

**CHAPTER - 6****CONCLUSION**

The Madras Presidency was larger than the United Kingdom with an area of 141,705 square miles. It consisted of 25 districts and the districts could be divided into seven groups-the Circar, the Carnatic, the Southern, the Ceded, the Central, the Westcoast and the Nilgris mountain ranges. The red soil was found in fourteen districts of the Presidency next to the black soil. The Presidency received copious rainfall from south-west monsoon. The parts of the Presidency received rainfall from north-east monsoon too. The rainfall varied from 140 inches(South Kanara) to 23 inches(Anantapur). The average rainfall was not exceeding 50 inches a year during the period under study. The rivers formed a true and valuable part in the irrigation systems of the Presidency. The area irrigated in the Presidency was 11.73 million acres(32.2 percent of the total cultivated area). The irrigation works included 600 dams 33000 tanks, 7000 channels and 660000 tube wells.

The revenue history of the Presidency began with the advent of the British who found the prevalence of Zamindari settlements and village settlements alongwith the existence of manyam lands. The beginning of the nineteenth century witnessed the introduction of the Ryotwari settlements in the place of village settlements.

The chief foodgrains were the paddy and dry crops like cholam, cumbu, ragi, varagu and samai and various pulses. Besides, the commercial crops were also grown in fourteen districts. Of which, the cotton and tobacco were grown in 2 million to 2.6 million acres and 2.9 to 3.7 million acres respectively. The lowest yield per acre was higher than the yields in the other states of the country vide table 2.4. The average annual production of rice was five million tons in the Presidency; whereas the production went low during the period under study.

Famine occurred at frequent intervals during the closing years of the British rule. Famine affected not only the parts of the Presidency, but the whole of India. Their effects continued to be felt long afterwards. The insufficient rains resulted in the outbreak of famine in the Presidency. The lack of irrigational facilities exposed districts like Bellary, Anantapur, Ramnad, Coimbatore to severe famine conditions. The North-east monsoon was not a boon to the Ceded districts as they received less than 6 inches except Cuddapah which got about 10 inches. In Coimbatore, Salem, Chittoor, South Kanara and the rainfall hardly exceeded 13 to 14 inches. The monsoon was the usual accompaniment of cyclonic storms which quite often affected the Circar districts of the Presidency. The outburst of storms added miseries to the people by damaging to the standing crops between 1941 and 1945.

During the period under study the south west monsoon proved to be deficient. The normal rainfall was less than 50 inches in Bellary, Anantapur, North Arcot, Salem, Trichinopoly, Ramnad, Tinnevely and Coimbatore. So the departure from the period of normally reflected on the agricultural productivity. South Kanara and Malabar, Godavari, Kistna and Tanjore, though they received the maximum rainfall in the Presidency, were driven to famine condition by the pressure of population and insufficient food supplies owing to the bad season.

Agricultural practices varied from district to district depending upon the soil, rainfall and source of irrigation. Well irrigation was most popular in Coimbatore district since 72 percent of the irrigated area was covered by this system. The irrigation works in Zamindari tracts and Ramnad were not in a satisfactory condition. The severity of the famine was felt only by 14 districts of the Presidency of which the Ceded districts were the worst hit. The production of foodgrains fell from 7.7 million tons to 6.3 million tons between 1945 and 1947.

The war clouds were hung on Europe with the outbreak of the Second World War due to the ambitious and arrogant policies of Nazi Germany and its allied countries. The efforts of Great Britain to combat the Axis powers brought the colonial India into the whirlpool. The Congress and other political parties availed this

opportunity to press their demands and were firm in securing favourable terms from the British in relation to India; whereas Gandhi stood for unconditional support to the British based on moral rather than practical. On the other hand, the British were more cautious in not repeating the mistake of 1914-18 namely the securing the short term support of the Indians. Though majority of the congressmen seemed to be in favour of cooperation with the British, they obliged to the decision of the Congress Working Committee. Thereby, the Congress Ministries tendered their resignations in 1939. The non-congress parties including the Muslim League and the Justice party openly supported the British in their war efforts. The Governor assumed the administration of the Presidency and leashed repressive measures against the Congress party and its leaders. The relationship got strained.

Wavell who stood for agricultural and Bovine improvement both in Great Britain and India could not protect India from the impact of the war namely rampant inflation, wide spread corruption and black marketing; the situation was further worsened by the stopage of imports from Burma and South Asian Countries which were under the horns of war. The outbreak of famine in parts of the country added fuel to the fire.

The war needs placed the Presidency in a precarious position concerning the food market. The average gross output of food crops

in the Presidency of Madras during the pre-war period was 8.3 million tons. The deficit was adjusted by means of annual imports amounted to half a million tons. The year 1941-42 was one of the net exports rather than imports. The deficit was higher in the Presidency. The food situation was further aggravated by adverse seasonal and the increase of population. Rumours were afloat that the army was building grain stocks at a time when the parts of the Presidency were facing starvation. The cost of the balanced diet rose from five rupees (Pre-war cost) to fifteen rupees per adult per month. The mad hiking of the prices drove the Madras Government to fix the prices of essential commodities under the Defence of India Rule in 1939. Special efforts like setting up the advisory committees at various levels, the compilation of index numbers and special price reports were undertaken by the Government to stabilise the prices of food commodities in the Presidency.

Orders issued under Rule 81, Defence of India Act of 1939 provided the legal frame work of food administration in the country upto September 1946. However, it was allowed to continue to operate under the Essential Supplies Act 1946. The Government controls food-grains like rationing and controlled distribution of foodgrains were adopted by popular ministries of T.Prakasam and O.P.Ramasamy Reddiar during 1945-1947. The measures were enforced through the newly created post of Commissioner of Civil Supplies who was

to be a member of Board of Revenue. Stringent steps had been taken to curb the stock movements of rice, paddy and other foodgrains outside the Presidency.

The food administration in India was out and out a method of 'trial and error'. The Price Control Conferences were convened periodically by Government of India, seemed to be abortive as their recommendations were <sup>not</sup> to be binding the Provincial Governments. However, Madras Government stepping into the lines of Government of India drew up a Provincial Basic Plan and introduced the 'automatic requisitioning scheme' in November 1943 which proved to be a partial success.

The quantity of foodgrains procured amounted to 721,164 tons to 1,052,688 tons during 1942 and 1944. The Madras Government took stringent steps to arrest the price hike of the foodgrains. Subsequently rationing system was introduced. By the middle of 1946, the entire population of the Presidency was brought under the purview of the rationing systems-statutory and non-statutory. Under the rationing system, an individual was given a ration of ten to twelve ounces. Its quantity was gradually reduced to eight ounces. Indeed, rationing was not popular in the Presidency. Besides, the machinery was not efficient and was quite ignorant of the basic economics of price control. Further, the political condition forbade the people in extending their cooperation to the extent for the success of the system.

The Grow More Foodgrain was launched to increase food production; the village committees proved to be a dismal failure in the presidency except in Malabar. The food policy of the Madras Government was under serious attacks from the members of the Legislative Assembly of Council. On the whole, the people in the Presidency suffered to the extent owing to the vague and complicated procedures of the Government and the starvation deaths also followed.