CHAPTER - VI
THE LAND SYSTEM

The land system in Pudukkottai indicates the agrarian relations, through a system of ownership, tenancy and settlement. Both the peasant and state are interested in land use. The agrarian surplus helps the peasant to fulfill his needs. The state extracts a part of the surplus in lieu of the protective function it offers. Reforms and regulations were made as part of land use. An attempt is made in this chapter to enquire the details regarding land ownership, tenure and tenancy which may reveal the agrarian relations in the Pudukkottai state.

(1) LAND OWNERSHIP

The concept of land ownership is the result of a complex process of history through decades, influenced by socio-economic and political factors. According to Manu's principle "land is his who first cleared away the jungles, as the deer is his who first brought it down." But scholars are of the view that land was held in common by the community (tribe or lineage) before the emergence of state, and land grants given by the king to his followers in lieu of salary led to the evolution of private property in land. Karashima has proposed that private property in land emerged in the Kaveri zone from communal ownership due to land grants by the Chola kings and his
However, common ownership of land persisted till very recently. Appadorai points out that communal ownership in land was the accepted norm in case of lands granted to Brahmins, known as brahmadeya. Communal ownership in land also persisted among the non-Brahmin communities. Stoke has recorded the prevalence of this phenomenon in the Thanjavur area as late as the seventeenth century.

Epigraphs and copper-plates reveal the existence of communal ownership in the Pudukkottai state during the period under study. According to Venkatarama Ayyar land grants were given to Brahmins (Aharappary), martial communities (Padaiparru), Kallar (Kallar parru) and Vanniyar (Vanniyar parru), communal ownership thrived when the village was settled by a lineage of a dominant caste or its sub-caste and such commonly owned land was redistributed within the clan; the process being called karai or karaiyid. The village in which it was practised was known as pasunkarai or karaiyid village. Stoke explains the process as follows. The process of division took place before the seed was sown in June-August. The lands of a village were to be divided into so many shares, those again were divided into four karais. The names and extent of the fields composing the karai were written separately in four palm
leaf pieces called karalyōlai. Four other small slips containing names of the karaikāran i.e. leader of a group were also prepared. All the eight pieces were placed on the ground and a child was asked to pick up a large and small slip at a time. Thus the karai (share of land) and the karikāran (the leader of a group that was allotted a particular karai) were chosen.

It is not unlikely that a similar process was followed in the neighbouring Pudukkottai state, though there is no detailed study available. However, some copper-plates give sufficient hints to arrive at a conclusion that here also a similar process was followed. In the copper plates there is a specific mention that it was a karai piriyal paṭṭayam i.e. the record of the redistribution of land. Further Dirks reports that the karai system as evolved through Kallar settlement of land was of paramount importance. Thus it can be presumed that common ownership of land continued in this area among the martial communities such as the Kallar, Maravar etc. Generally karai was ranked as per the order of settlement. The first settled lineage of an area was called first karai and others who settled subsequently were called second and third. The head man of the lineage of the karai was called karai Ambalam. The karai system established a nexus between lineage and territory. The Maravar settlement pattern provides ample evidence of gift transformation and land
division among families. In many villages grazing lands were set apart and they were communally held and administered.

Along with the evolved system of communal ownership of lands the Raja and other lesser nobles like the Jahirdars owned vast tracts of land. In Pudukkottai land ownership was burdened with ʿuлим (services) to the temple. The Raja declared that he was the servant of the goddess Brahadambal. The land grantees performed their devotion to the deity through ʿuлим rendered to the temple. Here in Pudukkottai the sacred concept of religious respect was linked to strengthen Rajah's ownership on lands. The amani lands clearly recognised that the Raja was the owner of land and the cultivators were share croppers. Confiscation of the lands of defaulters and auctioning of lands indicated the Rajah's control over land. Hence it can be said that the king had absolute power over unoccupied waste lands and his claim over lands over which there existed clear proprietary rights was just nominal. However, the right of the state on land did not prevent the alienation of lands by others through sale or gift.

Besides, communal and state ownership of land, private land holdings also existed. As pointed out by Karashima, cited above, private ownership emerged in the Kaveri zone from communal ownership during the medieval period. The same trend
can be noticed in the Pudukkottai region also. The epigraphs from this region cite instances of private ownership of land in the medieval period. During the period under study, land transactions in the form of alienation by sale or gift to individuals was widely prevalent. In short, ownership of land was both communal in the case of martial communities and private with regard to others.

(ii) LAND TENURE

The first and foremost factor in Land system, viz., land ownership was discussed in the above section. The other factors, land tenure and land tenancy, deserve to be considered now. Tenure is explained "as the act of holding and occupying land or the right of using land." In other words it is an economic arrangement according to which the occupants of lands are provided with certain rights, privileges, duties and immunities and at the same time they are supposed to carry out certain obligation pertaining to the use of the soil. Privileged land holding withstood the test of time in Tamilnadu. The Raja gave lands to beneficiaries with religious and secular motives. The privileged land holdings as prevailed in Pudukkottai are given below.
(a) BRAHMADEYA

Brahmadeya lands were granted to Brahmins for subsistence or for the performance of certain services. Of these, Surothriyam lands were given to scholarly Brahmins who were engaged in vedic study and practice. In Pudukkottal before inām settlement there were fifty villages covering about 44899 acres classified as Brahmadeya lands. The migration of Brahmins started with the arrival of Gopalakrishna Sastriar who later became the palace guru. Lands were initially measured and demarcated. Forest lands were cleared and assigned. Fertile lands were given in the beginning. The charter of land grants indicate that forests were cleared, tanks and canals were constructed so that the lands were made fit for cultivation.

Brahmadeya grants included virgin lands, and waste lands (Puramboke). Forests and minerals were given as sarvamanyam (tax free). Some of these lands were granted as shares to specified families. Later they were divided and a number of co-parcenaries succeeded to the shares which were bought and sold. Vedaviruthi lands assigned were not hereditary. They were assigned to be passed from one learned Brahmin to another. Brahmadeya villages emerged at Rangammal
Samudram (1793), Tirumalairayapuram (17940, Sellakudi (1799), Kiranur (1804) and Pungudi (1805).

(b) DHARMADAYA LANDS

Land grants assigned for the management of chatrams or feeding houses and shelter for pilgrims were called Dharmadayams. Thondaiman rulers patronised chatrams with men and money so that their services were fully utilised by pilgrims. When an individual called Adaikkalam Katha Chetti betrayed the trust money intended for the maintenance of Chatram the Darbar made every effort to get back the money with the help of the Madras government, the Raja of Thanjavur and the zamindar of Sivaganga. At the end of the nineteenth century there were ten major state managed chatrams having twelve villages granted to them eight in Kolathur and two each in Alangudi and Thirumayam taluks. They were intended for the pilgrims to Rameswaram.

(c) DEVADAYAM LANDS

Devadāyam lands were lands granted to temples. They were free from partition and other issues connected with the possession and enjoyment of land. The state endowed Devadāyam lands to the temples at Trichnopoly. Certain
grants were given to minor temples which were managed by private persons. Devadāyam lands held by the servants of the state were called ulthurai-manyam lands. Besides, there were endowments for the maintenance of temples outside the state called pararāśtram temples. Twenty one villages were alienated for the maintenance of the samasthanam temple at Tirukogarnam.

(d) JĀHIRDĀRĪ LANDS

In Pudukkottai, Jāhir was a system of land grants given to individuals claiming royal connection by birth. They were given to Jāhirdārs who assisted the state in times of need. In 1874, Jāhirs were given up to twenty five percent of total inām acreage. Major part of it was given to the two collateral branches of the dynasty with a small portion allocated as pin-money for royal women. The Thondaimans received a token tax from the lands called Pilluvāri. There were six Jāhirs-Western Palace Jāhir, Chinna Aranmanai Jāhir, Manovrithi Jāhir, Rangan Pallava Rao Jāhir, Regunatha Pandrīkondar Jāhir and Amman Raja Jāhir.

Rangan Pallava Rao and Regunatha Pandrīkondar enjoyed Jāhirdārī lands of 849 and 717 vēlis respectively. They were
the son-in-laws of Raja Regunatha Thondaiman (1825-1838).
Ammani Raja estate granted to the first daughter of the Raja possessed four villages having 318 vēils of land. According to Gopalakrishna Gandhi sixty four villages having 6264 vēils were in the hands of Jāhirdārs.32

(e) AMARAM TENURE

In Pudukkottai the local chiefs called Vahuppu Sērvaiķārars helped the kings in times of need. They were remunerated for their military service in the form of land grants called amaram lands. The villages granted to them were called padaiparru.33 Such Padaiparru localities were Vayalogam, Adanur, Tirukalampur, Tirukkattalai, Keelaikurichi, Melathanyam, Keelathanyam, Pudukkottai, Keeranur, Virachilai, Kaikurichi, Kurunthanpirai, Pulivalam, Karaiyur, Lambalakkudi and Ilanjapuram. The term for military hamlet Padaiparru had a unique association with Pudukkottai state.34

It shows that Pudukkottai was a region of chiefs who had political cum military relations with local dominant groups.35 The amaram land holders organised themselves as state militia. Thus it, consisted of amarakārs (retainers), Sērvaiķārar (captain), Vahuppu sērvaiķār (captain of squadron) and Sardār (colonel). The extent of lands given to them were
calculated according to their rank and men at his command. Each amarakār was given lands sufficient to maintain himself and his retainers. It was called āḷjīvitham, which consisted of three and a half acres of wet land, five acres of rain fed wet land or ten acres of dry land. According to Thiyagarajan fifteen individuals of the state militia possessed 2914 āḷjīvitham lands. The details with regard to amaram tenure were available in inām settlement fiscal registry, village wise index of ināms, Uttakurippu of eighteenth century and Amarālāvanāpapathivu.

(f) OTHER TENURES

Land grants to individuals for their service to the state were called umbalam lands. There were two kinds of umbalam-attavani umbalam and kuḍiumbalam. Attavani umbalam lands were held by eminent persons of the state. Kuḍiumbalam was intended for village services. It was given to potters, carpenters, irrigation supervisors, village head man and accountant. The state played its decisive role in the appointment and dismissal of village artisans. Mirāci umbalam and Vetṭi umbalam, noted under 'irrigation' also came under this category. Urani mānyam was given for the maintenance of drinking water sources. Rokkakuthagai were the lands enjoyed by subēdār and jamēdār. Different kinds of grants
Tenancy is explained as a mode of holding land which actually belongs to another or upon which any other person may have prior claim. It applies to the system of holding land by one who is not the owner and who must pay some sort of rent for the period of contract. In short, tenancy envisages two parties (i) the land owner, who is not actually cultivating the land and (ii) the tenant, who actually makes use of the soil. Tenancy becomes an important factor in land system, since the quantum of land owned by non-cultivating owners was of considerable proportion, necessitating the presence of tenants. Generally three types of tenancies have been identified: viz., (i) fixed-cash-rent tenancy, (ii) fixed-kind-rent tenancy and (iii) crop share tenancy. First the mode of tenancy that was in vogue in the ayan lands may be taken up for consideration.
AYAN LANDS

While ṯām indicates privileged land holding that was not taxable, the rest of the lands were taxable. These lands were generally called ayan lands. With regard to ayan lands two kinds of tenancy viz., vāram and kuthagai, prevailed. The landlord enters into an agreement with the cultivating ryot who meets the cost of cultivation. The harvested produce was equally divided but straw was divided in the ratio 1:5 between them. This system was called šarivāram, 'equal share'. In dry lands the share of the landlord varied. It may either mūnril onru (1/3), aŋjukku irāndu (2/5) or aŋjukku mūru (3/5). The money rent of Rs.24/- for wet land and Rs.3/- for dry land per acre was given as kuthagai. The problem of tenancy in Pudukkottai centered on the question of ulpullidār in joint pāṭṭa land. The lands of the ulpullidār were alienated if any one of the land holder defaulted. As a result of this state of affairs, they were being penalised for no fault of their own.

The owner himself undertook the task of cultivation by employing labourers. It was called Pannaiyāl system. In this system, land owner employed hired labourers whose wages amounted to fifty Madras measure. Sometimes lands were given to persons called periyāl for their subsistence.
employed Athakoolie (agricultural labourers at will) whose living condition was deplorable. In this system the male members were given six or eight local measures of grain and the females received only four local measures.

(iv) AMANI SYSTEM

Amani system as prevailed in Pudukkottai was a system of sharing land revenue sources directly by the government. In view of its importance a separate section is devoted here, to analyse the impact of it on the land system. Amani, otherwise called Vārapattu, gives mēlvāram produce of the land in kind to the state. Under the amani tenure the crop produced from the land was shared in the threshing floor between the peasant and the state. 52

The amani cultivators recognised the suzerainty of the Raja and his right over all amani lands. As a result the cultivators came into contact with the revenue administration of the state directly. The lands cultivated by the amani holders were harvested in the presence of the state official called kankāni. The harvested grain was brought to the threshing floor to be separated from the stalk. The state's share was removed from there to be stored in ambāram or
They were stored and protected till the market price of the grain was favourable to the state.

The kankāṇi with the help of Amarakār carried the government's share of grain from the ambāram to the market to sell it. Those who offered the highest price in the market will get the acquired government's share of produce from the amani lands. The money offered was credited as land revenue to the government treasury.

The amani system was an arrangement to convert the grain rent into money rent by taking into account the yield of the land during the previous five years (1871-1876). The years of poor harvest and high prices were avoided for fixing the government's share on the yield. The average of five years was fixed as the state's share from the land. The chief merit of the amani rates was its equality of incidence. It narrowed the interference of different revenue officials on land deliberations. The crops were harvested only when it was fully ripened. The process of separating the government's share was carried out with utmost care. The grain was protected and sold on an intention to enhance the revenue of the state. Amani was accepted because of the faith that a correct estimate was made and the actual share was taken
into account from the produce. Seshiah Sastri favoured the amani system because he was not prepared to kill the chicken that laid golden eggs. 56

As a result of amani system 66110 acres of dry land and 45537 acres of wet land were cultivated contributing Rs.22,10,843/- by way of assessment into public account. 57 The system made the revenue administration active. The cultivator toiled on land and the system made him free to take his due share from the land. So it was viewed as a best suited revenue measure which provided a strong financial base for the Pudukkottai State. 58

It was alleged that amani rates were high. Lands of the same fertility were given different rates in the same village. There prevailed different measuring rods. The pynash and amani registers were inaccurate. To favour a few, amani rates were manipulated by supporting the average of the previous years. 59 The new rates calculated were based on the old amani returns and it forced the tillers of the land to share more to the state. 60 Many of the cultivators found themselves either close to or caught in the web of bankruptcy. 61 In 1892 Seshiah Sastri reduced amani rates of half lakh acres of lands. For that act of mercy, sanction from the Madras government was to be obtained.
The displeasure on Seshiah Sastri's efforts was expressed by Henry Stoke by saying that he should conduct the administration of the state under the supervision of the Madras government. To Blackburn amani embodies oppression and injustice in government and to Pennington it was like Chauth lured by Shivaji. According to Dirks amani created the context for the exploitation of the very amani cultivators whose woes he had documented in piteous details only to justify their more systematic exploitation and his own reputation as the bureaucrat par excellence.

Amani lease created unfavourable terms and intolerable conditions in the state. So Pennington was in favour of the collection of land revenue in proportion to the produce from the land. He wanted to replace amani with the revenue settlement introduced by Puckle at Ettayapuram in Tirunelveli. Ultimately, Amani system was abolished by Seshiah Sastri. But many peasants did not relish the idea of abandoning the amani system of crop sharing.

(v) RESUMPTION OF JAHIRDARI AND INAM LANDS

Seshiah Sastri was very particular to resume the Jahirdari lands. Extensive lands were given to Western Palace Jähirdar. Indirect rule of the British over Pudukkottai made
the conditions of Jāhīrdaṛ irrelevant. After the Poligar wars which ended in 1801, their hold and position weakened. To the Raja, the Western Palace Jāhîr was nothing but a rival power centre. The Jāhîr was in debt and the state was not getting its legitimate income from the Jāhīrdaṛi lands. So it was resumed and a pension of Rs.15,000/- was granted. On the death of the Chinna Aranmanal Jāhīrdaṛ it too was resumed. The Manōvīrthi Jāhîrs were resumed by providing Rs.1,800/- for the annual maintenance of the Ranis. The Devasthānam and Chatram lands were amalgamated with ayan lands. Like Travancore state it was intended to maintain temple rituals.

The state initiated its settlement operation by the enfranchisement of inām lands. In Pudukkottai, inām lands exceeded the acreage of lands paying revenue to the state. The inām lands called āljìvitham was given to amarakārs who helped militarily in times of need. By tact and firmness Seshiah Sastri enfranchised all the militia tenure. It resulted in a total additional revenue of a lakh of rupees to the state. Lands of the amarakārar were enfranchised with half quit rent. Üliyam lands possessed by amarakārar were enfranchised with three fourth quit rent. The excess of inām lands held by amarakārar, called veṅgam were taxed with three fourth of full assessment.
The settlement officers guided by rules, excluded any kinship considerations in their scheme of classification.

The Brahmin īnāmdārs opposed the resumption of Brahmadeya lands. They appealed to the Raja and the ruler granted concessions. A distinction was made between the lands given for the propagation of vēdic studies and other categories. The subsistence grants were confirmed if they were found in the possession of the family of the original grantee. A quit rent of one fourth was levied if they passed into the hands of others. Regarding Vēdaviruthi lands, a quit rent of half the produce was charged when the service was performed by some one not related to the original grantee.

The īnām settlement resulted in 4817 cases of revenue disputes. Yet the revenue of the state increased by a lakh of rupees. To Frykenburg īnām settlement was a silent settlement. Dirks viewed it as a partial settlement. The state wanted that no drastic changes which destabilised the precedents were to be introduced. By imposing a quit rent on land, the īnām settlement introduced meaningful change in tax revenue. It widened its orbit by bringing more lands taxation. It gave more powers to the bureaucrats to assert their power over privileged land holdings. In Pudukkottai, socio-political holdings continued
for a long time whereas in Madras Presidency, it ended by the constitution of estates in ex-poligar areas.\textsuperscript{81}

**(vi) LAND SETTLEMENT**

In land system, land settlement is of vital importance to the state to extract the agricultural surplus in the form of land tax. Land settlement involves two aspects (i) land survey and (ii) land assessment. Inscriptions of the medieval period from the Pudukkottai area reveal that the officials of the state inspected the land and fixed the tax on the basis of the standing crops (Payirērīna nilathukku payir pārthu).\textsuperscript{82} This involved both land survey and assessment. Before discussing these factors for the period under study, it may be useful to make a brief mention of the same prevailing in the Madras Presidency under British rule.

The land revenue settlements of the British like the permanent settlement in Bengal, Ryotwari settlement in Madras and the Mahalwari settlement in the Punjab were intended for the maximum extraction of revenue.\textsuperscript{83} Under Ryotwari system, the peasants paid land revenue directly to the state without any intermediaries. It was introduced in Salem and Baranāhal. Soon it was extended to other parts. The early British legislators and administrators thought that the conditions prevailing in
Baramahal and Salem were the same as elsewhere. In their settlement the ratio of rent to be paid to the land owner was hardly mentioned. So exploitation could not be ruled out, whenever lands were leased either by the land owner or by the tenant or by the sub-tenant. The British land revenue policy thus fostered rack renting and subinfeudation.

British land revenue policy resulted in the accommodation of land in favour of landlords, money lenders and traders. The economic depression and the Second World War resulted in unfavourable conditions to the peasants. Britishers were dis-interested in protecting tenants who were under the Ryotwari and Estate system. The Ryotwari system admitted in theory only two interests on land, the government and owner cultivators and only one payment namely land revenue. It drove the peasantry into debt and made the owner cultivators to alienate and sell their lands. The Mahalwari settlements in Punjab was intended for the maximum extraction of land revenue. In Tamilnadu in the ex-poligar area, estate system (surrogate permanent settlement) prevailed where the zamindars were demilitarised and asked to collect land revenue on behalf of the state. It reduced the primary producers of the land as tenants of the Britishers. As a result, the quasi-feudal absentee land-lordism was legitimised and it had no sympathy with the peasant's customary rights on land.
In such an environment of British land system, the princely state of Pudukkottai witnessed changes in land settlement especially in inam lands, through their resumption and enfranchisement. Land survey was made indispensable to demarcate the borders of the land and to decide the ownership of land. Its main aim was to augment the income of the state. Both ayan and inam lands which were in a cultivable condition were surveyed. Any map of the village or individual field was not prepared for assessment. The system of fixing pre-determined rates without taking into consideration the crop production, continued since Carnatic and Poligar wars. So land survey assumed greater attention after 1801 since the government was reluctant to assess all inam lands.

(a) SURVEY

The first systematic land survey was ventured in 1813. It was prepared on Cadjan leaves. It was more a topographic survey than a revenue survey. It was prepared under instructions from the East India Company. The state was divided into Vadamukam, Melmukam, Thenmukam and Kilanilai taluks. By 1813, the fields had been subjected to a system of classification based on land fertility. It was Blackburne who introduced the Taramfysal survey in 48 villages of Viralimalai which consisted
of 201 acres of nanchai lands, 1716 acres of punchai lands, and 368 acres of garden lands. According to the survey, wet lands of padugai, sevval, manal, saral, kalar were divided into three sorts. These lands had the benefit of tank irrigation for more than four months. Similarly lands with tank irrigation for less than three months were classified into three sorts and taxed accordingly. It was the first classification based on land survey and fertility of the soil. 97

The Taram fysal survey was a popular measure because it recognised remission. But it was limited to Viralimalai tract. In other places the existing pymash registers prevailed. Blackburne viewed that the revenue department was to be re-organised. But the peace of the state was disturbed because of the rebellion of Venkanna Servalkarar. He and his supporters created ryots on the issue of shorter measuring rods used to identify the excess inam lands. 98

Proposals for the survey of lands were made during the inam settlement (1888-1896) and the Revenue Survey (1893-1907). As a result detailed entries were made in the pymash register. Experts from Madras were called and their services were utilised. Training schools for cadastral survey was established in every taluk. The aim of the survey
deliberations were to distribute the entire burden equitably on the entire land holdings of the state. Though greater inequality prevailed in tenure and assessment between villagers, minor inequalities were rectified through survey. Seshiah Sastri collected the particulars of land revenue of each village on its actual crop yield of five years. A trial settlement was introduced in 1897 in twenty villages in Alangudy taluk. The area measured was 475 vells (3141 acres) wet and 450 vells (2975 acres) of dry land. Another settlement introduced in 1908-1912 had three aspects of survey, groupings of land and assessment. Regarding survey, lands were demarcated and each field was given a revenue number. Importance was given to the actual yield rather than the yielding capacity of the land. The achukattu lands were dropped from assessment. The lands were further divided into three classes, and five sorts and grouped into seven taram for wet and eight taram for punjai (dry) lands.

Land survey remained a continuous process in Pudukkottai. Changes came because of partition, court interferences and the introduction of metric system. The government stocked the required number of boundary stones for use. Government surveyed lands without informing the owners of lands. Government assured its help to solve the
problems of ulpulli on major mānyam lands. In the Legislative Council it was informed that the topographic survey will be extended by the British to Pudukkottai. Thirty years passed since the original survey and inām lands were not surveyed as that of ayan lands. It was reported that pymash numbers for inām lands were available with each village officer. In 1945 James prepared a resettlement investigation but the state merged with the Indian Union before the resettlement could be enforced.

(b) ASSESSMENT

Next to survey, the assessment of land revenue became a crucial issue in Pudukkkottai. One-sixth of the produce of the land was the normal rate of assessment for a long time. It was collected both in kind and cash. Before 1801 there was no uniform method in the assessment of cultivated lands. The state was not asked to pay any tribute to the British. The state was free to follow its own scheme of assessment.

The pymash registers of the state indicate different types of land holdings with different assessments like māmūl ijara (permanent lease), jodi ijara (temporary lease), Cowle (assessment on newly reclaimed land) and Jāhirdār lands.
Poruppuvari was a levy collected from lands which were offered as mānyam to the temples. Levies of agrarian nature like kulavettu, marāmathuvāri, pādikāval dues, cess on trees, quarries, earth salt, filler earth, salt patre and taxes on cattle were collected. Vijaya Ragunatha Thondaiman appointed persons to expose fraud in the revenue administration. In addition, the practice of handing over the whole village for tax collection to state creditors prevailed.

Blackburne's correspondence with the Madras government points out the desire of the Raja to follow British precedents. Public transaction of business in kutheries and giving receipts for the land revenue was established. A ban was made on the purchase of articles for the state on credit. Under Blackburne, katcha vasool was abolished. He introduced taram fysal rates in Viralimalai area on the basis of the classification of soil and irrigation capacity. The assessment in kind was called vārappathu and in cash thīrvaipathu. Under the settlement effected the taram fysal rate stood between the rates for vārappathu and thīrvaipathu. The use of shorter measuring rod which created unrest was abandoned. For the first time the rates were fixed based on survey and fertility of the soil. It recognised remission, if cultivation failed.
When Annasamy Ayyar was the Sirkil and Moris was the political agent, the minimum rates of assessment were raised with a view to raise the low assessment on a larger area. The rates for wet lands were Rs.25/-, for achukattu lands Rs.22/-, for kambu cultivation Rs.10/- and for Varagu Rs.6/-. In Thirvalipathu lands because of money assessment different rates prevailed. On Thirvalipathu rates Pennington in 1875 decided a graded assessment rate. There were 218 Nanjal rates varying from Rs.1-14-0 to Rs.132/-, 16 Nanjal garden rates ranging from Rs.31-4-0 to Rs.475/-, 202 punjal rates from 15 annas to Rs.62-8-0 and 17 punjal garden rates from Rs.10-2-2 to Rs.1125/- a veli. Seshiah abolished amani system and granted remission of half lakh of rupees which was resented and criticised as it was not done without the prior permission of the Madras government.

(c) SESHIAH'S SETTLEMENT FOR ASSESSMENT

In the resettlement operation, Seshiah Sastri was influenced by the mode of assessment prevalent in the ryotvari areas of the Madras Presidency. The assessment was made on the basis of the classification of soil. Each series of the soil was divided into classes and each class into sorts. The class is determined by the proportion of sand and clay in
the soil. On the basis of the nearness of the land to the village, irrigation source, facility for manuring and guarding facilities, the land was classified as sorts - best, ordinary, inferior and worst. The settlement order number 944 dated 6.9.1882 forced the averages of the assessment to be adopted. The system had all the advantages of good and bad years balanced. The market prices of non famine years as recorded were taken and a deduction of 15% was allowed for cartage and merchant's profit. The allowances for the unfavourable seasons and cultivation expenses were deducted. What remained was the net value of the produce, half of which was fixed as the share due to the government. 121

A trial settlement on the lines of the Madras government was conducted in twenty villages of the Alangudi taluk. The rates were fixed on the average of twenty years (1871-1895). Twenty percent reduction for adverse conditions and fifteen percent for carting expenses were made. The result of this trial settlement showed an increased income compared with the amani rates. 122

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Bracken was the author of the settlement of 1908-1912. It too was based on the pattern of the Madras settlement (1885-1888). The lands were grouped under three heads. For dry lands market and road facilities were taken into consideration and irrigation was the primary consideration for wet lands. Achukattu land was considered wet when paddy was cultivated and dry otherwise. Deduction of fifteen percent was allowed for merchant profit and carting expenses. The settlement rates that prevailed in Pudukkottai and Thanjavur for the same period varied and in Pudukkottai higher rates were charged for paddy, ragi and varagu cultivation. To Thiyagarajan, rates at Thanjavur were low because settlement was made when prices were not very high there. Under the system cumbu was charged Rupees 1-8-2 per acre, varagu 0-1-46 and virali 0-6-0. Water rate for wet land was Rupees Three and for dry land Rupees two. This settlement was to last for thirty years. Tree tax was rationalised. The rate for mango, tamarind and jack trees were uniformly fixed as four annas. Coconut, fluppai and bamboo trees were fixed as two annas.

The settlement of 1908-1912 witnessed 20% increase in dry assessment and 2% increase in wet assessment and the state ultimately enjoyed a total increase of 7%. Inequality of the earlier times were made good and it reduced the multiplicity
of rates into a few taram rates. To Thiyagarajan, the system as prevailed in Pudukkottai, though inelastic, had the advantage of simplicity. The settlement of chettinatham lands brought additional revenue inspite of occasional harassment by officials of the state.¹²⁶

(d) TAX BURDEN

The Thondaiman rulers followed the administrative system of the Naicks. Marathi remained the official language of the state. To Subbalyan their rule was paternal and the state was called Dharmasamasthanam (seat of justice).¹²⁷ Blackburne by his efforts improved the land revenue administration and efforts were made to increase revenue collection.¹²⁸ Yet there was deadlock in the administrative set up because of factions, nepotism and domination of Maratha Brahmins. As a result the interests of the peasants were ignored in the princely state.¹²⁹ Seshiah Sastri allowed them to pay the taxes either in cash or kind.¹³⁰

In Pudukkottai People's Conference, in its first meeting on 27.4.1920 lamented the deplorable condition of the people because of tax burden and non representation in the power structure.¹³¹ The same plea was made in the second meeting,
but the Darbar imprisoned the nationalist leader Sathyamoorthi. The Rajah's expensive marriage was criticised and the grant of Rupees 175000 to Martanda Bairava Thondaiman and a lumpsum amount of 20 lakhs of Rupees to him reduced the financial resource of the state.

The poor agricultural land holders and cultivators who constituted ninety percent of the population were always at the mercy of the land owners and money lenders. The budget showed the pre-war and post-war financial position of the state. There was deficit in the budget because of the impact of external market forces, war situation and the natural cases. The largest expenditure of Rupees 4155201 was in 1922-23 when Martanda Bairava Thondaiman was given special payment. Another big expenditure was in the days of flood damages. During 1930-31 the state spent Rupees 2451702 in which 6.75 lakhs were spent to quell the town conspiracy ryot. Tottenham understood the need and the financial position of the state. To him the demand for full tax remission was justifiable because seventy five percent of the population were in agricultural pursuits. On his recommendation a remission of fifty percent amount of Rupees 262518 was granted. In addition, the Darbar suspended the recovery of agricultural loan and fifty percent of kist.
Many of the ryots were in a state of constant debt. Co-operative Institution did not offer timely help to them. Non-cultivating land lords received twenty percent of the total agricultural produce as rent. In 1923 there were 1000 non-cultivating owners or rent receivers and it increased to 2500 in 1931. The land transfers indicated the passage of land from real agriculturists to non-agricultural owner cultivators. The price of grain remained low and the prices of other commodities like sugar, household articles and cloth went up. In short, landless agricultural labourers, uneconomic agricultural income, increasing indebtedness, migration to new pastures and overcrowding in agriculture were some of the features found in the agrarian landscape of Pudukkottai.

(e) LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND THE ISSUE OF TAX BURDEN

The response and reaction of the official members in the Legislative Council reveal the rigid stand taken by government on land revenue administration. The government was unsympathetic towards remission and it held the view that second crop was not at all assessed. It maintained that the increasing value of land justified their denial of tax remission. To them, the minority of the Rajah, compel the administration not to introduce any immediate change in revenue matters.
Changes could be effected only at the end of a period of land settlement and not before. On the issue of ulpullidārs in joint pattas the government maintained that they could not be helped as their lands were not fully divided. It was argued that any postponement in tax collection may induce them to squander their money in festivals like maṅchu viraṭu. Yet the government promised that it will not attach the plough cattle for non-payment. The government ordered that groundnuts should be sold not by measure but by weight. Along with the 'grow more food crops' campaign, a penal assessment on those who failed to cultivate food crops in their land was imposed. The government under a notification collected new rates of revenue ranging from Rupees Ten to Rupees One and a half for wet lands, and Rupees Three to Rupees 0.37 for dry lands, per acre.

The leading ryots like Venugopala Naidu, Bhujanga Rao and Sundaresa Ayyar found it difficult to pay land taxes from the agricultural income. The demand for economic survey was rejected often. The state claimed that they will be benefitted from British experience, Mysore economic conference and Royal Commission of Economic Enquiry. In the trans-Vellar region income from land decreased. A member pointed out that for a yield of 20 to 30 kalam the cost of
the kist was Rs.150/- and this was in no way better than lands that were not cultivated at all. The same was the case with the land of the ināmdārs.

The members recalled that the fifty percent remission sanctioned by the Regent Sahib was praised in the Madras Legislature by Nadimuthupillai and Srinivasa Ayyangar. In Pudukkottai as a result of the resumption of umbalam lands to vettiyāns, carpenters, pallans and washermen, the villagers faced labour scarcity and they were forced to pay money to secure their services. Non payment of land revenue by a single peasant was not tolerated. Always the government maintained that pattādārs and not the actual cultivator was the land holder. So all land holders were affected irrespective of their involvement in land. Deliberate non cultivation of land invited penal assessment. In the state, patta was given not according to enjoyment of land. At the time of taxation patta was considered and not the actual field cultivated. So the unfavourable conditions led the peasants to desert their inhabited villages.

In Pudukkottai an agriculturist was one whose income from other sources did not exceed Rupees Fifty per year. Under revenue recovery proceedings melvāram and kīlvāram lands were attached. It showed that the state was interested in the arduous
task of land revenue collection than in peasant's welfare. According to Vaithyanatha Ayyar, except in Chettinadu the ryots position was not satisfactory, because the peasants who owned four or five plough of land went for cooly work. Inspite of the miserable condition of the peasants, the government encouraged ancient families like Manavelar, a Rajabandhu, Bhujanga Rao, Kadiyapatti Rangiyar, Sardar Owic Narasa Raja and Rajkumar Durai Raja by giving them loans to stabilise themselves.

Ownership of both ayan and inam lands, tenurial arrangements and settlement and the demand of the state on agrarian surplus were factors that shaped the land system in the princely state. Resumption and enfranchisement of inam lands and the imposition of quit rent though created differences were incomplete attempts for change. The different settlement measures made survey and assessment inevitable. On the collection of land revenue, the Darbar assumed more powers and often the interest of the peasants was neglected. As a result, they migrated to other places. Some of the British methods of survey and assessment attempted were only increased the tax burden. The demand of remission was not fully realised. Any innovative or sympathetic attempts on the part of the Darbar was resisted by the British Administration. In short, the land system in the Pudukkottai state can be said to be a combination of tradition and modernity.
CHAPTER - VI

REFERENCES


2. Ojha, G., Land problems and Land reforms, S. Chand and Sons, New Delhi, p. 27.


4. Noboru Karashima, South Indian History and Society, OUP, Delhi, 1984, p. XXI.


7. For an explanation of 'Karal' see V.Manickam, 'Karai an explanation,' Journal of Tamil studies, No.35, June 1989, pp. 47 ff.


12. The view of Dharma Samasthanam links the State and Darbar to divine concept.


15. The existence of private ownership in land can easily be understood in the accretion of landed property in the hands of Nattukottai chettiar by way of purchase and other means. In the next chapter on Peasant Community the details about them as a group of land owners are given.

17. Ibid., p. 8.


21. Ibid.


27. Ibid.


29. Ibid., p. 341.
30. Ibid., p. 413.


32. Ibid.

33. In Tamil *Amar* means war and hence *Amaram* indicates land grant to soldiers.


35. Medieval inscriptions of Pudukkottai call such chiefs as *Aralyars*.

36. Land grant for the subsistence of a person
   (*A1* = Individual; *Jivitham* = amenity)


38. Ibid., p. 426.

39. Ibid., pp. 426, 428.


46. Ibid.

47. Ibid., p. 9.

48. Tenancy in Pudukkottai emerged on ayan lands. In Alangudi taluk and Thirumayam taluk the wealthy Nattukottai Chettiyar tradition prevents them from taking direct cultivation of land by themselves. The cultivator's division may vary between 40 to 50 percent.


50. The lands possessed by different ryots under a single patta system. The failure of tax payment by one resulted in the confiscation of all lands. The matter led to further discussion in the legislative council.

51. Periyāl means a person capable of controlling other labourers.

53. Appendix, Plate 5.

54. Kankāni means a supervisor and Amarakār was a military personnel.


56. Ibid.


62. Ibid., pp. 318-319.

63. Ibid.
64. Major Sir William Blackburne (1764-1835) was the British Resident and Political Officer of Pudukkottai. He had a keen eye on the financial stability of the state. He viewed that the poor condition of the state was due to the prevalence of the amani system.


65. Shivaji was the Maratha ruler collected revenue (Chauth) from the farming community which was opposed by British because they saw peasantry as their support base.


67. Ibid., p. 413.

68. Pennington, the political agent viewed amani system as a subject of universal complaint and stressed alternatives. Radhakrishna Aiyar, S., Op.cit., p. 419.

69. Ibid., p. 437.


72. Ibid., pp. 344-348.


82. I.P.S., 359.


87. The main aim of Britishers was to collect taxes indirectly to avoid local tension.


94. Ibid.

95. Ibid., p. 189.

96. Statistical Account (1813), (kept in Pudukkottai Museum).


100. Ibid., pp. 374-376.

101. Ibid., p. 376.

102. Ibid., p. 376.


113. Venkannas rebellion in Pudukkottai started because of the presence of different measuring rods. It was an agrarian revolt of a palace Ūliyakār. Such an event was never witnessed before in the state.


115. Ibid., p. 357.

116. Ibid., p. 357.

117. Ibid., p. 352.

118. Ibid.


120. These Mahimsais were originally voluntary contribution and in due course assure the character of prescriptive right.


123. Ibid.

124. Ibid.
125. P.D.O.R., 532/C of 1910 dated 17.7.90.

126. In chetti villages the revenue officials fixed a higher rate and collected the tax without mercy.


128. Sir. William Blackburne, was an ideal Political Resident. He realised the need for drastic reforms. He advised the Rajah to spend some money to build the new Town and the "New Palace."


130. Ibid.

131. Ibid., p. 258.

132. 'The Hindu,' Madras, dated 10.11.1920.

133. Janamithiran, dated 1 and 22.7.1927.


136. Vide *Appendix* VIII.

137. *Ibid*.


142. *Ibid*.

143. *Ibid*.


150. Pudukkottai uncultivated land Regulation No.XVIII of 1942.


162. Pudukkottai uncultivated lands Regulation No.8 of 1942.


