.Breeks Revenue Commissioner on 15th May 1871.

The Todas were however secured from interference in the enjoyment of their Mands (the collections of curious wagon roofed huts in which they resided) and 11 acres of land were set apart around each Mand for the grazing of the cattle. They paid the taxes i.e. 1½ pagodas (Rs.5-4-0) on each Cawnie (1-32 acre) of lands or Rs.3-15-0 per acre. The rate of assessment was levied more at the uplands of Todanad\textsuperscript{20}. Rates of cultivated lands distanced from Ootacamund were reduced and the lands within the town known as "The settlement of Ootacamand" were charged double rates. Because the fertility of the
soil was more and it was easy to market the products there, the rates were charged alternatively. After the completion of Major Ouchterlony's survey in 1847 the grant of thirty years leases of land for agricultural purposes and ninety nine years leases for building sites were introduced\textsuperscript{21}.

Restrictions on purchases of land from Todas

Todas had the propriety rights to the soil in the Nilgiris from the Mirassdars of Malabar. The whole plateau belonged to the Todas\textsuperscript{22}. With the permission of the Todas the Burghers (How Europeans called the Badagas) settled and cultivated the Toda lands. European settlers also bought land from the Todas. Assessment was levied from them and they paid taxes for the Toda lands occupied for the formation of the cantonment of Ootacamund and the Todas were debarred from its circle. Sullivan, Rumbold, S.R. Lushington were notable persons who bought land from the Todas. The matter was referred to the government for proper settlement after the occupation of Toda lands for the cantonment. Finally it was found out that there were no land documents with the Todas.

Hence, the Government focussed their attention on the settlement of the Toda land. The government required the occupant to pay to the circar from the date of the grant. Agricultural condition of the lands were checked by the court of Directors periodically. The court decided to give land lease
Grants of land system prevailed, compensation was limited for 21 years. Native cultivators were not given the right to transfer the land, no proprietary right over the soil such as interference of the government was admitted. This decision remained in force with certain modifications until the wasteland rules were introduced in 1863.

Sir Frederick Adam's administration on land Revenue

Settlers of the hill station continued to purchase land from the Todas for the purpose of building and cultivation. Small compensation of Rs.10 or Rs.50 was paid to satisfy them. When S.R.S. Lushington held the office he turned his attention to land transaction with the hill tribes. Lushington said that the rights of the Todas should be respected. They should not be deprived of their privileges. The court also opened up the whole question of the Todas' rights to the soil. In 1847 the Board of Revenue reported that the area in the Ootacamund settlement be reserved for the Todas. 100 cawnies or 133 acres were allotted for them. The compensation would be Rs.162-10-1. "Governent have decided that compensation for the whole land included in the cantonment of Ootacamund shall be paid direct to the Todas from the public treasury and that no demand should be made on private occupants on this account and further that the amount already paid by private individuals as
compensation to the Todas for lands occupied by them should be paid on their making over the government the right and interest purchased by them from the Todas in lieu of which a perfect and unquestionable title will be given them by government to the lands in their occupation"\(^{24}\). Notice was furnished by the sub-collector of Malabar at Ootacammd.

**Interference of court of Directors**

In order to solve the unsettlement of Toda's revenue, court of Director wanted to sign an agreement with the Todas "either by payment of annual rent or otherwise induce the Todas to make over the lands on payment annually of Rupees 150 as quit-rent for the same"\(^{25}\). Mr.Conolly submitted to Government an agreement concluded with the Todas, according to which the lands other than those given to the cantonment could be purchased from Todas for building purposes.

The revenue problem of the Todas was not settled till 1842. They were educated about the word compensation for gudu. Their boundary was noted down between Doddabetta and the Paikare river and between Segur and the Melur cultivated lands and the Government concluded that "An attentive examination of the whole subject did not enable us to discover that the rights of the Todas in the land differed from those of the people of India generally in their relation to the
existing government. They seem always to have paid a land tax, and this was a light pasture tax only, because the Todas are a pastoral tribe in the lowest stage of civilization. It was observed by the other hill population and they were not exempted from the payment of the usual agricultural tax. It is true that the latter were in the habit of offering certain gratuities or allowances of grain to the Todas under the name of 'gudu'. The exact import of it is unknown, but similar payments are made to other tribes of the mountains without any acknowledgement of superiority claimed of service render". This was the resolution passed by the Government in 1835.

Since the Britishers occupation of the Toda lands, the Board of Revenue started to form a manual of land revenue rules27. The manual was prepared and submitted to the government in 1843 but it was sanctioned only after the completion of ouchterlony's Survey. Then the government identified land which were occupied by the Todas for pasture and for cultivation. Todas had no right to sell their lands to others but they can sell among themselves. These rules remained in force until 6th March 1863.

Waste Land Rules

Waste Land Rules came into force on 6th March 1863 in the Nilgiris28, under this scheme of rules all lands were declared as waste, in which no rights
of private proprietorship of exclusive occupancy exist and the lands were liable to be disposed off by public auction, which ended the bhurty system and the privileges of the Todas over the soil also came to an end.

Toda Land became saleable after the survey and demarcation of land with annual assessment of Rs.2 per acre for forest and Re.1 for grassland. Nobody obtained land by grant. Initially it was very difficult to handle the waste land rules, because of the problem of its survey and demarcation. There was no district staff and revenue officers to look after the survey of the waste lands. Finally survey was taken up by three special officers appointed by the government. No general survey had taken place since Ouchterlony's in 1847. In 1870 a General survey was effected and it was completed in 1880\(^2\).

In 1871 the rate of the grass land was reduced from Re.1 per acre to 8 annas. Assessment was remitted once in five year for forest land and once in 3 years for coffee land specially in Wynad. (Where coffee grew quickly). Grass land was taken for tea, Coffee and Chinchona plantations\(^3\).

It was explained that the land for plantation purpose was procurable, under the proceedings of the Madras government, regarding the waste land rules.\(^3\) Sale of crop was profitable, and the money invested in a well worked estate, had given the
return of 25 percent per annum. As a result of this, government got more profit and it was encouraged. In 1874 grass lands were taken up for tea or firewood plantations which were similarly exempted. In 1883 this concession was extended to the lands acquired for coffee or cinchona also.

Form No.7 speaks of the sale of waste land rules in sections XXXVI. It was notified that there were seven rules under the section XXXVI\textsuperscript{32}.

Land holders must register their lands. Land revenue was collected periodically. The lands of the revenue defaulters were sold by public auction at the Nilgiris commissioner's office at Ootacamund on a particular day. The land was knocked down to the highest bidder. Arrears of the defaulter was shown accurately. Purchasers of the land had to deposit 15 percent money at the time of sale. The remainder of the purchase money should be paid within thirty days from the days of sale. In case of failure the money deposited was liable to be forfeited.

The remaining amount must be paid within a fixed time; otherwise the land was resold at the expenses and risk of the first purchaser. The sale of the land was stayed. The commissioner was the person to declare the date for sale.

The purchaser had to pay the money and after the confirmation of the commissioner he possessed the
land. It was registered in the name of the purchaser. A certificate of the sale with signature and the seal of the commissioner was granted to the purchaser. If the purchaser was not satisfied with the buying of the land he could appeal to the commissioner within thirty days from the day of sale, and the purchase was conditioned on the final order.33

**Condition of Sale**

a) Highest bidder was the purchaser of the premises.

b) A purchaser deposits Rs.10/- per cent of the land as part of his purchase. It was intimated to the commissioner.

c) The remaining amount was paid within Thirty days in three instalments.

d) If the purchaser paid the money within 30 days he received a conveyance of the premises, and the premises was defined in the form No.5.34 Before the sale of the land it was surveyed and demarcated.

If the purchasers neglected or failed to follow the conditions of sale of land, the deposit money was forfeited. Government had the power to re-sell the land either by public auction or by private contract.35 Under the waste land rule, land was taken by the government for building reservoirs and roads. If the purchaser found any mine in his property, during any excavation of the land he had to inform it the government. Under section 4 of Act III of 1871
cultivated lands in the waste lands were levied taxes. Lands under section 40 Act III of 1871

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Amount of Assessment per acre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Coffee and Tea planted - 5 years</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cinchona planted - 10 years</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Grow Accacia &amp; Other plantation after 10 years</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sholas</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Market garden and orchards</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Grazing lands</td>
<td>020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment and collection under waste land rule**

Todas' grazing land was charged with full assessment. All the grazing lands were attached to Munds. Toda individuals should not alienate themselves by the sale of the lands granted to them. Sholas granted to the Todas belonged to the whole Mund community and their heirs. Government charged full rates of assessment prescribed by the waste land rules. Assessments were fixed by the commissioner. That was 4 annas per acre, all the graz lands were exempted from Tax. Lands planted of gum, accacia and cinchona trees were levied taxes for 10 years and 5 years.
Todas of several Munds within the Municipal limits requested the commissioner in person not to collect the land tax, because the Todas were poor and unable to pay the tax. Their requisition was accepted by the commissioner and he declared that lands occupied by Todas were rent free.

Individual pattas were issued. Pattadar or the owner of the land had the right to transfer the property. Person bidding at a sale should bid on their own account or as an agent. Defaulters must pay their arrears with interest and other charges to the tenders and of the defaulters land was sold by public auction.

After the payment, the possession of the land was registered in the name of the purchaser. The government was not responsible for errors of description or in estimated extent during the registration.

Particular areas were not allotted to the Todas, Though the Todas were given rent free lands. They were given Nine Bullahs - 34.3.8 acres of land by the government for grazing. All these grazing lands were around the Mund. No one claimed a right on these lands. If they used these allotted lands for grazing they had to pay an assessment of Rs.100 per acre per annum. Individual or Joint patta was given to them. The pattadars got the right to sell their lands.
Census operation in revenue collections

Census operations were held in 1881. Land revenue of the district came under the Census operations. In the general census, Inam and Zamindari village's revenues were not included with the total areas. Census duty was taken up by the officers called Karnams. They were given salary in kind. In Nilambur, Tahsildars were given gingelly oil as a salary by the zamindaris. All the records and reports were maintained by the Karnams. Revenue Officers were also appointed to collect the land revenue.

After the census it came to be known that several cases of wrongful sale of lands by alleged pattadars had taken place and this was brought to the notice of the commissioner. Land sale was made, bonafide pattas were issued (after a detailed examination).

Excess of lands were marked and shown to the commissioner. Reasonable latitudes were allowed for holdings. Revenue Department maintained a new Survey register to issue pattas. Lands were issued under waste land rules after the recommendations of the government to the commissioners. Section 35 of Boards Standing order did not mention the sale of waste land rules in the Nilgiris which came under the section No.1863, No.478A. According to these
rule, waste lands were sold subject to annual payment of the assessment specified by the highest bidder above the price enumerated on the particular day. Government reserves in the waste lands were supposed to contain gold and other minerals or coal and rock.

**Transfer of pattas in the Waste Land Rules**

Transfer of the pattas were also given importance. The transfer certificate was produced before the revenue authorities, within six months. Pattas or grants must be registered in the new survey register. A new department for the revenue settlement was sanctioned by the government. Scheme of the revenue work was also sanctioned in the year 1880-81. The work was started towards the end of the year i.e. 1881. Aggregate value of the land transactions were registered annually.

The public were given right to resell the purchased lands. Purchasers had their own account with their agents. They were given certificates of sale with the signature and the seal of the commissioner. Persons who obtained lands from the Todas were penalised and the assessment rates were also raised for that particular land. According to Rampell's opinion, the assessment rate after the penalty was Rs.1000/- per acre per annum for shola and Rs.100/- per acre per annum for grass land. Act of 1882 says about the sale of immovable property, here
sale is a transfer of ownership in exchange for a price paid or promised or part paid and part-promised. If the value of the land was more than Rs.100/- during the time of sale it was made by a registered instrument or if the value was less than one hundred such transfer was made either by a registered instrument or by delivery of the property. When the delivery of the tangible immovable property takes place the seller places the buyers or such person as he directs in possession of the property.

The validity of the documents was not enquired in the Registration office. The registration of a document was based on the ground that the executing party had no right to execute the document tendered for Registration.

Public were given the facility of mortgaging their properties. Looking at the language of the Registration Act the term "Patta" appears to be included in the term lease Act III of 1877 section 17 clause (d). It makes the registration compulsory of all lease from year to year for a term exceeding one year subject to the exemption a local government was empowered to declare, in certain cases, term not exceeding five years rent reserved not exceeding fifty (50) rupees.

There were no general registers for fixed areas, nor did the registers usually state the tenure on
which any land was held. Some lands were ordinary patta lands, others were held on restricted pattas of which there were three classes: those issued to Europeans those to the Todas and the Irulas and the Other lands were held under waste land Rules, deed or under permanent pattas.

Effect of the Waste Land Rules

As a result of this settlement, the administration of land revenue differed widely from the normal. All the methods were not like the revenue system of the plains. Soils were not classified and the rates of assessment were changed. The government was to enter into a settlement with each ryot directly as regards his rent. Four nads (divisions) were further divided into thirty six village for the convenience of revenue administration. After the general survey a map of the village was drawn out. It was very useful for the revenue official to collect rent and to demarcate the boundaries. Registration of the lands transfer of pattas, Statistics of holding lands, cultivating crops came out in the revenue picture. The waste lands were to be regarded as circar property but was to be assessed., when it was brought under the plough. The field registers, maintained in the district cutcheries, contained the particulars about the rights and interests of the ryots as well as the circar. Lands were inspected by the settlement officer.
Grants of pattas were issued under the settlement rules. Annual reports of the land revenue were submitted to the District Collector. Lands for sale and other reserved lands like forests, roads, Streams were recorded. Lands were classified as cultivable and grazing lands. Inam lands were dealt with in accordance with G.O.No.212 dated 11th Feb. 1884.

A General register of all the lands in the village was framed. From the general register the chitta (or individual ledger) was prepared. The map of the village was registered and prepared on the scale of 16 inches = 1 mile. It was sold to the public. Accounts were maintained properly as well as periodically. Accounts were prepared by the settlement officer and sanctioned by the government.

Acquisition of Land

Under the provisions of Act X of 1870, the Governor in General declared that the plots of land held by the individuals were acquired for public purpose. The public were paid a compensation, for such lands and the lands were sold by public auction. These lands had their own registration in the name of the individuals.

Janma Bhogum

Janmam right was the traditional method of Land
revenue which prevailed in Malabar and Wynnaad Districts. Janmam was a title given to the owner of the property (Landed property) under Janmabhogam. Land was either owned by government or by Private individuals. Assessment was levied by the government i.e. 8 annas per acre. The dependent or the owner of the Janma, called Janmi, was granted a patta in recognition of his occupancy rights. Generally Janmabhogam land revenue system was followed by the Wynnaad Nayars. The revenue settlement of the Wynnaad area was completed separately in 1887. In 1877, Wynnaad became a part of the revenue map of the Nilgiris. This Janmam land was declared to be a government property.

The following copy of the report contains the divisions of the Janmam.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Amsam</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>No. of Payment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Nilgiris</td>
<td>Cherankod 41</td>
<td>1731</td>
<td>4280</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Munnanad 60</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>6292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nambalakod 139</td>
<td>2695</td>
<td>9868</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ryotwari in the Villages

Under the Ryotwari System, at the villages a document was prepared, which was given to the ryot. These documents showed the specified boundary of the lands. It was signed by both village headman or Moneyagars and Karnam. No conditional relinquishment
was allowed. Masinagudi village came under the ryotwari settlement. This area was surveyed and demarcated in 1885-87.

Under the Ryotwari tenure, assessment was paid by instalments. New applications were issued for the Ryotwari holders. Plantation bills were collected from same lands through the sub-ordinate revenue officers.

A ryotwari settlement was gradually extended to the village landholders on the hills. All the lands within each village, held exclusively, were entered in the individual patta or notice of demand. Its assigned assessments were relinquished unless paid for each year, subject to sale in case of retention and final default. The ordinary rules for the occupation of new land under ryotwari settlements were obtained in respect of the extension of cultivation, by indigenous races within the area of their village lands, and no change was made. On the other hand the larger block of unappropriated land sought for plantation industry and the like, the land appropriation rules of 1863 were settled in to the Nilgiris by the Secretary of state after discussion in the parliament.

The unclaimed property of the village was sold by public auction and the payment thereof was credited to government. But after the announcement of the
Loan's Act of 1883, properties were pledged to get loan. Deputy Tahsildars were appointed to collect the arrears of the revenue payment. Any objection to the grant of land was to be informed to the collector before the announcement. Villagers had the facilities to apply for a loan for cultivation. Loans were granted under the Land Improvement Loan Act XIX of 1883.

The inams or glebes of village officer, were hold rent free, as per the office. Transfers of land were frequent and easy. Between natives, these were generally effected by the traditional form of conveyance and intimated to the settlement officer. But the European practice of conveying by stamped and registered document was becoming popular. The price of land of course varies, and in Wynnaad and Ochterlony valley the forest land was selling at Rs.300 an acre; but Rs.6 to Rs.30 an acre was the average auction price for coffee land in the same area.

Revenue Settlement in Ouchterlony Valley

The valley had been surveyed first in the year 1847. Then it was resurveyed in 1872 and also in 1887, under the District standing order No.1 of the government in 1890. Notice was sanctioned for the introduction of the Revenue settlement in the Ouchterlony valley with effect from and inclusive of the current Fasli 1299 (1899-90) on the basis of
the accounts settled by the Special Assistant Collector of Nilgiris and Malabar. The collector notified that pattas were issued for all the estates in the valley embodying the result of the settlement at the Jamabandi issue from and after the issue of pattas. The land tenure there was the same as in Nilgiris, Wynad, Nilambur and Tirumalpad (Janmi). There was no wet land in the area and only areas under cultivation were coffee and other estates. These had formerly been charged Rs.2 on every cultivated area and nothing on uncultivated areas and were assessed at Rs.2 per acre on the cultivated area and 6 pies on the uncultivated as in the Wynaad.

The first instalments of revenue was paid for the current year in the case of holdings in the ochterlony valley soon after the issue of pattahs. Instalments were treated annually and recovered under Act I of 1864 (Madras) by the attachment and sale of the movable and immovable properties of the defaulting pattadars. Revenue arrears were paid to the appointed Adhigari (officer) or remitted to the Taluk Treasury at Gudalur.

The Kistbandi Rules were introduced in 1889. It was applied only to Ryotwari holdings held on pattahs from government. The Revenue on Estates held under special deeds was paid as stipulated in such deeds names.
The village cess Act IV of 1864 of Madras was brought into force in the tract known as the Ouchterlony Valley of Nilgiri District\textsuperscript{64}. His Excellency the Governor in council declared for information of these concerned. From the beginning of fasli of 1299 all holders of land in the said Ouchterlony valley were liable to pay 6 pies in every rupee of assessment and water rate on account of that cess. His excellency in council further planned to declare that the said tract should hereafter for revenue purposes be known as the Ouchterlony Amsham.

**Existing Administrative Arrangements**

Under Act I of 1868 the Commissioner of the Nilgiris was invested with all the powers of a Collector devolving upon that official by any Act of Regulation. He was the head of the revenue administration. The Commissioner was also appointed by the Act of 6th June 1868\textsuperscript{65}. His duty was to collect revenue on the Nilgiri Hills.

**Appointment and the duties of an Assistant Commissioner**

The Governor of Fort saint George in council had given the power to appoint an officer to assist the commissioner who was styled as Assistant Commissioner\textsuperscript{66}.
The said Assistant Commissioner of Revenue should perform such duty in his capacity of an Assistant Collector of revenue as it was assigned to him by the Commissioner. Assistant Commissioners received orders from commissioners regarding revenue matters.

The Commissioner was aided in the administration by two Deputy Tahsildars - One stationed at Coonoor, the other at Gudalur. The duty of the Deputy Tahsildar was related to inspection of waste land applications and reporting on petitions referred to him by the commissioners. He was ex-officio stamp-vendor and money order agent also.

Revenue Inspectors

There were two Revenue Inspectors on the Nilgiris. One worked under the Commissioner in the Todanad and Kundas and the other under the Sub-Magistrate of Coonoor. There was one Revenue Inspector in South East Wynaad.

Maniyagar and Karnams

Revenue officers of the villages were called Moneyagar assisted by the Karnams or the Accountant Generals. The Moneyagar possessed great power in their respective nadus (villages). viz., Mecanad, the paranginad, Todanad, Kudanad. They were wealthy and are generally much respected by the villagers within their divisions. There were also Maniyagars
or headmen for Ootacamund, Coonoor, Segur and for the villages below the ghats and on the slopes and also inferior Maniyagars for the hamlets on the plateau. According to the circular No. 3 dt. 4th Nov. 1878, the moneyagars and other village officials received a payment called kists (tax collection from the cultivable lands).

Under Act I of 1889 the Collector shall appoint the village munsif of each such village court. He might be a person other than a head of a village, who resided within the jurisdiction of the village court and who possessed the educational qualifications prescribed by Government. The Collector shall in such case give preference to a member of a family in which the office of the head of the village or headman within the Jurisdiction of the village court was held by hereditary right of the nearest male relation succeeding.

This village munsif or headman or Maniyagar possessed great power and influence in their respective nads, though only those of Ootacamund, Coonoor, and Kotagiri held regular courts for the disposal of petty civil and criminal cases under the Regulations.

The Karnams on the other hand were essentially government nominees. This office was not an hereditary one. There were six of these officials two for Todanad, one for each of the other three
nads and one for Segur. By the Boards proceedings (No.1283 of 13 the May 1878 and No.2491 of 7th Sept. 1878) Tahsildars of taluks were empowered to grant copies of extracts from Village Account No.5. and the chittah without reference to the Divisional officer. This authority was now extended to all Deputy Tahsildars incharge of division of taluks. They were careful to maintain the Register required by the former of the proceedings.

Duties of the Registrar

The most important duty of the Registrar was to maintain revenue registers. The duty of the registrar and that of the sub-registrar were to register the documents. Taluks were empowered to grant copies of extract from village account. Under section 50 of the Indian Registartion Act all the registered documents were kept in order. After the submission of notice the land was transferred by the Revenue Officer.

Unclaimed Documents

Under the Revenue Rule No.19, person entitled to their documents of lands must claim them without delay. If they made any delay (i.e. Period exceeding two years) the document would be destroyed.

Under the standing order of the District. When a patta was cancelled and if another person had the
same manner of patta, it should be cancelled. Blank number had been given in the No. 5 Account. (No. 5 Account was the chittah particulars. Chittah was the individual ledger of the owner of the land). Until the occasion arose to create a new pattah blank number was in account.

Owners of the land must pay their assessment regularly. Defaulters must show their reason for the non-payment of the assessment. Otherwise their property would be kept under attachment. Unless the arrears were paid by the person with interest and other charges within thirty days the landed property would be brought for sale in due course under the force of law.

Periodical Assessments were collected. Forest and grass lands planted with special products like Coffee, Tea or Chinchona were exempted from payment of assessment from the date of occupation. Assessments were collected on the Nilgiris for 5 years and on the South East Wynaad for 3 years. Grass lands on the Nilgiris occupied by fuel planters were similarly exempted for five years. These concessions were not granted to the Janmmis and to the lands held on pattas granted by government, but such lands of revenue, when planted with Chinchona were exempted from assessment for five years.

Under the standing order of the District Collector lands in Wynaad held under Jenmis and
ryotwari pattahs under government, planted with Coffee should be assessed at the rate of Rs.2 per acre and that the tax was imposed in the Third year of the plant, the year of planting and the succeeding year were exempted from demand73.

Permission of assessment was allowed for full three years. The above concession was extended to lands planted with Tea or cinchona. But the standing order No.4, No.5 of 1884 and No.7 of 1885 was notified that the remission of assessment on lands planted with cinchona between the year 1883 to 1887 applied also for lands held under permanent pattas in the district74.

Registration Act of 1877

As per the provision of the Law regarding "False Registration" it appeared that many people did not understand about the registration. In order to remove the problems in registration, the Registration Act No.III of 1877 was published. Under section 82 of this Act punishments were accorded to the persons who made false registration75.

The village revenue establishments were very small, and inadequately paid by assignments of revenue. The scheme was prepared by the settlement officer and sanctioned by the government; and villages cess Act of 1864 was specially extended to the district by the Act I of 1863 and the scheme was
modified in 1895. Under waste land rules and ryotwari system villagers were given lands. Native pattadars were granted such land as they wanted round their holdings to a total extent of 4,376 acres at an assessment of 10 annas per acre. Owners of estates were given at Rs.2 per acre. Boundaries were required. There were 4,075 acres of land provided for grazing their cattle. Every grant was inspected by the settlement officer.

Registers were maintained at the commissioners office. More care was taken during collections of revenue to avoid excess collections. Statements were prepared to show the excess collections of revenue. It was prepared at the time of Jamabandi and submitted to the settling officer - who made careful enquiries and necessary arrangements before the closing of the account. Arrangements were also made for the collection of refunds village officers were given charge to take action against the parties.

Lists of the collection and refund were sent to Taluq Treasury with village remittance. The list in the Taluq treasury contained all the claims to refund. Therefore it was easy for them to furnish vouchers for each individual case.

All proposed addition to village site, whether of assessed or unassessed land, should be submitted to the Board for Prior sanction.
Registration of the Lands

Registration of the lands were held in the Registrar's Office. Under the Indian Registration Act No.III of 1877 the registration of receipts and discharges of mortagages of Rs.100 and upwards and the reconveyances of mortagaged property were as compulsory as that of the mortagages to which they relate, whether with or without possession. Therefore present practice of registering only the mortgage deeds and not the receipts discharges and reconveyances, most prejudicial to the interest of the persons concerned was totally absent in that system.\(^7\)

The term patta was included in the term lease Act of III of 1877 section 17 clause (d) which made the registration compulsory. Of all leases from year to year or for a term exceeding one year subject to the exemption a local government was empowered to declare in certain conditions, a term did not exceeding five years and a rent was reserved not exceeding fifty (50) rupees.

Sale notice of land

A person bidding at a sale was to make it clear whether he did it on his own or as an agent and in the latter case he was to sign a document failing which his bidding was rejected.
The sale should be stayed if the defaulter or his agent acting on his behalf to claim an interest in the land tendered the full amount of arrears of revenue with the interest and other changes, before sun set on the day previous to that appointed for the sale. When purchasers paid the purchase money the lands were to be placed in their possession after due registration in the name of the purchaser and a certificate of sale was signed and sealed by the Commissioner.

Several cases of wrongful sale of lands alleged against the pattadars went to the notice of the commissioner in which the bonafide purchaser as well as the government were defrauded. In such cases, the redemption of land revenue was raised from 25 to 29 years. Tahsildars were authorized to dispose the transfer of patta. Pattadars were asked to pay land Revenue of not less than Rs.50/- per annum and were also allowed to pay the amount in a lump instead of paying in instalments.

The grant of house sites in South East Wynnaad, was free from Assessment and an extent of 25 cents was allowed free of rent to all applicants. This particular land and also the government waste lands were used for house sites but not the lands reserved for public purposes. These rules were followed by both Europeans and the Natives.
Prohibitory assessment was imposed on unauthorized occupation of land in South East Wynnaad\textsuperscript{79}. The Board authorized the collector of Nilgiris to grant lands to Irulas and Kurumbas at a rate of assessment of 6 annas per acre in consideration of their backward condition\textsuperscript{80}. The Head Assistant Collector and the Deputy Tahsildars of Coonoor and Ootacamund were requested to give due publicity to the Board's order among these tribes and to afford them all possible encouragement in the direction of cultivation.

Issuing pattahs for the grant of such lands, a clause to the effect that the pattas were not transferable and that the land was only let to them from year to year and was resumable at the pleasure of government was inserted in them. The government recognized the individual right of Todas\textsuperscript{81} to particular area of land. The privileges reserved to the Todas were intended solely for the tribe and were capable of alienation to individuals.

Salt, Abkari and miscellaneous Revenue

The district never produced the salt and that which was consumed therein was imported. The salt commission of 1876 reported that the salt dealers at Ootacamund obtained black salt from Ponnani in Malabar district, and white salt from Madras. During British regime salt was imported from the Bombay
Presidency and it was brought to Calicut by sea and then by rail to Mettupalayam or Coonoor and thence by cart. No salt petre was made in the district. The imports of salt petre from Calicut which appeared in the trade statistics consisted of the twice-refined product which was used in the cordite factory at Aravankad. The abkari revenue consisted of that derived from country spirit (arrack) foreign liquor, beer, and hemp-drugs. The only intoxicant used by the people of the Nilgiris was opium before the 19th century. Records show that opium was grown and used as a drug as well as an intoxicant. Making beer was commenced in various places like Davis brewery, Kalhatti (1839), and Honey well Brewery, Aravankadu (1857), mostly from Scotch and English Malting barley. Badaga men and sometimes women also resorted to the manufacture and consumption of country arrack a local made liquor as early as 1840.

Income tax was levied and collected in the usual manner. For similar reasons the stamp revenue was also exceptional in its nature, while the actual amount received was smaller in other districts, the revenue from both judicial and non-judicial stamps was higher per unit of the population in the Nilgiris
References

2. Ibid, P.312.
3. Ibid, P.312.
5. Ibid, P.105.
10. Francis, W., Gazetteers of South India, 1988, P.311.
11. Ibid, P.313.
14. Land for ploughing was called 'ercadoo' and Land permitted to use "a hoe" called kottu and was consequently called kottucadoo.
16. "Gudu" literally means "basket of grain" paid as tax by the Badagas and the other tribes to the Todas.


32. Revenue Records, Record Office, Collectorate, Nilgiris, 1872.
33. *Proceedings of Board of Revenue, Madras Government*
   July 9, 1978.

34. Waste Land rules were defined under rule No.478.

35. *Government Order, Section 4 of the Act 111, No.2761, June 4, 1871.*

36. *Proceedings of Board of Revenue, July 24, 1879.*


39. *Letter from Major Murrant to the Assistant Commissioner of Nilgiris, No.668, Nov.17, 1879.*


45. *Proceedings of Revenue, Madras Government, March 27, 1878.*


47. Madras Administrative Report, 1880.


49. *Indian Registration Act No.III of 1877, Fort. St. George Gazetteer, 1877.*

50. *Indian Jurist High Court of Judicature, Madras, Indian Jurist Vol.V., Dec.1, 1881.*

51. *Report on Revenue Court of Directors, Revenue despatches to Madras April 12, 1815.*


55. Letter from Castle Stuart to the Board of Revenue dated March 7, 1884.

56. Letter from Castle Stuart to the Board of Revenue dated April 7, 1884.


59. Ryotwari System was strongly advocated by Sir Thomas Manroe, ultimately in 1812, the court of Directors choose to follow this system in preference to permanent settlement. It created a direct contact between the land owner and the Government and that the obligation of the land owner to Government was fixed.


62. Ochterlony Valley was the Janmam property of the Nilambur Tirumalpad. The first professional survey was done here in 1872.

63. *Proceedings of Board of Revenue*, dated August 1, 1890.


68. *Proceedings of Revenue*, Madras Government. No.2491,
dated May 13, 1878.

69. Standing Order, Board of Revenue Madras, Government No.26, dated March 27, 1878.


74. Letter from Burrow, L.R. to the Collector's Office, Ootacamund, dated Nov.6, 1885.

75. Revenue Record dated July, 10, 1885.


79. District Standing Order No(4), Revenue Collectorate Nilgiris, 1890.

80. Proceedings of Revenue, No.1213 (MIS) dated March 8, 1895.

81. Government Order, Madras Government No.397, dated April 18, 1881 (Revenue).


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