CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

The historiography of colonial India is a cornucopia. The imperialist, nationalist, Marxist, Cambridge and subaltern scholars have contributed immensely to the understanding of the British colonial working in India, its impact on India and Indians, and the manner in which Indians had responded to the colonial challenge. However, the British colonial working in Uttara Kannada had received scant attention by the scholars. Uttara Kannada a small region of Karnataka State, well-known for forest resources, spices and ports from ancient times, experienced transformation due to the colonial policies and played a significant role during the anti-colonial movement.

This thesis is a study on the British colonial administration and policies in Uttara Kannada, their impact on the society and economy of the region and the regional response that they evoked. The period of the study is from 1862 to 1947. The year 1862 is taken as the starting point because it marked the beginning of a new phase in the history of the region. This study is up to 1947, the year which saw the dawn of independence in India, including the British ruled Kanara.

Traditionally the southern tip of the Kanara region, from Chandragiri river in Kasaragod taluk to Bhatkal was called as Tuluva, and the region from Bhatkal to Ganagavali river was called Haive or Haiga as testified by Francis H. Buchanan and other earlier records, and the territory to the north of the Gangavali was part of Konkan. Early Indian dynasties like Mouryas, Satavahanas, Kadambas, Bhojas, Kekayas, Chalukyas, Rastrakutas, Kalyana Chalukyas, and Vijayanagara rulers ruled over the region either
directly or through their feudatories. The Portuguese called the Kanara region (North and South together) as Canara. The Dutch called the people of this region as "Canarins". When the British occupied the region in 1799 they called it as Canara, and it was a part of the Province of Kanara and Sonda under the Madras Presidency. The whole province of Kanara and Sonda in 1799 included the regions presently covered by Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Uttara Kannada of Karnataka State, and the Kasaragod region which is now in Kerala State. It also included the northern group of the Laccadives known as Amindivi Island on the Arabian Sea. The Province of Kanara and Sonda seemed unwieldy for administrative purpose, and as such, in December 1800, it was divided into the Southern and Northern Division. In 1805 these divisions were again reunited into a single Collectorate. On 16th December 1859 the Kanara Province was again divided into two separate Provinces. According to Srinivas Havanur, the division of Kanara province was done in 1862 because of the economic compulsions of England. It required export of cotton grown in Dharwad and Bijapur regions from Karwar, when it had suffered cotton scarcity as it was not imported from America during the American Civil War. The Madras Government did not show any interest in the development of Karwar port, as it already had good harbours in Mangalore and Cochin on the West Coast of India. The British traders used to transport the cotton from the up ghat regions to Kumta on bullock carts and then shipped to Bombay by the country boats for exporting to England. However, this was found to be inconvenient and less profitable. Therefore, The British government decided to divide Kanara, and transfer the northern part to Bombay Government which showed interest in developing the port of Karwar as it would facilitate export of cotton directly to England. As the work of developing Karwar port picked up momentum, the American Civil War ended, and there was restoration of regular cotton supply from America to
England. Thereafter, the British did not take interest in the development of the Karwar port.

The northern part of Kanara which was known as North Kanara was transferred to Bombay Presidency on 28th February 1862. After India’s Independence in 1947, Bombay Presidency was reconstituted as Bombay State. In 1956 the Southern portion of Bombay State was added to Mysore State, and the Kasaragod district was merged with Kerala State. The Mysore State was renamed as Karnataka in 1972 and North Kanara was renamed as Uttara Kannada. The present Uttara Kannada district consists of eleven taluks, namely Karwar, Ankola, Kumta, Honnavar, Bhatkal, Sirsi, Siddapur, Yellapur, Mundgod, Haliyal, and Supa.

As presently the region is called as Uttara Kannada, in this study the same nomenclature is used and geographically the present Uttara Kannada and the northern part of the Province of Kanara and Sonda or North Kanara were the same. It is bounded on the north-west by Goa state, on the north by Belgaum district, on the north-east by Dharwad district, on the east by Haveri district, on the south-east by Shivamogga district, on the south by Udupi district, and on the west by the Arabian Sea. The district has an area of 10291 Km², out of which 6502 Km² is under dense forest. Only 13% of the district’s land is under cultivation. Uttara Kannada is a combination of two distinct regions as widely differing from each other with regard to external physical features and also the customs and habits of their respective inhabitants. The main geographic feature of the district is the Western Ghats or Sahyadri range, which runs from north to south through the district. Between the Sahyadri and the Arabian Sea is a narrow coastal strip, known as Payanghat, which varies from 8 to 23 kilometres, in width. Behind the coastal plain area lay the flat
topped hills from 60 to 100 meters in height, and behind the hills are the ridges and peaks of the Sahyadri. East of the Sahyadri is the *Balaghat* upland, part of the vast Deccan Plateau. The moisture bearing winds come from the west, and the region receives an annual rainfall in the range of 2000mm-6000mm, largely concentrated in the monsoon months from June to October. The forest of Uttara Kannada is extensive. The most valuable and useful timbers are found in these forests, mention may be made of sandalwood, blackwood, ebony, teak, etc.

Uttara Kannada district has several rivers such as Kali, Ganagavali, Agahnashini, Varada and Bedti. All the rivers of this district are often heavily flooded during the monsoon. These rivers form numerous waterfalls, the most famous of which is Jog fall, on the upper reaches of the Sharavati in neighbouring Shivamogga district. The other famous waterfalls include Unchalli fall, Shivaganga fall, Lalguli fall and Mailmane fall. Uttara Kannada is also called as the district of waterfalls. In the lowlands, these rivers form wide estuaries, extending several kilometres inland from the coast. Uttara Kannada district has five reservoirs across Kali and Sharavati rivers. Nature’s beauty in this region is displayed in the alluvial soil, extensive forest, and abundant vegetation, the availability of laterite and iron ore. It was the extensive sea board dotted with ports, and the rice and spice produce that secured Uttara Kannada an identity in the map of the coastal trade in the early medieval times.

The main languages of the district are Kannada, Konkani, Marathi, and Urdu. The population is predominantly Hindu comprising of many communities called as Havyaks, Gouda Saraswat Brahmans, Daivajna Brahmans, Vokkaligas, Sherugars, Nador Vaishyas, Namadaris, Bhandaris and Gamvokkals. There are also Muslim, Christian and
Jain inhabitants in the region. Muslims in the district are mainly of Navayat descent. They live mostly in taluks of Bhatkal and Honnavar.

**Historiographical Survey:**

In the last few decades, the historians have shown interest in the study of regions and localities in India. Some attempts were made by Indian and foreign writers to study about the region of Uttara Kannada. However much of the work undertaken is on the freedom movement of the district and less attention is paid to the study of colonial administration under the British, and its impact on the region. The travel account of Buchanan\(^{13}\) constitutes a valuable source for the transitionary period following the death of Tipu Sultan in the IV\(^{th}\) Anglo-Mysore war and the initial years of the British take-over. Baden-Powell\(^{14}\) has produced a monumental work on the land-systems during the British rule in India. However, it furnishes no much information on Uttara Kannada. *The Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Kanara Collectorate*, edited by James M. Campbell\(^ {15}\) and the same gazetteer re-edited by R. E. Einthoven\(^ {16}\) provide valuable data on this region. *The Karnataka State Gazetteer, Uttara Kannada District* edited by Suryanath U. Kamath\(^ {17}\) furnishes considerable secondary data on the history of the district. Works such as *Karwar Jilla Darshana* by M. N. Bhandarkar and S. Silva,\(^ {18}\) *Chittakula - Karwar* by Desai and Madhava Anant,\(^ {19}\) and *The March of Patriots* by Raj Gaonkar and Sita Gaonkar\(^ {20}\) are useful for this study. Writings on Karnataka State also refer to the history of Uttara Kannada to some extent. The *Keladi Polity* by K. N. Chitnis throws light on the history of the region during the Keladi rule.\(^ {21}\) Ganapati Gouda’s thesis on “The Minor Dynasties of Uttara Kannada”\(^ {22}\) and S. Y. Mugali’s \(^ {23}\) thesis on “Freedom Movement in Bombay Karnataka: Role of Intellectuals” may be noted in this context. However, the former work
is on the pre-British period. The latter work furnishes some insights into the role of intellectuals of the region like Timmappa Nayak, a poet and teacher. It is observed that the poems and writings of Timmappa Nayak helped in spreading the nationalist feelings among the local people during the freedom struggle.

A few writers have published on the freedom struggle in Uttara Kannada. Among them edited works of Suryanath U. Kamath titled Quit India Movement,24 The Documents on No- Tax Campaign in Uttara Kannada District (1930-1934)25 and Swatantra Sangramada Smrutigalu26 are based on the memoirs of the freedom fighters. Swatantra Chaluvaliya Karapattragalu compiled by V.S.Hegde27, Swatantra Horatada Horalu Nota by Shantaram Nayak Hichkad,28 Karanirakaraneeya Veera Kathe by R. R. Diwakar29 and Freedom Movement in Karnataka by G. S. Halappa30 are based on the memoirs and leaflets of freedom fighters, and are extremely useful for the present study. However, in very few works archival sources are used. Further, the colonial administration and its impact on the region are not much explored by these historians.

Scientists like M. D. Subash Chandran,31 Madhav Gadgil32 and Sharachchandra Lele33 have published numerous books and articles on forest management and its impact on environment during the colonial time. Their concern has been to highlight the colonial forest management and its impact on the ecology of the Western Ghats. The colonial forest policy and management should be analysed in the larger context of the British colonial policy of exploiting Indian resources. Marlene Buchy’s work titled Teak and Arecanut 34 is a study on the colonial state, forest administration and its impact in the Western ghats with special reference to Uttara Kannada.
“The Agrarian Structure and Tenancy Reform - A Case Study of Uttara Kannada”, by G. V. Joshi\textsuperscript{35} contains some details on the land revenue administration under the British rule, but the thrust of the work is more on the land revenue administration and tenancy movement after independence.

**Sources:**

The British administrative records are very important primary source materials for reconstructing the history of Uttara Kannada during the colonial period. This study is largely based on such sources collected from the Maharashtra State Archives, Mumbai and Karnataka State Archives, Bangalore. They include the official documents and reports related to political, revenue, judicial and other branches of the administration. The important documents consulted are files of the Revenue Department, Forest Department, Judicial Department and Public Works Department which provide information about the decisions taken, rules and regulations passed and details of the administration. Other documents such as Revenue Survey, and Settlement Reports, Forest Survey Reports, Forest Working Plan and Bombay Government Selection files are consulted. The printed documents like annual administrative reports of Revenue Department, Forest Department, and Abkari Department are consulted. Besides, official publications like *The Bombay Survey and Settlement Manual*\textsuperscript{36} and *Bombay Forest Manual* \textsuperscript{37} are used here. These official documents and reports furnish details on the land revenue system, land tenure, revenue collection, revenue expenditure, socio-economic condition of the people, rural indebtedness, trade and industries, and political and movements related to the region of Uttara Kannada. However, it is pertinent to note that these sources reveal the standpoint of the colonial government on major issues like rate of land revenue assessment, tenancy,
socio-economic condition and other such matters. One has to view and examine these data critically along with other corroboratory evidences like the views of the ryots and local leaders expressed in native literature, vernacular newspapers and also in the large context of the nature of the colonial working in India to arrive at a more objective evaluation. The locally published weekly newspaper named Kanadavritta, Samyukta Karnataka a daily newspaper published from Hubli and Bombay Chronicle, an English newspaper are consulted. These publications contain valuable information on the general political, economic and social condition of the region and the resultant resistance movements. They reproduced the grievances of the peasants, made caustic criticism of the forest policy and certain unpopular officials and denounced cases of harassment of the natives by the British revenue and police official and corruption by the government servants. Further they conveyed information about meetings, demonstrations and other actions of the locals against the administration and thus helped disseminate news and mobilise support for the anti-colonial movement. The autocratic behaviour of the forest officials, their biased attitude towards the inhabitants and atrocities of police officers were time-to-time published in these newspapers. In fact these newspapers mirrored the true nature of colonial working in the region. They played a significant role in creating awareness among the inhabitants about the use of swadeshi goods, ill-effect of consuming liquor and unfavourable consequences of child marriage on the society.

The personalities involved in the political, social or ecological movements of their contemporary time have first hand information about their involvement in them and their interviews provide considerable useful data. Discussion with Hammanna Mani Nayak Shetgeri, a freedom fighter of the region, provided valuable information about his participation in the Non-cooperation movement. Meetings with the descendants of
freedom fighters like Late Parvati Hammanna Nayak, Hoskeri, Ganapati Bommayya Nayak, Bole, and Shantaram Nayak Hichkad all from Ankola taluk, provided valuable ideas about the sufferings of their parents, and families including the first two members mentioned here. They informed that their families faced utter poverty due to forfeiture of their properties to the government. These bits of evidence help us to understand the mass participation in freedom movement and the government attitude towards the people. These details are complementary to the information available in official records, and aid us in examining the colonial policies from the Indian perspective.

Apart from the primary sources mentioned above, many secondary sources or published works are consulted from the libraries of Maharashtra State Archives, Mumbai; Karnataka State Archives, Bangalore; Goa University; Karnatak University, Dharwad; and Mumbai University to understand the topic of research and its scope in a broader historical perspective. Published works are used to comprehend the working of colonialism, and dynamics and dimensions of nationalism.

Aims and objectives:

The present study aims to fill in a noticeable gap in the historiography of modern Uttara Kannada district. It is done mainly by collecting the primary sources relating to the theme of the study. Therefore, the intention is to present an original work. However, for interpretation of data, this study has used ideas presented by historians on colonialism and nationalism, mainly in the Indian context. The main purpose is not to study political history, but to examine the colonial administrative policies and their impact on economy, society and polity of the region and the way in which the indigenous people reacted to
them. The land revenue system and forest administration were given priority by the colonial state as they could earn much revenue. The impact of the forest policy resulted in discontent among the inhabitants and thereby facilitated their participation in the anti-colonial movements in this region. The objective is to use interdisciplinary approach in analysing the data. The thesis examines not only the role of the colonial state, elite classes and organisations, but also the part played by the masses like peasants, artisans and women. Thus the objective is to consider the role of the subaltern classes as well during the period of study.

**Methodology:**

The methodology used is both empirical and analytical. The empirical data are collected from original sources relating to the British administration, contemporary newspapers, and secondary works. Besides, interviews of three families are also conducted to gather information. The study basically adopts the challenge and response paradigm in analysing the historical data collected by utilising the works of well-known authors on modern India. In fact the works available on modern history of India provide a model for this study. The best examples are that of *Nationalism and Colonialism in India* by Bipan Chandra\textsuperscript{42} and *Modern India* by Sumit Sarkar\textsuperscript{43}. The major policies of colonial administration like maximisation of land revenue, exploitation of forest resources, and suppression of the indigenous people in various spheres of life are analysed. The responses that these colonial policies evoked are also critically examined.
**Scope of the Study:**

This thesis analyses the nature of colonial administrative aspects in the region of Uttara Kannada (1862-1947). The revenue, particularly land revenue, police, judicial and forest administration are emphasised as they figured prominently in this region. Besides, the colonial socio-economic policies are also considered. Further the thesis deals with the effects of the colonial administration and policies over the region and its inhabitants. In fact the colonial rule transformed Uttara Kannada in many ways, and such changes were seen in polity, economy and society. It was a great challenge for the inhabitants and major problems or issues like ownership of land and forest rights and privileges emerged and became cause of friction between the rulers and the ruled. The changed environment was responsible for the rise of nationalist spirit and nationalist movement. The region witnessed both primary and secondary types of movements against the British and they are also examined here.

This thesis consists of eight chapters.

**Chapter - I, Introduction:** This chapter includes the introductory details about the region of Uttara Kannada, historiography, sources, aims and objectives, methodology and scope of the study including chapterisation.

**Chapter - II, Historical Background:** This provides a brief survey of the history of Uttara Kannada before the advent of the British, and the British administration in its early stage, that is up to 1862. The rule of the Satavahanas, Kadambas of Banavasi, Bhojas, Rashtrakutas, Chalukyas of Badami, Alupas, Vijayanagara and Keladi rulers are covered. The Maratha and Adil Shahi invasions and their influence on the region are highlighted.
The local chieftains like Bilgi and Sonda, and their administration are sketched. In the second part, the acquisition of Uttara Kannada by the British in 1799 by overthrowing Tipu Sultan, and the establishment of the British colonial government are highlighted. The working of the colonial government in Uttara Kannada up to 1862 is briefly examined.

Chapter - III, The Revenue System: The third chapter deals with revenue administration under the British colonial rule in Uttara Kannada. The maximisation of land revenue through various survey settlements, methods used to collect land revenue and arrears, landowning classes, tenancy system and different sources of revenues like abkari, and municipality revenues are discussed.

Chapter - IV, Judiciary and Police: This chapter contains details about the judicial and police administration. The manner in which these two major branches of administration worked as the arms of the state is discussed. The discrimination towards the inhabitants and the laws enacted to suppress them are investigated.

Chapter - V, The Forest Policy: The British colonial rule formed a watershed in the environmental history of India. The forest acts, regulations and the colonial control over the forest resources of Uttara Kannada and the loss of the agriculturists, peasants, artisans and the masses are analysed here.

Chapter - VI, Economic and Social Policies: This chapter deals with the impact of colonial administration on the region. The nature of the colonial government, its policies and programmes towards revenue, agriculture, industry, trade and society and the consequent changes in agrarian and social structure are discussed.
Chapter - VII, Emergence of Political Consciousness and Regional Response:
Early resistance to colonial government, rise of nationalist feelings, local organisations and their contribution to spread nationalist feelings are discussed. The participation of the inhabitants in the national movement with special reference to Home Rule League Movement and Quit India movement is discussed.

Chapter - VIII, Conclusion: In this chapter, an evaluation of the British rule in Uttara Kannada and the responses that it evoked are summarised based on this study.


10 *Ibid.*,.


12 Nadors are referred to as Nadavas, Nadwar, Nadavaru etc., and in this thesis, the term Nador is used to have consistency.


27 V. S. Hegde (Compiled), Swatantra Chaluvaliya Karapatragalu, Bangalore, 2005.


34 Marlene Buchy, *Teak and Arecanut, Colonial Forest and People in the Western Ghats South India (1800-1947)*, Pondicherry, 1996.


38 I met Hammanna Mani Nayak Shetgeri, at his residence in Shetgeri, Ankola Taluk, on 2-10-2009 and discussed with him about his role in the freedom movement. He informed me that he had resigned from the post of *Patel* and participated in the No-tax campaign.

39 Met on 2-10-2009 and 2-3-2010.

40 Met on 2-7-2009, 6-9-2010 and 14-11-2010.

41 Met on 29-12-2008, 2-10-2012, 11-7-2013, and 13-8-2014.
