Introduction
CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

The period 1947-1967 marks a significant stage in the general as well as in the revenue administration of the Madras State. This period witnessed the gradual constitutional, political administration and revenue reforms and changes in the state. This period may be called as a new era in the revenue administration of the Madras State because the welfare and well-being of the people was the key-note of the administrators.

Land Revenue is the back bone of a government. Different land revenue administration prevailed in the Madras Presidency during the native governments. Land Revenue system was at the hands of petty officials and middlemen. The Britishers who introduced the system of land revenue settlement, linking the assessment to the productivity of land commuted at the average market rates which were unchangeable during a spell of 50 years. An era started to bring prosperity to the agriculturists. The National Government took more progressive views and put a stop to the periodical resettlement from the year 1937 onwards.

Land Revenue Administration has undergone progressive changes in different countries or different parts of a country, from time to time creating various types of tenures in land holdings thus deviating from the Ryotwari
tenure. Time has proved that the Ryotwari tenure is the only ideal tenure both for the state and for the land holders as intermediary tenures that were created from time to time have only helped middlemen to prosper at the cost of the agricultural economy.

This research work deals, succinctly with various types of tenures and the steps taken over the years to all intermediaries and confer ryotwari rights on the occupancy ryots or land holders who had resorted to pannai cultivation.

Tamil Nadu has been described as a country almost a nation of its own. Although primarily defined in cultural terms as the land of the Tamil speaking people the geographical location of Tamil Nadu is in the South-eastern corner of the Indian Sub-continent which has enabled it to develop and maintain a distinctive character.

It had national boundaries. It is bounded on the South by the Indian ocean, on the west, by the Arabian sea, on the east by Bay of Bengal and on the North by the Mysore plateau. In ancient time, it was divided in to number of kingdoms. It was the scene of three old Hindu dynasties of Pandya, Chola and Chera.

From time immemorial the rulers in India were accustomed to take from the cultivators of the soil a certain share of the produce of every
cultivated acre. The commencement of the nineteenth century witnessed a splendid transition in the field of revenue assessment and collection in parts of Tamil Nadu.

From the time when the East India company first acquired sovereignty of the territories in India, land revenue constituted the chief part of public resource.

The primary object of the East India company was from the beginning, the acquisition of large area of lands. Land revenue was necessary in the early days to fulfil the company’s obligation to the proprietors of its stock. In 1771 the revenues from the Diwani did not come up to the company’s expectation. So Warren Hastings urged direct assumption of authority and responsibility for collection of revenue. Increase of revenue had acted as a powerful incentive in the case of the successors of Warren Hastings. Thus land revenue had grown with the growth of territorial possessions of the company.

The Madras Presidency was formed at the close of the eighteenth century and in the beginning of the 19th century. Prior to that period, the East India company’s possessions were confined to the Northern Circars, the Jaghir or the Chingleput district and a number of isolated ‘factories’ along the coast. At the close of the war with Tipu in 1792, the company obtained a
large portion of his kingdom, including Malabar, Salem and parts of Dindigul. At his death in 1799 there was another considerable accession of territory comprising Coimbatore, Canara and the Wynad, while the administration of Tanjore was taken over from the Raja. In 1800 the Nizam of Hyderabad relinquished the districts of Cuddapah, Bellary and Kurnool—generally known as ceded Districts. The next year the Nawab of Carnatic was relieved of his Subah and Nellore, North Arcot, South Arcot Trichnopoly, Madura and Tinnevelley were added to the company's possessions. These territories constitute the Madras presidency.

It was in 1765 that the question of land revenue first came up before the servants of the East India company, first in Bengal and then in Madras presidency. Feeling the pulse of experimenting different systems of land revenue, the zamindari system of revenue was extended to Tamil Nadu from its original place Bengal, evolved by Lord Cornwallis. The system was extended to Tamil Nadu in two phases—the first phase from 1802 to 1803 witnessed the initial extension to the select areas such as the Jaghir (Chingleput), parts of North Arcot, Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli. The second phase, 1804-1807, saw the final extension of this system of revenue to other areas. Thus more than one-third of the total extent of the Tamil region came under the enforcement of the Zamindari system.
In 1775, the Court of Directors ordered that a special commission, the committee of circuit, regularized the working of the zamindari system. Under this system there was no need for extensive Indianisation of the revenue service. Contact between the zamindars and the revenue authorities become less frequent. The year 1786 saw the establishment of the Madras Board of Revenue for the administration of land revenue.

Almost all the British land revenue systems and settlements beginning from the Permanent settlement were superstructures built on the prevailing systems. The unsympathetic foreign rule, the Englishman’s ignorance of Indian situation, growing financial needs of the East India Company, the excesses of the new class of speculating Indian revenue farmers and the zeal of the European revenue collectors cut at the roots of the old ethical principles of public weal.

In Madras, the different types of land tenures are to a greater extent the by-products of the attempts of the British administration to fix the responsibility for payment of land revenue. The land tenure systems prevalent in Madras are

1. The Zamindari Tenure
2. The Ryotwari Tenure
3. The Inam Tenure.
The system of the Ryotwari had direct dealings with government and enjoyed the benefits of fixity of assessment during the currency of a settlement, proper maintenance of irrigation sources by the government and an authentic record of rights in the form of a settlement register based on a cadastral survey of their fields and soil classification.

The Board of Revenue which was set up in Madras exercised supervision over the collectors and the ultimate control was with the Government and council. The functions of the Board of Revenue were defined by the Madras Regulation I of 1803. In the district, District Collectors were the heads of the revenue, administration assisted by Deputy Collectors. Districts were divided into Taluks and Thasildars were incharge of revenue administration. Big Taluks were further divided and placed under the control of the Deputy Thasildars. Under the Thasildars were Revenue Inspectors, whose duty included supervising the village accounts. The village head was not only a rent collector as for as his village was concerned but also was a magistrate disposing of petty cases both of civil and criminal in nature. Next came the Karnam whose duty was keeping the village accounts and registers intact. In the Jamabandi, peasants could get their annual rents fixed. They could demand remission of rents citing crop failure due to natural calamities.
The Survey and Settlement departments were subordinate to the Board of Revenue. The Madras Survey department did topographical and revenue settlement.

After the liquidation of the East India Company in 1858, the crown took over the colonial administration. In the form of taxation, the British squeezed as much money as possible out of India. As soon as India became free several changes were introduced.

The first major decision of the congress government of the Madras Presidency under C. Rajagopalachari was the abolition of all future Resettlements. The history of land revenue assessment of the state thereafter was just a jumble of adhoc decisions taken from time to time to meet peculiar situations.

Agriculture is the backbone of Indian Economy. Therefore land reforms were the foremost objectives of the central and state Governments in their planning immediately after attaining independence. The state of Tamil Nadu took suitable legislative measures step by step to implement the policies advocated by the centre, on the recommendation of the Planning Commission regarding measures indicated in the first part of its policy decision on the second five-year plan. Infact legislative measures in that direction had been on the anvil in our State since 1948.
As a first step, measures were taken to abolish the Zamindari system, which is nothing but an anachronism in a welfare state. In this system, the interest of the cultivators was neglected and only the middlemen benefited out of it.

The State Government began to enact a number of tenancy legislations soon after our independence in consonance with the principles laid down under the Article (39) b and c of the Directive Principles of States Policy of the Constitution of India. They realized that unless the man who cultivates the land gets his due from the produce of his land, he will not be interested in producing the food and thus meet the demand of his country men.

Beginning with Tanjore Tenants and Panniayls (protection and fair rent), Act, 1952, the Government of Tamil Nadu enacted a series of legislations like the Tamil Nadu Cultivating Tenants protection Act, The Tamil Nadu Cultivating Tenants (payment of Fair Rent Act, 1956) The Tamil Nadu Land Reforms (fixation of ceiling on Land), Act, 1961 and so on. In order to abolish Inam Tenures and leasehold, some more acts were passed in 1963.

These enactments were passed in order to subserve the common good, increase agricultural production and to promote social and economic justice.
In this thesis an attempt has been made to trace out the early land revenue administration, genesis of land revenue system and the legislation on revenue reforms in Tamil Nadu to the formative years of our popular Government after Independence.

Objectives

This study has the following objectives:

1. To trace the origin of the British Administration in the Madras state,
2. To explain the genesis of the land revenue administration in the state and
3. To describe the reforms and administrative changes during the formative years.

Sources

The present research work is based on the primary and secondary sources. The Administrative Reports, Government orders, census reports confidential reports, Debates in the Madras Legislative Assembly, proceeding orders of Board of Revenue, Jamabandhi Reports, Land Revenue Reforms Committee Reports I & II and Gazetteers are the important primary sources that are consulted for the study.
Books, Journals, Magazines and Articles are the secondary sources. Among them mention may be made to few of the works such as H.H. Dodwell’s *The Cambridge History of India* (1932) B.S. Baliga’s *Studies in Madras Administration*, (1960) J.D. Bourdillion’s Trevelyan’s *Administration of Madras*, (1960) C.D. Maclean’s *Manual of the Administration of the Madras Presidency*, Vol. I and III (1885) R.C. Dutt’s *The Economic History of India*, Vol. I & II, Dharma Kumar’s *Land and Caste in South India*, 1965, Baden Powell’s *Land Systems of British India* (1982) Frykenburg’s *Land Tenure and Peasant in South Asia* (1977) Ojha’s *Land Problems and Land Reforms*, Sarada Rajus’ *Economic Conditions in the Madras Presidency*, S. Sundararaja Iyengar’s *Land Tenures in Madras Presidency*, etc. However, none of these works gives an in-depth study of the subject under discussion. Hence the topic has become my research work. This thesis deals with the Land Revenue Administration which is the backbone of the Administration of a state. For the convenience of substantiation, the sources are used, not strictly up to the periodisation mentioned.
The Thesis has been divided into seven chapters which includes the Introduction and the Conclusion.

- The first chapter is introduction in which nature, scope and objectives are stated.
- The Geographical features of the Madras State are described in the second chapter.
- The establishment of the colonial rule in the Madras State is explained in the third chapter.
- The fourth chapter traces the genesis of the Land Revenue System.
- The fifth chapter analyses the structure of the Land Revenue system and administration of the Land Revenue.
- The administrative changes and reforms are exposed in the sixth chapter.
- The seventh chapter is the concluding chapter. The facts and the information’s furnished in the above six chapters are summarized.