

PREFACE

Agrarian societies all over the world are receiving considerable attention from scholars in recent times. Indian and foreign historians have contributed valuable research works on agrarian issues pertaining to India. Micro level studies have also been done. Traditional societies have a tendency to remain unexposed to forces of change because they are regulated by time - honoured customs. Indian society in the pre - colonial era was feudal in character and the caste - class nexus played a significant role in determining the social and economic status of the constituent member of the society.

The British administrators were through going imperialists and they did not want to risk their interests by introducing changes in the existing socio - economic order. But the colonial government could not practice imperialism without introducing reforms indefinitely. Hence in the 19th century the agrarian society in India underwent structural and functional modifications. Perceptible changes could be seen in the agrarian structure of the Indian society, consequent on the introduction of different types of land tenures. Administrative adjustments were also made by the English. In the process a new class system evolved. Commercialisation of agriculture under the colonial government brought about considerable changes in the agrarian society. Building of roads, canals and dams were undertaken by the alien government to enhance their revenue. It has to be accepted that these measures proved beneficial to the agrarian community.

Since independence the condition of the agricultural population has shown considerable improvement. This is due to the introduction of a lot of promotional measures by the government. This trend change is reflected in the economic, social and cultural life of the agrarian society. In the dissertation an attempt is made to focus the impact made by the process of modernization in agriculture on the economic, social and cultural life of the agrarian society of Tanjore.

The study covers the period from A.D. 1800 to 1990. Eighteen hundred A.D. marks the take over of Tanjore region by the Company's administration. The year 1990 marks the appointment of the Water Dispute Tribunal by the Union Government to resolve the Cauvery River water dispute between Karnataka and Tamilnadu.

The period of research is long and the problem chosen for investigation is too complex. It is practically impossible for a researcher to complete the dissertation without the assistance of others. In the preparation of the dissertation, I am indebted to many individuals and institutions and it is my duty to thank them all. First and foremost I am indebted to my guide Dr. V. Sathianesan, M.A., Ph.D., Reader in History (Retired), Periyar E.V.R. College (Autonomous), Trichy, for his valuable guidance and erudite comments. He is a source of inspiration at every stage of preparing the thesis. Without his consistent encouragement, frequent goading and suggestions, it would not have been possible for me to bring out the work in the present shape. I am ever grateful to my guide for completing the dissertation.

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