LAND REVENUE:

The oppressive land revenue policy of the British Government was the most important cause for the backwardness of Indian agriculture and poverty of the bulk of agricultural population. Thus, of all the problems of Indian agriculture, the nationalist leaders attached the greatest importance to the system of assessment and the pitch of land revenue. As land revenue was the most important source of public income, the British Government tried to extract maximum from the peasant by neglecting the destination of the peasant.

It is evident from the British officials itself, who wrote, but kept it secret "No native prince demands the rent which we do" wrote Bishop Heber in 1826, after traveling all through India and visiting British and Native States. Further, “A Land Tax like that which now exists in India”, wrote colonel Briggs in 1830, “professing to absorb the whole of the landlord’s rent, was never known under any government in Europe or Asia.” Such was the land revenue policy adopted by British Government in India. Therefore, R.C. Dutt asserted openly “In England, the land tax was between one shilling and four shillings in the pound, i.e., between 5 and 20 percent. In Bengal the land tax was fixed at over 90 per cent of the rental and in Northern India over 80 per cent of the rental, in case of Bombay Presidency more than that.”

It clearly appears that the land tax in India under colonial rule was heavy and uncertain, in fact, it was worst in the Bombay Presidency where the land tax was paid by the cultivator of the soil. So the land revenue policy along with the outbreak
of regular and devastating famines in Bombay Karnataka aggravated the problem of poverty leading to chronic starvation.

The British Government in India did not adopt a uniform land revenue policy. Broadly, it introduced three major land revenue and tenurial system viz., The permanent settlement in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, Banaras division of the U.P., Northern Carnatic (Tamil Nadu) and roughly covered 19 per cent of the total area of British India. Where the zamindars and revenue collectors were converted into landlords, who were not only collected land revenue from the peasant, but also became the owners of the land they held. While the cultivators were reduced to the status of mere tenants.

The Mahalwari system was introduced in major portions of the U.P., the central provinces, the Punjab (with variations) and covered nearly 30 per cent of the British area. In the Mahalwari system settlement was made village by village or Mahal by Mahal with landlords or heads of families who collectively claimed to be the landholders of the village or the Mahal, and were collectively responsible for the payment of land revenue.

The Ryotwari system, it was first introduced in Madras by Thomas Munro (1820-27), later extended to Bombay Presidency including Bombay Karnataka, Assam and some other parts of British India, it covered roughly 51 per cent of the British territories. As the Madras settlement Manual States, 'under the Ryotwari system, every registered holder of land was recognized as the proprietor. He was at liberty to sub-let his property or to transfer it by gift, sale or mortgage. He cannot be ejected by government so long as he pays the fixed assessment.'
The Bombay government introduced ryotwari system in Bombay Karnataka, after several experiments. The British officials in Bombay Presidency showed that there were no zamindars with large estates with whom settlements of land revenue could be made. However, it is very clear that the British officials favoured ryotwari settlement in Bombay Presidency, because, there were no intermediate landlords or village communities to intercept a part of the profits, as it had to share the revenue with the zamindars and could not claim a share of the growing income from land. And, the government had as good a grip over the cultivators as a slave-owner has over his slaves, and could take away all that was not needed to keep them alive. It cannot be denied that the object of the Ryotwari system was to obtain for government the utmost that the land would yield in the shape of rent. So the officials pointed out that under the permanent settlement the government was a financial loser, but as the government looked for more and more, it went ahead with ryotwari system against the wish of the peasantry.

After the defeat of the Maratha confederacy in 1817, the area directly ruled by the peshwa including Bombay Karnataka was annexed and formed part of Bombay Presidency. Since there was no clear model for the land revenue at that time, the first two commissioners of the Deccan Mountstuart Elphinstone and William Chaplin began to experiment. Later under the direction of Pringle (1824-28), an officer of the Bombay civil services for the purpose of settlement a new department called “The Revenue Survey and Assessment of the Deccan” was established.

Pringle’s survey included the measurement of the field, an estimate of the yield of various soils, as well as of the cost of cultivation, and fixing of government
demand at 55 per cent of the net produce etc. But, Pringle’s survey had many faults like, the preliminary work of measurement was grossly faulty, the estimates of produce which formed an important element in the determination of the assessment, were erroneous and, the revenue demand was excessive. Therefore the Pringle’s system was abandoned and re-survey was commenced in 1835 by Goldmid and Wingate, their experiments led to the introduction of Ryotwari system in Bombay Karnataka.

After taking into consideration the average character and depth of the soil in each field, graded the land into nine different categories according to the fertility of the soil. But, instead of calculating the net surplus of each grade of soil and then fixing its rent at 55 per cent, Goldsmid and Wingate fixed the rates of assessment on the basis of practical considerations as the capacity of the land and the general circumstances of the districts. Thus, though the settlement was an improvement upon Pringle’s work yet the assessment was a kind of guess work. In fact they denied the fact that the principle of fixing the assessment on the basis of the average produce of the fields was the ancient and correct principle. Hence the continuous increase in the land revenue in later settlements, made on this unreliable basis, has led to improvement and widespread distress in the Bombay Presidency.

As a fact, the land revenue of the territories conquered from Maratha in 1817 was £ 800,000 in the year of conquest, it was raised to £ 1,150,000 in 1818 and further, in a few years raised to £ 1,500,000 and it has been continuously raised. Thus, the survey which commenced in 1835 the commencement of Ryotwari system in Bombay Karnataka, which really posed serious problem when the 1836 land
settlement period of 30 years ended and the revised settlement was introduced in 1867.19

Over all the system introduced by Wingate and Goldmid had many defects in the long run under this system the peasant in Bombay Presidency in general and Bombay Karnataka in particular suffered to the greatest extent. Firstly, the settlement did not bring the system of peasant ownership because large number of landlords had been replaced by one landlord i.e., the state, and, the peasant was branded as government’s tenant, whose land was confiscated if he failed to pay the land revenue. Secondly, the government retained the unrestricted power to increase the revenue demand at each recurring settlement and, the cultivator had no voice in the settlement of the land tax, he was not consulted in fixing that tax, he was called upon, after the demand was settled, to pay it or to quit his ancestral land and starve.20 Thirdly, in most areas the land revenue fixed was exorbitant, the ryot was hardly left with bare maintenance, the actual land tax levied often approximated to or exceeded one-third of the field produce.21 In other words, 45 per cent to 55 per cent of the gross produce was actually levied as land revenue,22 which left the cultivator no savings and no resources. Fourthly, though the settlement under Ryotwari system was made for 30 years there was no security of tenure, because the ryot could be driven out any time.23 Lastly, the land revenue was collected with stringency, the ryot had to pay revenue even when his produce was damaged by drought or other reasons.24 Hence, looking at the working of the system in Bombay Presidency, R.C. Dutt wrote "No system could be devised by human ingenuity better calculated to keep an agricultural nation permanently poor and resource less
than the system which left to the revenue officials the absolute power to increase the revenue at each revision.\textsuperscript{25}

Even several British officers as early as 1826 realized and wrote the grave effects of land revenue system. One of the most distinguished Englishmen Bishop Heber, who traveled throughout India in 1824, 1825 and 1826, realized that the heavy land tax was the main reason of poverty. He did not mention it explicitly, but in his private letters to the Right Honourable Charles Williams Wynn dated Karnatic, March 1826, he wrote thus, "Neither Native nor European agriculturist, I think can thrive at the peasant rate of taxation. Half the gross produce of the soil is demanded by government, and this, which is nearly the average rate wherever there is not a permanent settlement, is sadly too much to leave an adequate provision for the present, even with the usual frugal habits of the Indians, and the very inartificial and cheap manner in which they cultivate the land. Still more is it an effective bar to anything like improvement: it keeps the people, even in favourable years, in a state of object penury; and when the crop fails in even a slight degree, it involves a necessity on the part of the government of enormous outlays in the way of remission and distribution, which after all, do not prevent men, women and children dying in the streets in droves, and the roads being strewed with carcasses. In Bengal, where, independent of its exuberant fertility, there is a permanent assessment, famine is unknown. In Hindustan on the other hand, I found a general feeling among the King's officers, and I myself was led from some circumstances to agree with them, that the peasantry in the company's provinces are, on the whole, worse off, poorer, and more dispirited, than the subject of the Native Princes. Further, I am convinced that it is only necessary to draw less money from the peasants, and to spend more of
what is drawn within the country, to open some door to Indian industry in Europe, and to admit the natives to some greater share in the magistracy of their own people to make the Empire as durable as it would be happy.”

Absolutely, an intelligent observation and suggestion, which was utmost significant that “to draw less money from the peasants, and to spend more of what is drawn within the country” were the remedies against poverty and famine, but the colonial government did nothing in this direction rather it increased the land revenue year after year and spend little for the improvement, and, in fact large share was taken away or drained out of the country. Among the numerous problems of land revenue system, the nationalists argued that the ‘Assessments were pitched too high’ and it was the greatest evil. The high pitch of assessment continuously enhanced at every revisional settlement of 30 years in Bombay Presidency, where the land revenue demand was so high that whole of the economic rent was taken away. G.V. Joshi, in his article ‘Note on Agriculture in Bombay’ wrote, ‘the assessments are pitched too high and in some cases are even heavier, against all the declared principles of the survey, than the true economic rents, sweeping away not only all the Ryot’s “net assets”, but also trenching on his narrowing margin of subsistence. It is obvious that the government thrown away all the principles of civilized human being. M.G. Ranade initiated the nationalist critique of the land revenue policy in the course of a series of articles in the Journal of Poona Sarvajanik Sabha. In his article on the “Agrarian problem and its solution” in 1879, he pointed out ‘the unwelcome truth’ that operation of the Bombay revenue department had pauperized the country.
The nationalist leaders of Bombay Presidency like G.V. Joshi, Ranade, Pherozshah Mehta, K.T. Telang, G.K. Gokhale, Tilak, Mahrotha, Kesari and several native papers began to show statistically all the high pitch and argued that a major negative aspect of the revenue system as it operated in Bombay Presidency was the immoderately high pitch of assessment, which was continuously enhanced at each recurring settlement to a level which transformed land revenue into a virtual rack-rent.31

The land assessment in Bombay Presidency can be best exhibited by figures. Since the acquisition of the Peshwa's territories in 1817-18, the British territory remained virtually unchanged, at least till 1836, but within few years the land revenue immensely increased for instance.

In 1817-18 the land revenue was £ 868,047
In 1818-19 the land revenue was £ 1,143,041
In 1819-20 the land revenue was £ 1,078,164
In 1820-21 the land revenue was £ 1,818,314

It indicates the land revenue was more than doubled within four years from the conquest.32 The land revenue collection for the district of Dharwar in 1868-69 was £183,784, raised to £ 222,272 in 1878-79, and further raised to £ 225,831 in 1881-82.33

In between 1867—1896-97 or. by 1905 the land revenue of Dharwad district was raised by Rs. 6,17,324 from 12,77,626 to Rs. 18,94,950 by the revised settlement, the increase was an equal to 48 per cent.34

As regards to the district of Kanara in 1862-63 it was £ 65,942 in 1872-73 raised to £ 81,549 and further raised to £ 100,283 in 1881-82,35 by 1904 the assessment on the
government occupied land was Rs. 9,90,954.35. G.V. Joshi provided the statistical data of increased land revenue. He said, in 1871-72-73 the land revenue of Bombay Presidency was 242 lakhs, by 1899-1900 it increased to 299.9 lakhs, exhibiting an increase during those 30 years, 56.2 lakhs or 23.1 per cent. He said, further, by comparison with other provinces of British India, the land revenue increase was more in Bombay Presidency for instance the increase of land revenue demand in Punjab was 20 per cent, while just 8 per cent in the Ryotwari presidency of Madras, it was nearly 23 per cent in Bombay Presidency. As regards this increase, if we ask how it has been obtained, nearly three-fourths of this increase has been secured on revision settlements and just one-fourth was consequent of extended tillage. In other words out 56.2 lakh increased revenue 41.38 lakhs was due to revision settlements. It clearly appears from these figures that the land revenue demand has been increasing without any reduction year after year.

It is notorious that the assessment was left entirely at the discretion of the survey officer, who arbitrarily increased without consulting the cultivator, hence the ryots were not protected against undue enhancements at every revisional settlements. For instance, as far as Bombay Karnataka districts were concerned Wingate's settlement, commenced in 1836, was virtually completed by 1872. The increase shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Revenue prior to settlement (£)</th>
<th>Revenue under the settlement (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dharwar</td>
<td>113,039</td>
<td>156,562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgaum</td>
<td>130,744</td>
<td>157,026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanara</td>
<td>14,850</td>
<td>27,7881</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Particularly the land revenue in Dharwad and Belgaum increased very hurriedly after the revision settlement of 1866-67, since these two districts, as we have already discussed were famous for the production of cotton when the civil was in America had interfered with the import of American cotton into Lancashire, the British authorities took personal interest to grow American cotton here, which largely stimulated cotton cultivation in Dharwar and Belgaum and there were sign of temporary prosperity, which the British mistook, particularly the survey officers, and unreasonably increased the land revenue assessment, because of this misconception on the part of British Government, it went on increasing the land revenue, which brought severe misery to the cultivators, and they were forced to fall into the clutches of moneylender to pay the government demand. For instance, the Deccan rifts of 1875 were result of increase.

The revision settlement commenced in 1866, went on slowly, and by 1899 only half the villages of the province had been revised i.e. out of 27,781 villages only 13,369½ had been settled and the increase was 30 per cent in the Bombay Presidency. The increase in that period in Bombay Karnataka was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>No. of villages settled</th>
<th>Revenue realized in the year before revision (£)</th>
<th>Revenue demand in consequence of the revision (£)</th>
<th>Percentage of Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgaum</td>
<td>892</td>
<td>83,749</td>
<td>109,847</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dharwar</td>
<td>1290</td>
<td>129,868</td>
<td>187,253</td>
<td>44.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bijapur</td>
<td>995</td>
<td>81,631</td>
<td>109,043</td>
<td>33.644</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In fact, the highest increase of 44.2 per cent in Dharwar district was due to the mistook of prosperity, on account of cotton boom in that district. This was the reality of land revenue system under British rule in Bombay Karnataka. Dadabhai Naoroji, gave evidence before a committee of the House of Commons in 1873, in which he
said that the signs of prosperity were hallow and ephemeral, and that the enormous increase in the land revenue was oppressive and unjustifiable. As a matter of fact it will further clear if we see the collection of land revenue year after year in Bombay Karnataka except Kanara.

Revenue collection in the first three years of British occupation.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Collections</th>
<th>Remissions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1818-19</td>
<td>Rs. 22,00,140.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819-20</td>
<td>Rs. 22,29,980.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820-21</td>
<td>Rs. 25,56,270.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REVENUE COLLECTIONS AND REMISSIONS  
During 1833-1843  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Collections</th>
<th>Remissions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1833-34</td>
<td>9,67,943.00</td>
<td>1,28,350.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834-35</td>
<td>11,02,540.00</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835-36</td>
<td>9,25,332.00</td>
<td>3,03,300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836-37</td>
<td>8,38,840.00</td>
<td>94,060.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837-38</td>
<td>9,18,422.00</td>
<td>1,71,176.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838-39</td>
<td>8,65,069.00</td>
<td>3,10,565.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839-40</td>
<td>11,53,291.00</td>
<td>86,502.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840-41</td>
<td>11,47,066.00</td>
<td>77,427.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841-42</td>
<td>11,66,554.00</td>
<td>82,405.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842-43</td>
<td>11,50,821.00</td>
<td>71,991.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REVENUE COLLECTIONS AND REMISSIONS  
During 1860-61 to 1873-74  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Collections</th>
<th>Remissions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1860-61</td>
<td>32,57,439.00</td>
<td>16,020.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861-62</td>
<td>33,87,373.00</td>
<td>1,236.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862-63</td>
<td>35,17,000.00</td>
<td>1,183.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863-64</td>
<td>36,04,491.00</td>
<td>1,071.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864-65</td>
<td>44,09,774.00</td>
<td>485.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865-66</td>
<td>42,96,540.00</td>
<td>895.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866-67</td>
<td>43,36,235.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>1867-68</td>
<td>43,39,404.00</td>
<td>657.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>1868-69</td>
<td>42,81,845.00</td>
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<td>1869-70</td>
<td>43,25,937.00</td>
<td>311.00</td>
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<td>1870-71</td>
<td>42,84,006.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>1871-72</td>
<td>42,52,619.00</td>
<td>274.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872-73</td>
<td>42,81,965.00</td>
<td>339.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873-74</td>
<td>42,69,063.00</td>
<td>16.00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Revenue Collections in the Karnataka from 1875-76 to 1882-83

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Collections</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1875-76</td>
<td>45,68,213.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876-77</td>
<td>37,04,677.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877-78</td>
<td>44,94,380.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>1878-79</td>
<td>44,91,587.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>1879-80</td>
<td>41,90,384.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>1880-81</td>
<td>48,36,396.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881-82</td>
<td>43,73,146.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882-83</td>
<td>43,65,301.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Land Revenue Collected in Karnataka from 1903 to 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gross Revenue</th>
<th>Remission</th>
<th>Realisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1903-04</td>
<td>69,78,529.00</td>
<td>2,211.00</td>
<td>55,50,714.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904-05</td>
<td>69,79,032.00</td>
<td>29,104.00</td>
<td>46,56,509.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905-06</td>
<td>69,68,777.00</td>
<td>2,29,391.00</td>
<td>24,62,049.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906-07</td>
<td>72,22,874.00</td>
<td>1,91,380.00</td>
<td>67,65,962.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907-08</td>
<td>72,20,631.00</td>
<td>81,268.00</td>
<td>59,17,801.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908-09</td>
<td>72,39,314.00</td>
<td>1,09,809.00</td>
<td>45,55,938.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909-10</td>
<td>73,58,041.00</td>
<td>16,119.00</td>
<td>67,72,465.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>1910-11</td>
<td>73,91,031.00</td>
<td>10,617.00</td>
<td>65,07,827.00</td>
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</table>

### Land Revenue Collections from 1911-12 to 1917-18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gross Revenue</th>
<th>Remission</th>
<th>Realisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911-12</td>
<td>60,55,910.00</td>
<td>2,61,968.00</td>
<td>40,23,014.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912-13</td>
<td>73,98,659.00</td>
<td>74,662.00</td>
<td>59,75,726.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913-14</td>
<td>75,92,229.00</td>
<td>72,288.00</td>
<td>59,14,648.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914-15</td>
<td>75,90,514.00</td>
<td>24,189.00</td>
<td>64,57,995.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915-16</td>
<td>79,14,644.00</td>
<td>2,69,936.00</td>
<td>65,38,790.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916-17</td>
<td>63,92,803.00</td>
<td>50,344.00</td>
<td>63,35,223.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>1917-18</td>
<td>68,43,703.00</td>
<td>36,514.00</td>
<td>68,02,246.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Land Revenue Collections from 1920-21 to 1929-30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gross Revenue</th>
<th>Remission</th>
<th>Realisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920-21</td>
<td>68,64,289.00</td>
<td>1,40,125.00</td>
<td>53,29,097.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923-24</td>
<td>70,73,561.00</td>
<td>6,22,078.00</td>
<td>60,21,148.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926-27</td>
<td>72,12,500.00</td>
<td>25,083.00</td>
<td>61,04,952.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929-30</td>
<td>77,94,075.00</td>
<td>85,767.00</td>
<td>70,24,069.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Land Revenue Collections from 1931-32 to 1937-38

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gross Revenue</th>
<th>Remission</th>
<th>Realisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1931-32</td>
<td>84,90,049.00</td>
<td>1,46,690.00</td>
<td>67,63,474.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933-34</td>
<td>81,09,538.00</td>
<td>4,14,654.00</td>
<td>68,29,746.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935-36</td>
<td>91,18,505.00</td>
<td>4,89,379.00</td>
<td>70,85,964.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937-38</td>
<td>95,23,383.00</td>
<td>20,52,352.00</td>
<td>47,19,343.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Clearly the figures show that the government was mainly concerned with the collections, without considering the failure of crops, droughts or famine, another point is collection was constantly raised while remissions were constantly decreased. Even the native papers of Bombay Karnataka repeatedly complained against the new assessments, and the cultivators also sent several petitions to the authorities but the government was unheeded. The Bombay Samachar dated 6th July, 1885 in noticing the increase in the land revenue assessment in the Honnavar Taluka of the Kanara, says ‘that the officers concerned appear to have gone on heedlessly in the matter, the aggregate increase was 42 per cent, which was very large and startling and urged the government to inquire it.46 The Dharwar Vritt, dated 7th January, 1886 complained that, the cultivators of the village of Ainapur in the Athani taluka of Belgaum district, gave petition to the Governor in Council, by making a statement that the survey department abruptly increased land revenue, the reason given by the survey officers was that the inundations by the river Krishna have given extra valuation to that village lands. In fact the petition said the survey officers spend their time in Shikar and left their work done by illpaid and uneducated subordinates, who were probably directed to enhance abruptly by the officials. As a matter of fact the river Krishna was in existence when the first land revenue settlement was made. Thus, the Dharwar Vritt, along with many native papers of the region, in alluding to the subject requested the government to appoint a commission to report minutely to the changes made in the petition of cultivators of Ainapur.47 But, the government did nothing and, though the cultivators repeatedly sent petitions, the government went ahead to collect the enhanced land revenue. This is just an example here, one can imagine what would have happened throughout the Bombay Karnataka. Thus, it
need hardly said that this kind of sudden increase in the land revenue was made 
without consulting the cultivator.

Second most important evil of the land revenue system according to the 
nationalist leaders was the heavy incidence.48 G.V. Joshi said, ‘the land revenue 
demand in this presidency (Bombay), as measured by its incidence on population, is 
exceptionally heavy – heavier by far than in any other province of British India.49 
The enhancement was not according to any definite and specific rules, arbitrarily 
increased by unknown rules, and unhindered by any Judicial check.50 G.V. Joshi 
calculated the heavy incidence of land revenue on population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Land Revenue per 100 inhabitants (Rs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bengal</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Provinces</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madras</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>199.451</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, the heavy incidence of land revenue on population, was one decisive 
indication of the excessive pressure of the state demand upon the land in Bombay 
Presidency and to which the rayat mainly ascribed his difficulties.

Equally heavy, the pressure of its incidence on cultivated acreage, for 
example,

**LAND REVENUE INCIDENCE PER ACRE OF CULTIVATED AREA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Cultivated area in lakhs of acres</th>
<th>Assessment in lakhs</th>
<th>Incidence in Rs. Per acre of cultivated full assessed area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canara</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>9.84</td>
<td>4 2 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dharwar</td>
<td>13.59</td>
<td>19.23</td>
<td>1 6 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgaum</td>
<td>8.84</td>
<td>11.02</td>
<td>1 3 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bijapur</td>
<td>18.17</td>
<td>11.19</td>
<td>0 9 132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The figures for all the districts were for 1898-99. The most noticeable feature of the statistics put together is the remarkable disproportion they reveal that the rates were as high as they well could be, and were higher than anywhere else in British India. As a matter of fact, the pressure of land revenue assessment, whether measured in respect of their incidence on population or cultivated acreage, was unduly excessive, and was the heaviest in British India.

The third evil according to the nationalists was the rigidity of the land revenue system. The revenue collecting machinery was very rigid, inflexible, stringent, improper and that its mode and time of collection were inconvenient, oppressive, and unsuited to the circumstances of Indian agriculture for instance. G.V. Joshi wrote about the stringency in the district of Bijapur, which lies in the driest zone of the Deccan upland and was the poorest zilla in the presidency.

The land revenue history of the district during the years ending 1899-1900

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Land Revenue in 1889-90 (in lakhs of rupees)</th>
<th>Land Revenue in 1899-1900 (in lakhs of rupees)</th>
<th>Increase during the decade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bijapur</td>
<td>13.78</td>
<td>14.10</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two things are clear from the statement. Firstly, the land revenue demand shows increase, secondly, the land revenue demand has been collected in the district regularly from year to year and with comparative ease, in spite of the disastrous vicissitudes of the seasons, and the tremendous losses to the cultivators resulting in consequence during the period. In 1891-92, the suspension in Bijapur, owing to famine conditions, amounted to Rs. 27,000 out of 13.78 lakhs of land revenue. The arrear was however, collected in the year following As a matter of fact, in the whole of Bombay Presidency. During the decade ending with 1890-91 with its
seasons of drought and deficient rainfall, the annual remissions were only in the ratio of 0.23 per cent, and remaining 98.40 per cent was recovered within the year in which it fell due, and a little under 1 per cent was postponed or left over.56

The revenue collectors were as exacting as ever in their collections, and it was not a rare sight to see the cattle and household effects of the cultivators being sold for realization of land dues.57 The Belgaum Samachar58 of the 22nd May brought to light an instance of atrocious oppression committed by land tax assessor on some poor ryots. In Chandgad Mahal in the Belgaum Taluka, some three poor men were declared to have an annual income of five hundred rupees each, and thus, assessed at the rate of Rupees 19½ a year by Bapuji Narsihm the Mahalkari of the taluka. The poor ryots could not pay, and consequently their property was attacked and sold. The property which the tax collector got was their huts, which though estimated by the Mahalkari at an annual rate of thirty rupees, realized only twenty-one rupees at a sale by public auction. The men, though really oppressed, could not appeal, because they were too poor to think of that expensive remedy. When Mr. Gray, the then collector of Belgaum happened to know through the reports of the newspaper, he personally inspected the huts, after the inquiry he satisfied that the ryots were really oppressed. The paper says, it was a mere accident which brought this instance of oppression to light, and who can say often this how many instances have remained undiscovered for want of opportunities.59 Such a close collection of the state demand that such unprecedented misfortunes best serves to illustrate the cost-iron stringency of land revenue system in the Bombay Presidency.
The imposition of the enhancement of assessments on revision even in calamitous years, and insist a stringent collection of the state demand even from a starving and suffering peasant, without any large policy of suspension or remissions even in such seasons. G.V. Joshi wrote, even if the whole of the outstanding arrear were remitted, it would bring him no adequate relief, with his means all exhausted, with an increased burden of added debts to bear, and with his cattle dreadfully reduced in numbers, it would appear that he would not be able for years to come to easily pay up the existing assessments, which he finds in those districts like Bijapur even in normal years too heavy, And what is wanted to assist him in his efforts to recover from the “crushing blows” of the past decades is a material alleviation of the burden of the state demand upon the land.60

Whenever crops failed due to failure of rainfall or excess of rainfall, drought or famine, the government gave little or insufficient consideration and maintained its rigidity of revenue collection even in the face of such natural disasters. And forced the peasant to contribute his quota of public revenue.61 For example, the Chikitsak62, of 9th March, 1892 says that, the people of Athani taluka in Belgaum district, being much harassed by famine, petitioned the government for granting a remission of land revenue but to no purpose, that on the contrary, a contribution of half an anna per rupee of the land assessment was being levied from the ryots in addition to the land revenue.63 Further the Kanara News64 dated 6th April, 1922 wrote about the strictness of the revenue authorities in collecting land revenue that, if the tenant fails to pay the rent on the due date an amount equal to a fourth of the rent was taken from the ryot as fine.65
Thus the nationalist leaders and all the nationalist newspapers criticized the stringent land revenue policy of the government and urged for remedy. The Bombay Chronicle of 7th August, 1923 asserted, the land revenue administration of the Bombay Presidency suggests some pertinent and serious considerations. If in a year of plentiful rainfall and bumper crops, the coercive process has to be resorted to in thousands of cases, the entire system of land revenue calls for an immediate radical revision.  

Some of the nationalist leaders also recognized that many of the evils they found in the revenue system had their roots in the Indian government’s adherence to the Richardian theory of rent and in its belief that the state was the real landlord or owner of the land in India.

Another important issue raised by nationalist leaders was assessment of non-paying cropped area particularly G.V. Joshi who made the radical suggestion that the uneconomic holdings should not be taxed at all, since these holdings did not generate any surplus or rent out of which revenue might be paid. The government demand in their case, he said, became ‘a deduction from what is not ever enough for the ryot’s subsistence – a substantial portion sliced away from his scanty and precarious food-supply which ought never to be touched.’ He further said, the agriculturist pays not for cultivation but for occupation, and whether he puts his occupied acres under crop or not, he pays his assessment on the whole occupied area all the same. Taking the average rate of assessment at a 1 rupee per acre, it is clear that he pays to the state half a crore in assessment on lands on which he does not and cannot grow even a single bushel of corn, a good round price paid for the
barren privileges of occupation.\textsuperscript{69} These facts were not taken into consideration by the government and the poor peasants were continued to tax. M.G. Ranade said in 1879, "further as an all inferior lands the cost of cultivation and of the Ryot's subsistence approaches very nearly the whole value of the crop, no profits are earned by him, as he subsists only because he works on his field. There can be, therefore, no economic rent, and the ryot pays the government land tax, either with borrowed money, or else from income derived otherwise then from his land.\textsuperscript{70} Evidently these non-paying areas cover in their aggregate a third or thereabouts, of the total cultivated acreage in the Bombay Presidency and embraced not less than 30 to 50 per cent of the total number of smaller holdings. They included land such a mal lands in Bijapur, Dahali and Tisali in Belgaum. These lands were admittedly below the minimum economic level, and constitute, a broad belt of non-profitable subsistence farming, large extents of waste lands originally left out as unarable, but brought under regular assessment, notwithstanding the legislative guarantees contained in the land revenue code against taxation of private improvements.\textsuperscript{71}

These evils of land revenue administration in Bombay Presidency continued without break, therefore, these evils related in deleterious and harsh effects on the rural communities.

\textbf{Effects of Colonial Land Revenue Policy on agriculture in Bombay Karnataka}

The Ryotwari land revenue settlement in Bombay Karnataka resulted in backwardness and stagnation of agriculture, and poverty of bulk of agricultural population. Firstly, high pitch of land revenue took away almost everything, in fact, the cultivator was left in such a situation that he never had not only any surplus to
improve agriculture, but also a complete food for the whole year. Secondly, the heavy assessment under the intensity and frequency of famines, since the ryot had no savings he became the victim of famine very easily and died of starvation. Thirdly, the 30 years revision settlement under Ryotwari system the ryot always felt insecurity of tenure, thus the was in dilemma whether to work hard or not, because he was not sure about his position to reap the profit of his hard work. In fact, the lazyness of ryot was the product of the land revenue system, otherwise the ryot was thrifty, industrious and provident by nature.

Fourthly, the excessive land revenue discouraged private investment of capital in land, therefore the agriculture continuously remained backward. Fifthly, indebtedness, one of the worst consequences of land revenue system in Bombay Presidency was rural indebtedness. In the absence of proper system of takavi loans, diminishing agricultural production, excessive assessment, combined with the rigidity and stringency of the revenue system, forced the ryot to fall into the hands of the moneylender, to save his land. As a matter of fact, the government held the view that the ryot himself was exclusively responsible for all his woes, but the reality was the land revenue system and its pressure were the main force behind ryot’s indebtedness. With the introduction of the ryotwari land tenure, and the government’s recognition of personal rights in land, cultivable land became a marketable commodity, the growing demand and burden of land revenue, recurring outbreak of droughts and famines made the ryot depend to a much greater extent than ever before on the funds made available by the rural money-lender. Let us see Mr. Woodburn’s Report (1889) on the Deccan Districts indebtedness.
Mr. Woodburn’s figures for 9 districts relating to indebtedness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Percentage of occupants not in debt</th>
<th>Percentage of Ryots with debt 1-10 times the assessment</th>
<th>Percentage of Ryots with debt 10-20 times the assessment</th>
<th>Percentage of Ryots with more than 20 times assessment debt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poona</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satara</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagar</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sholapur</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khandesh</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasik</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thana</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratnagiri</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bijapur</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Averages</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

G.V. Joshi argues that the data were defective because, the burden of debt was increasing every year with the piling up of fresh obligations. There is ample evidence that the burden was more oppressive in the Deccan with its extremely precarious climate. The debts were growing because his necessities in this respect were often imperative. The oscillations of the seasons, the pressure of public burdens, domestic requirements and various other “accidents of circumstance” leave him no alternative but often to go to the moneylender.

The burden of debt, its interest, combined with creation of false documents, resulting in the loss of property by the cultivating classes exploded into riots against money-lenders and usurpers of land i.e. popularly called ‘The Deccan Agricultural Riots of 1875’. The deteriorating agricultural situation, worsened by heavy taxation caused discontent throughout the Deccan part of the Bombay Presidency, Poona Sarvajanik Sabha took up the cause of the cultivators and in 1872 appointed a sub committee of 12 members including G.V. Joshi as the secretary, to undertake an economic survey of various districts. In its report the sub committee submitted in
1873, blamed the revenue policy of the government for the economic plight and distress of the ryot.\(^8\)

Ranade and Joshi established rapport with the oppressed peasants, and the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha drew up petition on behalf of the peasants. The petitions of the cultivators fall on deaf ears and the government refused to redress their grievances. This neglect led to the tension in 1874. Many ryots refused to pay taxes. Poona Sarvajanik Sabha was behind the movement. The response of the government was far from satisfactory though it ordered that in no case should the assessment of taluka or a group of villages be raised by more than 50\%.\(^3\) Thus by the middle of 1875 the Deccan riots began. The Deccan riots were the result of the accumulated grievances of the peasants, which included the dislocation of rural economy caused by undue emphasis on growth of cotton during the American Civil war and increase in revenue rates, ultimately rates forcing the ryot into indebtedness. The riots began in the district of Poona, Satara, Ahmednagar and Sholapur with plundering of the houses of Marwari and Gujarati moneylenders and destroying their account books, mortgage records and other valuable documents.\(^4\) As a result the commission was appointed to inquire, it led to the implementation of the 'Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act, 1879.'\(^5\) The Act was later extended to many districts including Dharwar\(^6\) in Bombay Karnataka.

The Deccan Riots Commission reported in 1875, many causes for the riots among them, they made a prominent point that the rigidity of the land revenue system as being "beyond doubt an element in the causes of embarrassment."\(^7\) Tilak wrote 'In many villages Mahars were posted at the doors of the houses (of the ryot),
and the inmates were not allowed ingress or egress until they paid the land revenue. In some places the cultivators were not allowed to water the standing crops in the confiscated holdings. The victims went in crowds to the village money-lenders and took out loans at exorbitant rates of interest. Such was the situation under colonial rule.

As a matter of fact, the kind of riots witnessed in the Deccan districts could not appear in Bombay Karnataka although the situation was not much different than those disturbed districts. We can presume few reasons for not spreading the riots in Bombay Karnataka.

Firstly, lack of awareness among the masses, since the Bombay Karnataka districts were backward comparatively, very few people were educated. Secondly, may be due to lack of support from the nationalist leaders like Ranade and Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, who were instrumental in the disturbed districts. We do not find leaders like Ranade or organization like Poona Sarvajanik Sabha to provoke the peasantry in Bombay Karnataka at that time. Thirdly, unfortunately absence of local leaders made it impossible to organize the peasantry in Bombay Karnataka. Fourthly, the most important reason might be the strict vigilance of the Bombay government, after the outbreak of riots, since those districts were neighbouring to the Bombay Karnataka region. However, although no direct riots took place in Bombay Karnataka, the Deccan riots certainly had impact on Bombay Karnataka region.

In fact the Agriculturist Relief Act of 1879 tried to control the hand of moneylenders, but could not touch the real problem of excessive and rigid land
revenue system of Bombay government. Even the commission of 1891, appointed to inquire into the working of the Deccan Agriculturist Relief Act, drew pointed attention to the very rigidity of the Bombay land revenue system as the most prominent cause. In fact, the revenue system which aimed to secure a fixed annual payment was unsuited to Bombay Presidency therefore, the rural indebtedness became an acute social problem, in ryotwari settlement areas of Bombay Presidency. High interest charges absorbed a large part of the peasant’s income, and his frequent inability to repay the debt led to the large-scale transfer of land to the non-cultivating moneylenders.

N.G. Chandavarkar* delivering his presidential address to the Bombay provincial conference held at Karachi in 1896, dealt at length the condition of ryots as affected by the agrarian policy of the government, and pointed out the question of indebtedness of the agriculture class and its impact in Deccan districts of Bombay Presidency. He supported the Runchodlal’s request that the government should lend money to cultivators at less than 4 percent.

Remedies suggested by the Nationalist Leaders and Nationalist Newspapers to eradicate the evils of Ryotwary System in Bombay Presidency

The foremost demand of the nationalist leaders and almost all the nationalist newspapers of Bombay Presidency was the introduction of permanent settlement. Among all the leaders of Bombay Presidency M.G. Ranade looked into the problem

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* Narayan Ganesh Chandavarkar, born and brought up at Chandavar in North Kanara district of Bombay Karnataka. He was Judge of Bombay High Court and Vice-Chancellor of Bombay University. He joined the Congress from its inception and continuously participated in Congress sessions held in different parts. In 1896 he was elected President of Bombay Provincial Congress. He became the president of Indian National Congress Session in 1900 held at Lahore. During 1885 he visited England and delivered lectures on Indian condition to make English people aware of the situation. A district political conference was organized at Karwar in 1920 under his presidency at Karwar (Kanara) in 1920.

111
of the rural communities most seriously and in his essays on agrarian problems he argued for the permanent settlement.92

The Indian National Congress took up the demand in 1888, V.M. Bhide (of Poona) proposed a resolution, which ran "that in the opinion of this Congress, the time has now come for extending to the major portions of the Madras and Bombay presidencies, a permanent settlement of the land revenue demand." Flower the resolution failed to get passed.93 But the 1889 annual session of the Congress passed a resolution urging the government to take the subject of permanent settlement.94 Again in the 1890 Congress session R.N. Mudholkar (of Berar) proposing a resolution, he said 'the resolution with which I am entrusted is entitled to be called a people's question, like the salt tax, the question of a permanent settlement is one with which the comfort, the very existence of the masses, is intimately connected throughout the length and breadth of the land you find that the staple industry of the country is agriculture, and that being so, the system of tenure under which our agricultural operations are carried on, is one of the greatest importance to us.95 Hereafter there was rarely a session of the Congress at which the plea for permanent settlement of land revenue was not reiterated.

Nationalist leaders of Bombay Presidency like Ranade, Joshi and Tilak also pleaded for it. G.V. Joshi pleaded for a permanent limitation and settlement of the state demand upon the land, he considered it as "economic necessity" which ought not be delayed any longer. Joshi criticized the government argument that permanent settlement involves loss of revenue to state and pleaded that permanent land revenue settlement was urgent necessity to relieve the peasantry. Further he
cautioned that even a permanent settlement of the land revenue would be an economic failure, if the assessments were fixed too high, thereafter he pleaded that the state demand even when settled in perpetuity should be moderate.96

R.C. Dutt who took much interest in land revenue demanded permanent settlement repeatedly and supported Lord Ripon's view that the right of the state to demand of continuous increase of the land revenue on the definite and equitable ground of increase in prices. In fact, Rippon's Scheme combined the rights of the state with that security to cultivators without which agriculture cannot flourish.97

M.G. Ranade looked the problems of the rural population very deeply and he was the great advocate of the permanent settlement. In 1880, he laid down that 'A Permanent Ryotwari Settlement fixed in grain which the land produce... can alone furnish a solution of this Agricultural problem.98 As a fact, if the government could have adopted the method of taking tax in kind the problem would not have gone from bad to worse.

B.G. Tilak, at the 9th session of the Indian National Congress held at Lahore in 1893, spoke in support of a resolution moved by Peter Paul Pillai of Madras praying for a permanent settlement. He said, I do not plead for zamindars but the ryot of Bombay. There the necessity of permanent settlement is newly felt by all classes of the community. The resolution before us shows the necessity of fixity and permanent of land revenue demand. The present inconvenience of the revised Revenue settlement is caused by the increase some time amounts to as much as 700 per cent, though government says that the enhancement is not to be more than 33 per cent. Notwithstanding that resolution, the survey authorities have increased the
assessment by 700 per cent and the wonder is that, it is sanctioned by the government of Bombay. Thus, the agriculturist feel the necessity of a permanent settlement. In fact it was the reality of land revenue system in Bombay Presidency. Tilak again at the Poona Congress in 1895 supporting the resolution moved by M.N. Samarth of Bombay and seconded by Gajanan Venkataratnam Pantulu of Madras strud on the fixity of land tenure.

As a matter of fact all the leading Nationalist Newspapers of Bombay Presidency like, the Mahratta, the Kesari, Arunodaya, Induprakash, Dhyan Prakash, Native opinion, Bombay Samachar etc. agitated for the introduction of permanent settlement. The views of these nationalist papers were re-published by the native papers of Bombay Karnataka such as, Belgaum Samachar, Dharwar Vritt, Rajahansa, Hitecchhu, Dnyan Bodhak, Karnatak Vaibhav etc. In fact Tilak's Kesari played very important part in popularizing the agitation in favour of permanent settlement. But, since the government was mainly concerned about revenue, it felt that the introduction of permanent settlement may cause revenue loss, therefore all the agitation fall on the deaf ears of Bombay Government.

No-Tax Campaign

As far as Bombay Karnataka is concerned Lokamanya Tilak and his Kesari and Mahratta played very vital part in forming the public opinion in favour of nationalism over the question of land tax. Tilak was the only nationalist leader, who made an real attempt to organize the ryots to fight against the evils of land revenue system of Bombay Government.
The excessive burden of land revenue was crushing the peasantry, and with natural calamities added to it, there was widespread starvation and misery in Bombay Presidency. In 1896 monsoon failed throughout Deccan part of Bombay Presidency poor people were in an anxiety, as we have mentioned, the ryots of Bombay Deccan could not sustain a failure of a single monsoon, the situation gone from bad to worse. Despite the severe drought and sufferings the officials could not grant remissions, instead they collected revenue dues with force. Therefore Tilak took the initiative to organize the ryots. He gave the slogan. "Don't Pay Land Revenue if you cannot."101

Tilak was so angry over the official acts that they were reluctant to grant suspensions and remissions of land revenue in such a grave situation. So, Tilak used the British laws and their utterances against them. He said "when the queen desires that none should die, when the Governor declares that all should live and the Secretary of State is prepared to incur debt if necessary – will you kill yourself by timidity and starvation? If you have money to pay Government dues, pay them by all means. But if you have not, will you sell your things away only to avoid the supposed wrath of subordinate Government officers? Can you not be bold, even when in the grip of death?"102 Tilak undertook the task of educating and organizing the peasantry, public meetings were organized, Tilak made an extensive tour of Poona and Sholapur district,103 which was immediate neighbouring district to Bombay Karnataka, so certainly his tour influenced the people of Bombay Karnataka region. Throughout his tours Tilak addressed public meetings and stressed that you (peasant) have legal rights to refuse to pay the land revenue when you are not in a position to pay.
Tilak's campaign was virtually No-Tax Campaign. Agents of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha under Tilak's influence carried out propaganda tours in the countryside including Bombay Karnataka region and their exhortations at public meetings definitely affected collection of revenue. Whenever the agents of the Sabha moved large number of common people gathered and they listened them very patiently, because the agents of the Sabha carried out the relief measures since the famine of 1876-78. The contribution of the Sabha towards the affected people in different district was very significant. The agents collecting information about agrarian conditions, intensity of famine, the ability of the ryot to pay the land tax, and government's demand during famine years etc. And holding of meetings throughout the presidency. They informed the people by word of mouth and through printed handbills that there were provisions in the law which would protect them in times of distress. Tilak reviewed the activities of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha and decided to use it as an agent of mass awakening. The Sabha sent its agents to distant affected districts, collected information and pleaded the government to start relief work.

In fact Tilak and the agents of the Sabha under his influence conveyed the factual information stressed by the Famine Commission and Famine Code. Firstly, the Famine Commission of 1880 suggested “when the main crops of the year has been so great that no surplus produce is left to the landowners above their own necessary consumption and that their dependents, instructions should be issued to the collectors” to suspend the levy of land revenue “on account of the crop which has been lost.”
Secondly, the Lyalli Famine Commission pointed out that the duty and policy of making remissions to the landholders in years of absolute and abnormal failure of crop from any cause is an old obligation on the state.\textsuperscript{110}

Thirdly, Tilak urged upon the people to approach the collectors of the districts with a request for a suspension or remission of land revenue.\textsuperscript{111} Under the prescriptions of the Famine Code (Sections 137-140), which authorized the collector to suspend the collection of instalments of land revenue in the case of an abnormal failure of the harvest, causing total or almost total destruction of the crops over a considerable area, and with the sanction of Government to remit those suspended arrears after individual enquiry into each case.\textsuperscript{112}

The agents of the Sabha delivered speeches and distributed handbills, containing the provisions of remission and suspension of land revenue. To make common people aware about the provisions Tilak called upon the local leaders to take up the cause and to try to get the necessary relief for the people concerned. Further appealed to the people to have organizations for every taluka or village and said that there was a great responsibility resting on the shoulders of the taluka leaders and suggested the local leaders to point out the grievances of the respective areas.\textsuperscript{113}

Apart from Tilak and the agents of the Sabha, the \textit{Kesari} dated 29\textsuperscript{th} December, 1896 took up the question of suspension or remission of land revenue where failure of the crops was more than 10 or 11 annas in the rupees.\textsuperscript{114} In response to Tilak's agitation and in imitation of \textit{Kesari} majority of nationalist papers of Bombay Presidency including Bombay Karnataka agitated in favour of No-Tax and
suggested the ryot's that the assessment due should not be paid by selling cattle land or other sources. So ironically Tilak's campaign created serious difficulty in collecting revenue. The officials could not secure a percentage of collection which would normally satisfy their superiors. The large number of ryots who were often severely pinched or obliged to borrow money to pay land tax, in fact, practically they were not in a position to pay the land tax. And the peasants and farm workers suffered the pangs of hunger in silence and when the pangs became unbeatable, died by roadside, so they boldly refused to pay the dues under the influence of Tilak and the agents of the Sabha.

Therefore, certain rules were drafted to prevent Tilak's activities. They first originated (in the famine of 1896-97) with the collector of Poona, who when he found a widespread determination in his district on the part of the ryots not to pay the revenue. After the approval they (provisions) were extended to the whole famine area. The main rules were as follows:

(1) On the expiry of the ten days grace usually allowed from the date on which an instalment falls due notices shall issue to

a. All non-agriculturist occupants and all non-agriculturists directly interested as mortgagees or otherwise in land, whatever the outturn of the land may be

b. All agriculturist occupants whom the mamlatdar knows, or has good reason to believe to be

   i. Either well to do (i.e., possessed sufficient means to be able to pay without undue difficulty) whatever the out-turn of his field may be

   ii. Or occupants – who are not well to do of fields which have yielded a crop of four annas and over
c. All agriculturist mortgagees and others interested directly in lands in the occupancy of class  
(2) And notices shall not issue to agriculturist occupants or mortgagee, who have both of the following qualifications  
i. Not well-to-do  
ii. Crops have not reached four annas\textsuperscript{116}

Such rules not only enforced to counter Tilak’s No-Tax campaign during 1896-97 famine, but also enforced, G.V. Joshi said in 1900-01, though apparently without any such excuse as existed in the famine of 1896-97, viz., in order to defeat a “political agitation.”\textsuperscript{117} Obviously, such rules were enforced to suppress the political awareness and as G.V. Joshi argues, “on close consideration, it will be seen they virtually amount to a denial of relief except to a very small class of broken ryots by refusing to recognize any claim to leviency in the enforcement of the state demand – on the ground of crop failure.\textsuperscript{118} Evidently, the effet was little short of magical, the revenue came with marvelous ease, the suspension ultimately found necessary only amounting to 7-8 lakhs or less than 5 per cent of the total demand, and there were practically no remissions – not seen in Bijapur where the crop failure was almost total, said G.V. Joshi.”\textsuperscript{119} When these rules could not work effectively the officials created difficulties in the way of the agents of the Sabha who became an eyesore to the district authorities, and in some places they were not allowed to hold public meetings. For instance, Professor Achyut Shivaram Sathe (who was also a Secretary of the Sabha) was arrested and prosecuted under the Penal Code, the Forest Act and the Abkari Act. However, the prosecution failed.\textsuperscript{120}
Despite of all these acts the propaganda tours of the agents of the Sabha gained more and more popularity, so the frustrated government passed a resolution on 17 March, 1897 which stated "the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, as it present constituted, must cease to be recognized as a body which has any claim to address Government on questions of policy."\textsuperscript{121} This act of government was to crush the agitation, which was gaining popularity and making people aware of their rights. And, indeed, it exposed the reality of the government policies. So nationalist leaders, nationalist newspapers and people at large sharply reacted. The Mahratta dated March 21, 1897 expressed the reaction "The Government may or may not favourably consider any petition sent to it, but that does not preclude any one from addressing Government on question of public policy. The Sabha was not created by a Government resolution and it cannot be abolished by it."\textsuperscript{122}

As a matter of fact, large number peasantry supported the Sabha but, since the government was determined to suppress the agitation, Tilak himself was arrested in 1897 and sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment on the charges of sedition shows that the farsighted British officialdom was alarmed by the revolutionary potentialities of his campaign among the Deccan peasants in the winter of 1896.\textsuperscript{123} However, Tilak's agitation had a long lasting impact on the masses of Bombay Presidency. We can say that the No-Tax campaign of Tilak was indeed very popular, on the one hand it awaken the public at large about their right and his call "Do not pay land revenue if you cannot" echoed and re-echoed in the countryside.\textsuperscript{124} And on the other it forced the government at least to consider the temporary suspension or remission of land revenue in Bombay Presidency.
No-Tax Campaign in Bombay Karnataka during 1930s

The foundation of Indian National Congress at Bombay in 1885 certainly influenced the people of Bombay Karnataka region. Several regional leaders began to attend the sessions of Indian National Congress. Tilak, Poona Sarvajanik Sabha and other nationalist leaders and nationalist newspapers of Bombay Presidency played priminant part in developing the spirit of nationalism in Bombay Karnataka.

Swadeshi movement in 1905 and Home Rule movement in 1916-17 had created a widespread awakening in Bombay Karnataka under Tilak’s influence, Tilak visited several places. During Home Rule movement, large number of local leaders of Bombay Karnataka were followers of Tilak.

The Emergence of Gandhiji changed the course of National Movement. In 1927 when the All India Congress Working Committee met at Allahabad, the proposal to launch No-Tax Campaign in Bardoli was discussed. Similar idea was mooted by the then Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president Gangadhar Rao Deshpande to launch No-Tax campaign in North Kanara district in Bombay Karnataka.\textsuperscript{125}

However, in response to Gandhiji’s Civil Disobedience Movement the people of Bombay Karnataka launched more serious and more widespread No-Tax Campaign in 1930-31 at several places in Bombay Karnataka region (we shall discuss it in detail in Chapter IX under Gandhian phase).

Summing up

To sum up it is perhaps clear that the land revenue system of Bombay Government rack-rented the peasantry. Therefore, the nationalist leaders and the
nationalist newspapers argued that excessive taxation and over-assessment were the main reasons for the growth of poverty of bulk of population and the recurrence of famine was due to the great poverty of the people.\textsuperscript{126}

Interestingly, although it was a naked truth, some of the British Officials did not accept the views of nationalist leaders, for instance Mr. Lionel Anshburner (Late member of the Bombay Executive Council) contested that the land tax in Bombay Presidency was very light and it represented only 5 per cent of the gross yield, and that so far from checking cultivation, the settlement leads to its extension and improvement.\textsuperscript{127} While the truth was that the land tax was a heavy-rack-rent, absorbed not only the true rent, but a large portion of the profits, and occasionally trenching on the wages of labour. Thus the Journal of Poona Sarvajanik Sabha gave befitting reply to Mr. Anshburner's argument. For instance, officials argued that the government recommended a limit of 25 per cent as the highest enhancement, so that the interests of the material prosperity of the agricultural classes would be protected.\textsuperscript{128} But in reality the journal of the Sabha exposed the following figures.\textsuperscript{129}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>No. of villages</th>
<th>Revenue last year of old settlement</th>
<th>Revenue first year of new settlement</th>
<th>Percentage of increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bijapur (5 Talukas)</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>545,749</td>
<td>690,211</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dharwar (7 Talukas)</td>
<td>755</td>
<td>807,621</td>
<td>1,198,388</td>
<td>48.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hence, the naked truth is that 48.4 per cent enhancement on revision in Dharwar, so it can be said that greater portion of land tax was fixed more or less arbitrarily and absorbed a large portion of ryot's surplus.
Next, to avoid the evils of insecurity of tenure the nationalist leaders and the nationalist newspapers of Bombay Presidency unanimously agitated for the introduction of permanent settlement. In fact the proposal to extend the permanent settlement formulated by Sir Charles Wood in 1862, and reaffirmed in 1865 by Sir Stafford Northcote and later by Wedderburn Ripon. But the government reject all requests of the nationalist leaders. It was necessary that freehold property alone could have encouraged permanent improvements. Thus the nationalist leaders suggested permanent settlement and payment in kind, which would have given relief to the ryots.

The nationalist leaders repeatedly requested the government to reduce the land tax, so that a reasonable surplus could be retained by the ryot. One of the important suggestion and necessity pointed out by the nationalist leaders was adoption of flexibility in collection of land tax. N.G. Chandavarkar spoke in very clear cut manner in his presidential speech at Lahore Session of Congress in 1900, that after the Deccan Riots of 1875 the commission, among other things, reported about the rigidity of the land revenue system. The government left that larger question aide, and went to tackle the money-lender. But the mischief of the rigidity of the land revenue system was left untouched.

The people of Bombay Karnataka activity supported the agitation against the evils of land revenue system and it helped for the growth of nationalism. The native papers of Bombay Karnataka reproduced the views of nationalist leaders in vernacular languages. One of the most important incidence that took place in Bombay Karnataka region was the convening of the 13th Bombay provincial conference at
Dharwad in 1903. This conference was most significant as far as land revenue system was concerned. Daji Abaji Khare was elected as president of the Conference. D.E. Wacha and G.K. Gokhale also participated. B.G. Tilak was enthusiastically received by a large gathering who awaited his arrival.132

The conference, in fact, provided an opportunity for the local leaders to interact with the nationalist leaders like Wacha, Gokhale, Tilak and others. Several important aspects were discussed. The Eighth Resolution related to land assessment was proposed by Karandikar and supported by Tilak. It consisted four parts. In the first part the resolution expressed its regret that the Government intended to levy the full assessment when the agriculturists were in embarrassed condition. The second part of resolution requested the Government to moderate the rate of enhancement at the time of Revision survey, while in the third part contained a prayer for the publication of the rules regarding suspensions and remissions of land revenue forwarded by the local Government for the approval of the Government of India. The fourth part related to free grazing.133 This conference spread the awareness among the people of Bombay Karnataka regarding the true nature of land revenue policy of Bombay Government. Tilak indeed was the mass leader in Bombay Karnataka large number of people followed his footsteps. The significant fact is that Tilak realized very early the role of peasantry in freedom struggle, but unfortunately no body including Indian National Congress gave its attention. Tilak said "the country's emancipation can only be achieved by removing the clouds of lethargy and indifference which have been hanging over the peasant, who is the soul of India. We must remove these clouds, and for that we must completely identify ourselves with the peasant - we must feel that he is ours and we are his."134
Obviously emancipation of ryot was most necessity of the hour because the fruits of his hand work was not reaped by him but by the colonial government. Therefore, R.C. Dutt said, “Taxation raized by a King says the Indian poet, is like the moisture of earth sucked up by the sun, to be returned to the earth as fertilizing rain but the moisture raised from the Indian soil now descends as fertilizing rain largely on other lands, not on India.” Hence the tax collected from India drained out of country to increase the fertility of England. Thus Tilak at the 16th session of INC at Lahore in support of a resolution demanding an independent inquiry moved by M.G. Subramanian Iyer that “Howsoever rich a country is and the soil fertile, if the administration is carried on in such a way that you take away from the large portion of the produce without returning it is equivalent in one form or another, in a material form, not in the form of prestige or advice, then unless you give back to the people in some material form the return for the wealth that you take away from the country, the only natural result of it would be that the country must grow poorer and poorer.

Finally, it is clear that the Bombay Presidency was the poorest province in every aspect. And yet, proportionately it was compelled to make a large contribution to the empire.

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