CHAPTER - II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Myths and Uttara Kannada:

As in many other parts of India, in the case of Uttara Kannada too we come across references to historical traditions. According to Hindu tradition, the origin of Kanara along with the other regions of western coast is ascribed to the great warrior Parashurama, who defeated the Kshatriyas twenty-one times. When their power was utterly destroyed, Parashurama was anxious to settle in the lands from which his enemies had been driven. But the Brahmans did not allow their blood-stained champion Parashurama to live with them. He came to the Sahyadris and threw his axe from a point on the western ghat and made the ocean to recede back to the extent of the distance covered by his axe.¹ Thus the western coastal land of Peninsular India is considered as the Parashurama Srushti or Parashurama Kshetra. The Sahyadrikhanda of Skandapurana bears testimony to this belief. The Uttara Kannada district being a part of the western coast shares this legendary beginning in history. Lord Rama (Sixth incarnation of Vishnu) is said to have stayed for sometime at the Kavala caves near Dandeli during his fourteen years exile. It is also believed that in Kavala caves, lord Shiva performed penance when affected by Saturn (Shani).²

F.H. Buchanan has observed that Gokarna is a significant place in India.³ It is one of the holy places in South India. According to the popular legend, at Gokarna, the Mahabaleshwara Linga is described as the very Atma Linga of Lord Shiva secured by
Ravana after severe penance, as per the wishes of his mother. But Lord Ganapati, son of Lord Shiva made Ravana leave the Linga at Gokarna. The hindu mythology links Yana with an event in the life of the demon king Bhasmasura. Bhasmasura, by austere penance, obtained a boon from Lord Shiva. The boon was such that when Bhasmasura placed his hand over any one's head, it would burn the latter and turn into ashes (bhasma). It is further narrated that in order to test his powers, Bhasmasura wanted to place his hands on his patron Lord Shiva's head. He chased Lord Shiva, which unnerved Lord Shiva and prompted him to move from his heavenly abode to earth to seek the help of Lord Vishnu. Vishnu transformed himself to help Shiva, adopting the form of a beautiful lady named Mohini who enticed Bhasmasura with her beauty. Bhasmasura was quite infatuated by Mohini, and agreed to a challenge of a dance competition. During the dance competition, Mohini cleverly performed a dance pose with hand over her head. Without realising the gravity of this act, the demon king also placed his hand over his head. Soon he perished by the fire of his own hand and was converted into ashes. It is believed that the fire that emanated during this act was so intense that the limestone formations in the Yana area were blackened. The loose black soil or ash seen around the two large rock formations in the area is cited as proof of this legend by devotees. They see these formations as the result of fire produced by Bhasmasura and ashes produced by his death. The two hillocks are also named to commemorate this event: the tall peak being Bhairaveshwara Shikhara "Shiva's hill", and the smaller peak, a few steps down below, being Mohini Shikhara "Mohini's hill". Some other places in the district are also related with mythological stories.
The Dravidan words like Arishi (rice), Marichi (Chilly), Sandan (spice) etc., were found in the Old Testament of Greek and Latin languages and this established the existence of trade contact of the west coast with the Mediterranean region. The places like Banavasi Bhatkal were famous in those times.

The maritime connections with the people of Egypt, Babylonia, Palestine etc., continued and Ptolemy and Pliny gave detailed account of vast the maritime trade of Karnataka with the western countries. In support of this, Dravidian words and ancient harbours of the west coast like Bhatkal and Honnavar were frequently mentioned in their works.⁷

The Mauryas in Kanara:

The Srilankan chronicles mention the Mauryan contact with the Vanavasa region during the time of Ashoka (273-232 B.C.).⁸ These sources refer to the sending of Rakkita, a learned Buddhist monk, to propagate Buddhism in Vanavasa country as a part of Ashokan policy after the third Buddhist Council. Whether or not Vanavasa region formed the part of Mauryan empire is a question yet to be settled.⁹ The Buddhism introduced by Ashoka at Banavasi, Karwar and other places continued to exist till about the 10th century A.D. The commercial contact between China and South India is evident from the records of a Chinese mission to Kanchi. The coastal districts were famous for pepper, spices, sandalwood, betelnut, rice and other products.¹⁰
The Satavahana Rule in Kanara:

The decline and fall of the Mauryan empire paved for the establishment of independent rule of the Satavahanas in the Deccan. At least later rulers of this dynasty during the 2nd century A.D. were known to have exercised their sway in the Vanavasa region. One of the inscriptions in Banavasi gives testimony to this. The Satavahana administration was a continuation of the administrative traditions established by their masters. The Satavahanas supported Vedic religion and claimed to have restored *Varnashramadharma*.¹¹

The Satavahanas were succeeded in this region by the Chuta-Anandas. They ruled from Banavasi. Four Prakrit inscriptions and some coins found in these areas bear testimony to their rule. The Chutas were soon overpowered by the Pallavas of Kanchi.¹² The Kadambas established their power in this region by subjugating the Pallavas.

The Kadambas of Banavasi (3rd Century A.D. to 7th Century):

The Kadambas formed the first imperial native dynasty of Karnataka. They laid down the foundation for the political, cultural and architectural legacy of Karnataka. Under the Kadambas, Karnataka culture reached a new milestone. Mayuravarma was the founder of this dynasty. Their capital was Banavasi in Uttara Kannada.¹³ The origin of Kadambas is very controversial. Up to the 7th century they ruled Karnataka. After their defeat in the hands of Chalukyas of Badami in the 7th century A.D., they totally disappeared from history for a period of three centuries. However, they emerged in the 10th century A.D., as Kadambas of Banavasi, Kadambas of Hanagal and some minor branches of Kadambas.¹⁴
The Kadambas followed the administrative system of the Satavahanas. They maintained formal council of ministers, and a central secretariat. They appointed officials like rahasyadhikari, secret policy framers, mahamatras, rajukas or officers in charge of revenue and lekhakas or writers. They also maintained provincial administrative set-up; the empire was divided into western, northern and eastern parts. The viceroyes were appointed to look after the divisions. Below these were the district and villages. The districts and villages were headed by the manneyas and gramikas respectively. The King was supreme head of justice and he was the final court of appeal. Below the king, there were courts and punishments were dependent on the gravity of the offences committed. The land administration was based upon smritis. The land revenue was the major source of revenue to the state. Taxes were imposed upon oil manufacturing, beasts of burden, betel leaf and salt. The lands were classified under different categories based on their fertility. The Sarvanamasya, the Tribhoga, and the Talavritti were the three types of tenures.¹⁵ The Lands were surveyed and measured. A noteworthy feature of the Kadamba administration was the role played by Village Panchayats. They were autonomous units free from the interference of the state. Though agriculture was the primary sector of the economy, there were flourishing industries in Banavasi, Halasi and other parts of the Kadamba kingdom. Some of the artisanal activities of the period were spinning, weaving, stone-work, brass and iron work, jewellery, basket making and oil pressing. The society was caste-based, and Hindu, Jaina and Bhuddhist educational institutions imparted education.¹⁶

The Bhoja Rule in Uttara Kannada:

One of the early families of western Deccan was that of the Bhojas. Two inscriptions of the Bhojas of Chandrapur (Chandor in Goa) were found in Hiregutti and
Arga. The Bhojas were mentioned in the traditional Sanskrit literature as belonging to the Haihaya sub-divisions of the Yadavas. They ruled from North Konkan and they were the contemporaries of the Satavahans. The Bhojas of Chandor ruled parts of Khanapur-Haliyal in the up-ghat region and in the coastal strip, till Kumta. The elephant was their royal emblem.\(^\text{17}\)

**The Kaikeyas:**

One of the minor dynasties that ruled in Uttara Kannada was that of the Kaikeyas. Only very few inscriptions were found relating to them. They appear to have been the feudatories of the Bhojas earlier and accepted the over lordship of the Kadambas. They maintained matrimonial relationship with the other rulers of Karnataka.\(^\text{18}\)

**The Chalukyas of Badami:**

The role of the Chalukyas of Badami constitutes a brilliant epoch in the history of Karnataka in particular and Indian history in general. They overthrew the Kadambas of Banavasi in about 570 A.D. The Chalukyas under Pulakesi-I established their sphere of activity in and around Badami in Karnataka. When Kakusta Varma I came to power, he fought with the Kadambas. Later Pulakesi-II assumed the reins of the kingdom and Kadambas were actually quested from political power and Kadamba *mandala* was transformed to Alupa control for more than a century. The Alupas retained their authority over this region until Aluvarasa II (730-765 A.D.) shifted his allegiance to the Pallavas.\(^\text{19}\)
The Rashtrakutas (700-1000 A.D.):

The Rashtrakutas took over the reins by defeating the Chalukyas of Badami. During the 8th century, the Uttara Kannada region, particularly Banavasi mandala was ruled by petty governors appointed by the Rashtrakutas. At the end of their rule, they appointed a member of the Kadamba family to rule over Banavasi mandala.  

The Kalyana Chalukyas:

In the History of Karnataka the rule of Kalyana Chalukyas was very significant. The polity, economy and society of the whole of Deccan were influenced by them. The Uttara Kannada region was ruled by the minor dynasties and they accepted the overlordship of the Chalukyas of Kalyana. Their authority in Uttara Kannada extended over Yellapur, Mundgod, Sirsi, and Siddapur taluks. The taluks of Supa, Haliyal and part of Yellapur and Mundgod were under the Kadambas of Goa. The below ghat region comprising of Ankola, Kumta, and Honnavar taluk was under the Pandyas of Shiraguli. Vikramaditya VI led an expedition along the coast with the help of Jayakeshi I, the Kadamba ruler of Goa. It was during this campaign, Honnavar was forfeited by Jayakesi I, after defeating Pandyan ruler.  

In the middle of the 13th century, the Kalachuris usurped the Chalukyan throne at Kalyana. In the last quarter of the 13th century, the Hoysalas under Ballala II conquered the areas of Bhatkal region and this was perhaps for the first time that a major dynasty from outside the district tried to establish direct political power in this region along with South Kanara.
The Vijayanagara Rule in Kanara:

Throughout the course of Vijayanagara history, the coastal area of this region assumed great importance. The Vijayanagara rulers succeeded in bringing the whole of Uttara Kannada under their control. Then Uttara Kannada was ruled by the local chieftains like those of Nagara, Haduvalli, Bilgi and Sonda. An interesting aspect of the Vijayanagara rule in this region was that in spite of the minor feudal ruling families being present in the region, the emperors appointed and stationed officers in certain centres like Honnavar, Bhatkal and Banavasi, to retain their hold uninterruptedly in the coastal track. From Kanara, they carried out horse trade, first with the Arabs and later on with the Portuguese. The rivers in Kanara served as the natural channels for the transportation of the products of the interior coast and from coast to interiors.  

In 1663, Baladaeus, the Dutch traveller observed Kanara was rich in products and had a healthy and strong people capable of any kind of work. The rich products of pepper and rice attracted the European traders and it marked the commencement of trade activities on coast subsequently influencing the political events of Kanara.  

The entire Kanara came under the control of Vijayanagara in the middle of the 14th century. The period saw the advent of the Portuguese, and they tried to secure Bhatkal port and commence their trade activities in the region. Towards the beginning of the 16th century, the Vijayanagara rulers lost control on extremely northern portion of Kanara to Bahamani and then it went under the control of Adilshahis.
Harihararaya, who acquired the region in A.D. 1343, made a new assessment of that province purporting to be in accordance with the principles laid down in the *shastras*. The settlement of Harihararaya was referred in all subsequent assessments, and thus formed the foundation of all the land tax in Kanara. This was not made from any actual measurement, but merely from the rough estimate of the quantity of seed sown in each fields. This system was called as *Bijawari* system. From 1348 to 1366, more than 20 per cent addition was made to the *jama*. This continued unaltered till the Keladi ruler Sivappa Nayaka introduced some alterations in the land revenue system. John Fryer who visited Karwar at the end of the year 1675 provides a detailed account of Kanara territory and stated that under the Vijayanagara kings, the taxation was very milder and they (people) lived with great comfort. Shaivisam, Vaishnavism and Jainism were the popular religions that existed during this period.

**Keladi or Bidanur or Ikkeri Rule in Kanara:**

The defeat of the Vijayanagara ruler in the battle of Rakkasa-Tangadi (1565) paved the way for the rise of new ruling families. The extreme portions of the Vijayanagara empire were occupied by the Adilshahi rulers. In the southern region, the Nayakas of Keladi occupied prominent position in Kanara and influenced its political and commercial activities. The Keladi kingdom comprised the areas of Shivamogga, Chikkmagaluru, Gokarna, Ankola, South Kanara, and Dharwad. Their land revenue system, particularly the changes introduced by Shivappa Nayaka were historically significant. His system of land revenue assessment came to be called as Shivappa Nayaka’s *Shist*.28
The Keladi rulers made no addition to the land revenue collected from the region till 1618. In that year, they levied an assessment of 50% on the whole of *jama*, except in the *Hoblee* of Mangalore. Additional tax was imposed by the Bidanur ruler on coconut and other fruit trees. Earlier dynasties levied tax only on the lands, and trees were exempted from the tax. The Vijayanagara assessment along with these new additions was called *Rekah* or *Shist* (*Shist* literally means a line) or Standard rent in Kanara. The *shist* comprised of two parts, first seven and a half parts out of 30 parts of gross produce the original *rekha* or Vijayanagara assessment and an addition of 50% on this assessment by the Bidanur government. On the whole the assessment, constituted 11½ parts out of 30 parts of the gross produce was called as *shist*.³⁰

Subsequent additions were made to the land revenue of Kanara in the year 1711. The *Pagdi* or extra assessment was imposed by the wife of Raja, who was regent, during the madness of her husband 1/6 of the *shist* was increased and in the initial years it was levied as *Nuzza*, but soon came to be considered as a part of the *jama*.³¹

The assessment of Basavappa Nayak was made in 1723 at the rate of 1/10 of an *anna* or hundred and sixteen part of standard rent in order to erect *chhatras* and feed pilgrims on account of the death of his father.³²

The trade that existed between this region and the Arabian countries and also the Portuguese during the Vijayanagara period continued even during the Keladi rule.³³
Adilshahi Rule in Kanara:

The conquest of Goa by the Bahamani Sultan in 1472 A.D. led to the expansion of that kingdom to the border of Kanara. Gradually the region from Kudal (Ratnagiri) to Chittakula (Uttara Kannada) came under the authority of Bahamani rulers. The Adilshahis of Bijapur who succeeded the Bahamanis in this region in 1490 A.D., held their sway over this territory. The unexpected victory of the five Deccan Sultans over Vijayanagara in 1565 A.D. marked a turning point in the history of Adilshahi kingdom. Ali Adilshah I, who had earlier acknowledged the authority of Vijayanagara declared himself as independent after the battle of Rakkasa–Tangadi in 1565. Between 1556 A.D. to 1614, the sultan of Bijapur often came to conflict with some of the chiefs in Kanara. Ibrahim Adilshah II, concluded an alliance in 1569 A.D. with the queen of Gersoppa in order to check the influence of the Portuguese.

The Bilgi Chiefs:

The chiefs of Bilgi played their own role in the political and cultural history of Uttara Kannada. They rose to power in the late 14th century and reached their zenith in the latter half of the 16th and early part of the 17th century. *Bilgi Arasurugala Vamsavali, Bilgi Arasara Charitre*, and some copper plate inscriptions talk about their rule. The chieftaincy had lost power towards the end of the 18th century. They acknowledged the authority of the Vijayanagara rulers and had friendly contact with Sonda rulers, but they, often had conflict with the Nayakas of Keladi. Gouda Saraswats from Goa were invited to Bilgi and were provided with land and other facilities with a view to encourage trade and scholarship.
The Sonda Chiefs:

The Sonda chiefs came to power in the early part of the 14th century and attained their zenith in the middle of the 17th century. Their headquarters was at Sonda in Sirsi taluk. They called themselves as Swadi Puravaradhishwara. In the course of three centuries of its existence, the Sonda ruling family had contact with the contemporary rulers like Vijayanagra, Keladi, Adilshais, Marathas and the Europeans. After the battle of Rakkasa-Tangadi, they continued for a long time as feudatories of the Vijyanagara emperors and gradually rose to prominence in Uttara Kannada. It is difficult to trace the land revenue administration followed by the Rajas of Sonda. According to Harris, the Collector of Kanara, in some parts of Sonda, the assessment was levied in kind as late as 1770. It amounted to 2/3rd the gross produce and the settlement was made based on villages and village-groups or maganes. The headmen and accountants divided the total assessment among under-renters. All land belonged to the government. It is said that the gardens were considered as private property, but it appeared that only the trees belonged to the owners. The ownership of the land vested in the government.\textsuperscript{38} Extra assessment or patti was imposed in the year 1718 by the Rajas of Sonda for the purpose of discharging the Moghal peshkash (tribute) at the rate of 30\% upon all gardens and from 2 ½ to 12 ½ upon all rice fields.\textsuperscript{39}

The Maratha Incursion in Kanara:

The Marathas appeared on the political scene of Kanara with the commencement of the activities of Shivaji from 1646 A.D. Shivaji and his successors raided Kanara many times with the intention of extracting tributes from the local chiefs and also to have some territorial gains. Actually Shivaji did not have much contact with Kanara in the early years
of his career. His first attempt of raid on Bhatkal port in the year 1664 A.D. was unsuccessful. He was stopped on the way itself by the armies of the Sultan of Bijapur and Shivaji had to retreat. The raid was meant to acquaint himself with the topography and politics of Kanara. The Maratha soldiers frequently attacked the boundary areas of Kanara to collect booty. The British got trade privileges from Adilshahis of Bijapur and established a factory at Karwar in 1638 A.D. They subsequently increased their position due to the trade activities in this region. The British in Karwar gradually increased their influence in such a way that the Adilshahi officers very often sought military and financial help from the British against the Sultan of Bijapur and Marathas. At the same time, the British successfully consolidated their commercial hold on that region by siding one against the other. As a result, the native rulers lost their commercial hold on the region. Shivaji wanted to have control over the Kanara ports, and in 1673 A.D. he sent a naval expedition to Karwar and conquered it. In 1675 A.D., he again invaded Kanara and this time he established a good hold on the portion of North Kanara. The British could not withstand this menace and ultimately suspended their trade activities in Karwar.

The death of Shivaji in the month of April, 1680 A.D., resulted in the decline of Maratha hold on this region. His son Sambhaji, tried to regain it, but he was not much successful. He attempted to acquire the Anjadiv Island near Karwar, but strong opposition from the Portuguese forced him to withdraw his plan. He was successful in the abolition of slave trade in Karwar area. A treaty concluded by him with the English at Karwar prohibited the English from buying any of his people belonging to his territory to be used either as slaves or to be converted into Christianity.”
During the heydays of their glory, the Peshwas regarded the chiefs of Sonda and Keladi as their tributaries. But these chiefs constantly faced the raids of the Marathas under the Peshwas as they could not pay the stipulated tribute to them.\textsuperscript{42}

**The Mysore Sultans in Kanara:**

In 1761 A.D., Haider Ali came to power in the politics of Karnataka as the ruler of Mysore. This event had considerable impact on the surrounding regions. As he was a shrewd diplomat and a military genius, he soon launched an expansionist programme. He was attracted towards Kanara due to its rich natural resources, and brisk trade activities of the Europeans.\textsuperscript{43} As a coastal region with ports, Kanara was a strategic area from the point of view of politics and trade. He wished to have control on the trade activities and acquire wealth by pushing away the foreigners. The Bidanur capital of Keladi kingdom became the first victim in 1763.\textsuperscript{44} With 5000 sepoys and 300 Europeans he marched towards the Kanara coast and captured Mangalore. Then he marched towards Honnavar, the port was almost handed over to him without much opposition in 1763 A.D. In the same year, he invaded the on Sonda chieftaincy, the chief of Sonda escaped to Goa and sought help from the Portuguese.\textsuperscript{45} The conquest of Kanara was completed by Haider Ali in the beginning of 1764 A.D., and the vast area stretching from the Kali river to Chandragiri river came under his possession.\textsuperscript{46} This conquest strengthened the position of Haider Ali considerably. Thomas Munro said: “Haider received Kanara which slightly improved the country, filled with industrious inhabitants enjoying a greater portion of the produce of the soil and living more comfortably under any native powers in India.”\textsuperscript{47} The conquest had a considerable impact on the foreign traders also. The English did not want to lose their prosperous trade in this part of Kanara which was under the control of Haider Ali.\textsuperscript{48}
In 1762, Haider Ali was defeated by Madhav Rao Peshwa who exhibited interest in Sonda. But Haider Ali had realised the danger to the country that might emerge from the British, and therefore tried for an alliance with the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Marathas to drive the British out of the territory. But by the treaty of Salbai, the Marathas and the Nizam had succumbed to the British diplomacy and Haider Ali had to fight alone.  

In the year 1782 Haider Ali died and his son Tipu Sultan succeeded him. The British sent General Mathew from Bombay to capture Bidanur territory. On his way to Bidanur, he captured Mirjan, Honnavar, Ankola and Sadashivgad territories; finally he captured Bidanur in the year 1783. But Tipu soon regained all these territories in the same year and signed a treaty with the British. After the treaty, Tipu resorted to retaliatory action against the local Christians. They were forced to move to Srirangapattana and on the way they faced inhuman cruelties. Many churches were destroyed. During the IV Anglo-Mysore war, the British laid siege to Srirangapattana and Tipu was killed on 4th May 1799, ending thereby the last hurdle to the colonial conquest of southern India and thereby Mysore came under the British control.

When Haider Ali came to power in Mysore, he ordered an investigation into every source of revenue for the purpose of augmenting the income of the State. He ordered to re-impose an extra assessment of 1711 upon the lands held by the patels and other head ryots, who were exempted from that and an additional assessment of 12,000 pagodas to be laid upon the Mangalore Hoblee, because it was partially subjected to the additional 50% in the year 1618. When the Haider Ali conquered the Bidanur in 1763 and he ordered to make an investigation into every source of revenue for the purpose of augmenting it.
Haider appointed an officer called Shaik Ayaz who was the Diwan of Kanara and Nuggur (Nagara) provinces. He conducted land survey assessment of Kanara and Sonda. He restored to the standard rent to charge in respect of *tunkas* to peons which had been previously remitted and raised the rent of all coconut plantations in his region. He also calculated the amount of all *rasams* and services usually extracted from the Amildars and Killadars and added them to the land rent. In the early 1780’s Haider Ali ordered an investigation to be made into every source of revenue. Haider Ali was succeeded by his son Tipu Sultan, made total resumption of all *inams*. He ordered to increase the tax upon coconut trees. He increased the land tax to 30% by raising the prices of tobacco and *shroffs*. In 1792, 50% of *nuzzzerana* was increased. The *shamil* was introduced during the time of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan, which was the aggregate of the various cesses or *patti*, that amounted roughly at least 30%.

Tipu was not only a brave warrior, but also an equally good administrator. He divided his kingdom into 37 provinces called as *asofis* each of which was administered by a provincial Governor. The provinces were further divided into taluks called *amils*, which functioned under a taluk official called *Amildar*. The lowest administrative unit was a village called *simpt* administrated by a headman called *Patel*. The kingdom of Tipu comprised an area of 62000 square miles. Tipu introduced six departments which looked after different branches of administration, such as land revenue, military, commerce, marine, ordinance, and treasury. These ministers were assisted by the advisers and officials. Tipu established an efficient and highly disciplined army which comprised of cavalry and infantry. Mangalore was Tipu’s naval headquarters. He took steps for the development of agriculture by the construction of irrigational project; fallow land was
brought under cultivation through exemption from revenue payment for the first year, and by advancing *Taccavi*. ⁵⁸

Tipu introduced postal system for royal correspondence. For the first time, the department of census was opened. A new system of weights and measures and currencies came into existence. Coins were called by different names like *Hyderi*, *Inami*, and *Osmani*. Tipu also replaced Kannada with Persian as the administrative language. ⁵⁹

The most important aspect of Tipu’s administration was the establishment of state monopoly over trade. Trade and commerce became the exclusive prerogative of the state. Trading centres were established abroad in China, Masqat and some industries were also brought under state control. The benefits from these were reaped by the state. ⁶⁰

The above details provide a brief history of Uttara Kannada prior to the advent of the British. The region was famous for its ports, internal and external trade. The spices grown in this region were famous, and exported to other regions in India and abroad. The native rulers ruled the region according to *dharmashastras*. Though there were followers of different religions like Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity, there existed religious harmony. The society was caste-based. The primary sector of economy was that of agriculture and several castes and groups undertook artisanal works. Though there existed private property, there were lands which belonged to the state. The revenue administration saw changes over the centuries. The revenue share of the state was enhanced from the period of Vijayanagara. The Nayakas of Keladi and the Sultans of
Mysore also contributed to the enhancement of land revenue which formed the main source of revenue for the state.

**European Activities in Kanara:**

The advent of Europeans in India is a significant event in Indian history. It inaugurated a new phase in the political, economic and social life of the country. The ships of Vasco da Gama landed at Anjadiv islands off Karwar in 1498 A.D. The accidental landing of Vasco da Gama and the Portuguese in 1498 A.D. provided the scope for trade and commerce between India and the west. After him, a number of Portuguese sailors came to the Kanara coast and involved in trading activities. In the course of time, they slowly interfered in the local politics by siding with one chief against another and tried to strengthen their position in Kanara.\(^{61}\) In the 16\(^{th}\) century, they carried out thriving trade with India, including the west coast. The situation gradually changed from the middle of the 17\(^{th}\) century, when the other Europeans also entered India and Kanara for trading activities. Consequently, this led to the commercial rivalries and European incursions in Indian politics. A good number of ports were constructed for defence of the strategic places, there was a marked change in the method of warfare, and guns were used during the war. The sea trade received a considerable impetus. Side by side Christianity was also spread. The chief concern of the Portuguese was to safeguard their commercial interest in this region. Prior to 1747 A.D., the Portuguese received tributes from several ports in Kanara stretching from Chittakula to Kumbale. They used every opportunity to spread Christianity in the region. In the course of time, the Portuguese influence and prestige declined considerably on account of their inhuman actions in the field of religious conversion, and due to their weakness in relation to the Dutch and the English.\(^{62}\)
The Dutch:

The Dutch activities in Kanara coast commenced in the early part of the 17th century and they made considerable progress in the second half of that century. The fame of Karwar pepper which they heard in the accounts of the travellers induced them to come to Karwar. They, like the Portuguese, were jealous of the British trade in Kanara. They continued their trade activities in Kanara till 1757 A.D., and thereafter they completely eclipsed because of the increasing activities of the English on the one hand, and the Marathas on the other. They were not so much intensive and eager in spreading Christianity like the Portuguese. Their activities were purely commercial. They entered Kanara as competitors in the field of trade and competition resulted in rivalry. They tried to establish some sort of friendship with Nayakas of Keladi and the Sulatn of Bijapur. However they did not succeed.63

The French:

The French like other Europeans entered Kanara for securing pepper trade and started their activities in the second half of the 17th century. They established a factory at Mirjan in 1669 A.D. They did not dominate in Kanara because of the opposition from the English64.

The British in Kanara:

In the early part of the 17th century, some of the coastal towns in Kanara witnessed the commencement of the British activities like the other Europeans. The British too came to Kanara for trade and confined their activities only to trade and their involvement in local politics was motivated by commercial interest. The establishment of
English East India Company, and their factory at Surat enabled the British to know more about the wealth of Kanara, especially its prosperous pepper trade. Captain William Hoarse was the first Englishman who made an attempt to trade in Kanara in 1619 A.D.\textsuperscript{65} They got support and permission from Virabhadra Nayaka of Keladi and build a factory at Bhatkal. With the friendship of Adilshahis of Bijapur, they established a factory at Kadwad in 1638 A.D. and at Honnavar in 1717 A.D. Due to the local opposition in Bhatkal, the factory was closed in the year 1670. The British factory at Karwar was closed because of Shivaji’s frequent attacks on the bordering areas of Karwar. The British failed to stop these attacks and ultimately suspended their trade activities in Karwar. In the initial stage, the British maintained a cordial relationship with the Sonda chiefs. But in the later stage, they had to clash with the Sonda chiefs. The British wanted to settle themselves in Kanara, and finally they settled in Honnavar, and had a hold on pepper, and sandalwood trade. The fourth Anglo-Mysore war, which was fought in the year 1799 resulted in the final overthrow of Tipu’s power and the victorious British acquired the coastal district after signing the treaty of Srirangapattana on 22\textsuperscript{nd} June, 1799.\textsuperscript{66}

**Working of British Colonialism and Its Impact on Uttara Kannada up to 1862:**

After the acquisition of the Province of Kanara and Sonda in 1799 by the British, they consolidated their hold over the region by setting up a strong government. As regards administration, various departments were set up. The departments relating to revenue, judiciary, police, and public works were significant. Administrative officials like The Collector, Sub-Collector, Tahsildar, Shanbogues, manegars etc., were appointed by the colonial government.\textsuperscript{67} In the beginning of the British rule, Kanara Province was divided
into two divisions, Southern division and Northern divisions. The Province had only one Collector at Mangalore. The Province was divided into taluks, taluks into maganes, maganes into villages and villages into estates or wargs. The huzoor or collector’s office at Mangalore consisted of the various offices like that of sheristadar, naib or deputy sheristadar, gumastha, moonshee, English head accountant, deputy accountant, English writer, English record keepers, jamadar, delayat, ructwan, dufter-bund, treasurer, shroff, duffedar, peon, mussagies, sweeper, toti, book binder and ink-maker. The offices of the sub-collector, additional sub-collector and head assistant collector at Mangalore also consisted of various officials. Each taluk establishment had offices of tahsildar, deputy tahsildar, peshcar, sheristadar, gumastha, moonshee, shrof, gollar, duffedar, peon, cutwal and mutsuddy. Each village establishment consisted of mangegars, shanbogue and oograni. The remittance department included duffedar, peon and revenue tappal peons. The police department included English writer, moonshee, gumasta, police ammen, cutwal, shanbogue, dufterbund, duffedar and peon. The judicial department or the district court consisted of civil judges, sessions judge, another subordinate judge and other lower officials.

During the early years of the British rule in Kanara, there was anti-British uprising in the district as in other parts of Karnataka. Dondiya Wagh of Chennagiri rebelled from Karnataka. He unfurled the flag of revolt from Shikaripura and his allies and supporters also were active in many areas of Karnataka. There were disturbances in Banavasi, Sonda and Ankola. Some of the insurgents coming from Mangalore, and some others from Shikaripura were supported by the local people and they captured Banavasi and took possession of the British stores where a huge quantity of pepper had been stocked in
around June 1800. Another group which rebelled from Ankola not only secured control over the town, but also marched till Bilgi. The Prince of Bilgi also revolted against the British and declared his freedom. A descendant of the Sonda royal family was declared to be the ruler of Sonda, and all the regions in the area were surrounded by these insurgents. But Dhondiya escaped towards Gadag, and the British killed him in a war in September 1800 and it quelled the movement. The Bilgi prince was also killed in the war against the British.\textsuperscript{71}

Sir Thomas Munro, the first Collector of the Province followed the Bidanur assessment along with Haider Ali’s additions as a standard for his revenue settlement in the region. Consequently, this was approved by the Madras Government and revenue was collected in the name of \textit{kadim beriz} which was the fixed amount of assessment on the land. Thus the Munro System of land revenue assessment was introduced in Kanara in 1799-1800.\textsuperscript{72} In the initial stage of British administration, Munro wanted to conciliate the people by granting partial remission from the extractions imposed on them by their former native ruler to enable them overcome the pressure of old assessment. Munro, after his first settlement made certain reductions in the demand of land revenue amounting to Rupees 14,351-10-3 for collection, and Rupees 5,805-6-10 in abeyance and a total of Rupees 20,157-1-1.\textsuperscript{73} Munro also proposed a great reduction on the \textit{halut} (export duty) on pepper, \textit{supari}, cardamom, and sandalwood. But it was abolished when there was great reduction in collection of land revenue.\textsuperscript{74}

The land revenue system introduced by Murno was largely Ryotwari in nature. It was an arrangement made between the government and the ryots or cultivators of land with
the complete exclusion of intermediaries. Under this agreement, the government usually sought to receive its due in the form of money value fixed upon the actual fields under cultivation. The ryotwari system allowed the ryots to alter their holdings, and the ryots could transfer, relinquish, and take up available waste or fields relinquished by others. The ryots were also allowed certain remissions, both fixed and casual. The land revenue settlement under the ryotwari system was not permanent. It was revised periodically, after 20 to 30 years the revenue was usually raised. The Court of Directors in London ordered to implement the ryotwari system of land revenue all over Madras Presidency after 1819. An official report by John Stuart Mill in the year 1857, explained the Ryotwari system of land revenue system as follows: “Under the Ryotwari System every registered holder of land is recognised as its proprietor, and pays direct to Government. He is at liberty to sublet 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, and has the option annually of increasing or diminishing his holding, or of entirely abandoning it. In unfavourable seasons remissions of assessment are granted for entire or partial loss of produce. The assessment is fixed in money, and does not vary from year to year, in those cases where water is drawn from a Government source of irrigation to convert dry land into wet, or into two-crop land, when an extra rent is paid to Government for the water so appropriated; nor is any addition made to the assessment for improvements effected at the Ryot's own expense. The Ryot under this system is virtually a Proprietor on a simple and perfect title, and has all the benefits of a perpetual lease without its responsibilities, inasmuch as he can at any time throw up his lands, but cannot be ejected so long as he pays his dues; he receives assistance in difficult seasons, and is irresponsible for the payment of his neighbours. The Annual Settlements under Ryotwari are often misunderstood, and it is necessary to explain that
they are rendered necessary by the right accorded to the Ryot of diminishing or extending his cultivation from year to year. Their object is to determine how much of the assessment due on his holding the Ryot shall pay, and not to reassess the land. In these cases where no change occurs in the Ryots holding a fresh Potta or lease is not issued, and such parties are in no way affected by the Annual Settlement, which they are not required to attend.”

Though Munro was critical of the land revenue assessment collected before 1799, he did not depart widely from the system which he found established in the region. He made no other reduction in the assessment of Tipu Sultan beyond such as was absolutely necessary to ensure the collection of the rest of the revenue. Munro’s settlement was the basis of the revenue administration till about 1814. But overassessment and frequent arrears in the payment of land revenue by the ryots forced the government to alter the system of Munro.

In the year 1819-20 a revision was made by Harris, the then Collector of Kanara. That was known as tarao (fixed) or sarasari (average) settlement. The word tarao meant in Hindi, to fix, determine, or settle. H.H. Wilson gives it as a Hindi and Marathi word meaning fixed or determining. It was called as sarasari because the assessment was based upon the average collections of the revenue since the British occupation of Kanara. Under this system a fixed assessment was laid on each warg or estate. Harris ordered for the survey of the region, and accordingly along with Sirsi taluk five other maganes or village groups of Yellapur taluk were surveyed and assessed.
The taluk of Ankola below the ghats, and Yellapur, Supa and Mamlatdar’s division of Sirsi above the ghats, were surveyed and measured under the orders of Madras Government in the year 1822-23. But with the exception of a few maganes, none of them were surveyed and assessed. Honnavar and part of Sirsi which formed the Bilgi mahal, remained unmeasured and the survey operation was abandoned.\(^8^0\)

In 1825, some partial steps were undertaken and carried out above the ghats to survey the lands. Measurement of 50 villages in above the ghats and some villages of old Ankola taluk was undertaken. It was represented, however, that the principle of assessing all lands alike at one third of the gross produce was unfair, as the cost of working garden land was much greater in some parts than in other, and assessment varying from 25% to 35% of the gross produce was suggested. The Revenue Board approved the plan of ascertaining the gross produce and classing the lands accordingly, and the Collector was directed to assess a few village groups upon these principles.\(^8^1\)

In the year 1831, tumultuous assemblies of the ryots were held in the southern division of Kanara. The Madras government commissioned H. Stokes to enquire into the causes and happening of the resistance. Stock, in his report dated 12\(^\text{th}\) January 1833, after discussing the inequality of the distribution of assessment, and the cause of it, recommended as a temporary measure, the extension of the tarao principle to Ankola, Sonda and Supa. Stokes’ report is very useful to comprehend the complexities of the land revenue system in Kanara.\(^8^2\)
At the time of Nagara uprising of 1830-31 in the Mysore state, there were also disturbances in undivided Kanara, mostly led by the peasants. This was due to depression in trade during the 1820s on the coast and the peasants found it difficult to pay the revenue. First, there was trouble at Haliyal when people from Dharwad area attacked the treasury at Haliyal on 22nd January 1930. However, this unrest was suppressed by the government. The movement became acute in South Kanara region and its echoes were felt in the Uttara Kannada region too. There were riotous proceedings in Sonda taluk and serious disturbance in Sirsi in April, 1831.83

In the year 1832-33, Viveash, the Collector recommended certain changes to tarao settlement.84 A distinction was subsequently made between the estates which could afford to pay the full assessment, and those which could not; the first one was called as Bharti, no annual inspection was made on these Bharti wargs, and the second was Kambharti on which wargs every year inspection was made by Shanbogues which was checked by a Kacheri Karkoon, in order to ascertain if the reason for the reduction of assessment still existed.85 Subsequently, a resettlement was made of the Kambharti estates which were divided into three classes as below:

First - Vaida or those for which a gradually ascending rate of assessment was fixed until the full demand was reached.

Second - Board Sifarish or those the assessment of which was permanently reduced by order of the revenue board.
Third - *Tanki* or those left for assessment from time to time. This *taraao* settlement was continued until the new survey was conducted in Uttara Kannada.\(^8^6\)

In 1847, the Governor in Council came to the conclusion that a survey was the only way to correct fraud and inequality in assessment. But nothing was done up to transfer of Uttara Kannada to Bombay Presidency in 1862. The settlement and remission were based upon *bijawari* and *hootawali* measures.\(^8^7\)

The newly introduced judicial administration and police system helped the colonial government to establish its supremacy over the region. In 1773 three courts were established in Madras, Calcutta and Bombay. Under the Regulating Act of 1773, a High Court at Calcutta was established. The British laid the foundation of a new system of dispensing justice through a hierarchy of civil and criminal courts. However, there was no major progress towards simplifying and systematising the law until 1858.\(^8^8\)

The District Court was established at Honnavar in 1807 under Regulation II of 1806 with jurisdiction over both the divisions of Kanara then known as North Kanara and South Kanara. This resulted in only one judicial establishment for the entire Province of Kanara and Sonda with headquarters at Honnavar. However, in 1810 the District Court was moved to Mangalore. The District Judge was subjected to the supervision of Circuit Court at Tellichery which was established in 1802 under Madras Regulation IV, and was known as Provincial Circuit Court consisting of 3 Judges with power to hear appeals and try cases committed by the District Court of Kanara.\(^8^9\) However, in 1843, by Madras Act VII of 1843, the Circuit Court of Tellichery was abrogated and simultaneously the northern
division of Kanara was separated from southern division for judicial matters. In 1855, the Acting Magistrate of Kanara proposed to transfer the judicial headquarters from Honnavar to Karwar.  

The Police system introduced by the British through the Madras Regulation XXXV of 1802 replaced the traditional system of maintaining law and order. The police system of Munro as far as possible made use of the earlier officials like the village headmen and watchmen. However, new rules and regulations and bureaucracy came into being. It was under the authority of the Collector of the Province. The Darogha system was introduced. A thoroughly recognised police system came to be established only in 1859-60. However, the changes introduced were to the local inhabitants and were disliked by them.  

The colonial government introduced tobacco monopoly in the region. In 1804, the British government introduced tobacco monopoly in Kanara. Earlier to the introduction of the monopoly the ryots used to cultivate and sell tobacco by themselves, and thus enjoyed the full share of the profit. The introduction of monopoly in 1804 deprived them of this profit and naturally they resented the monopoly. During the unrest of 1830-31, the peasants did cities the policy of tobacco monopoly and regarded it as one of the important cause of their economic evils. The government however continued the monopoly until its abolition in 1853.  

In the year 1807, the British government introduced salt monopoly in the Kanara region. The inhabitants had to depend upon the government for the supply of salt. Even the licenced manufacturers were unable to meet the demand of the region, and as such, a large
quantity of salt was imported from Goa by land route on payment of custom duty of 12 annas per maund. It was considered to be equal to the profit made in manufacturing of the salt in the district. The salt monopoly of the government resulted in inconvenience to the subjects in many ways. Besides, the restrictions imposed on the use of forest resources made the life of the ryots artisans and other inhabitants of the region miserable.

The British occupation of Kanara and their trade policies had their impact on the trade and commerce of the region. Rice was staple export of the district. Pepper, sandalwood, timber, coir, coconut and other items were also exported. Raw silk, sugar tea, chinaware, dry grains, cotton, etc. were imported to the district. These were imported from the neighbouring regions including the up-ghat areas, and the export was to neighbouring regions and also outside, including China and Arabia. Mangalore port played a major role in the trading activities of Kanara. Heavy Custom duty was levied on the export of rice, betelnut and pepper. Inland and transit duties were collected. Kanara was under the Madras Customs Regulations. The sea custom department was set up. The colonial government introduced currency reform also.

The East India Company’s rule in the region from 1799 to 1862 transformed the revenue system, judiciary, police, trade and commerce, and the society. The British administration changed the traditional system by introducing the bureaucracy, rules and regulations, law courts, maximisation of land revenue, tobacco and salt monopoly etc. The colonial domination suppressed the indigenous people in all walks of life. The peasants and artisans suffered. The new social classes like moneylenders and landlords emerged, and the traditional socio-economic relations changed. This scenario continued in the region after
1862 also. In fact the day-to-day life of the inhabitants worsened due to the colonial policies in the late 19th and 20th centuries.

6. Ibid. ,p.9.
7. Ibid., pp. 31-33.
12. Ibid.,39.
16. Ibid.,p.29.
17. V. R. Mitragotri, Socio-Cultural History of Goa from Bhojas to Vijayanagara, Panaji, 1999, p. 34.
27 Quoted in W. C. Anderson’s letter to Chief Secretary to Government 28th February 1873, Kumta Settlement, *SRBG(NS)*, 1883, pp. 67-69.
29 *Ibid*.
31 *BHR, The Canara Land Assessment Case, 1st May 1875, MSA*, p.85.
37 Suryanath U. Kamath, (Ed.), *Karnataka State Gazetteer, Uttara Kannada District*, Bangalore, 1985, p.138; Chandrakanta Keni has stated that there were large settlements of Saraswat families, who had moved in pursuit of trade, in Mangalore and Bhatkal and smaller ones in other coastal towns. see Chandrakant Keni, *The Saraswats a compilation of facts and documents from various sources*, Panaji, 2008, p.127.
42 Ibid., p.185.


48 Ibid.,


54 Ibid.,p.89.


63 James Campbell (Ed), *Op.Cit.*, p. 120.

64 Ibid.


Ibid.
Ibid.
Ibid.


Letter from Acting Collector of Kanara No. 2072 dated 30th August 1855: quoted in the Judicial Department file No. 4149 of 1865, dated 20th December 1865, *JD, MSA.*
90 Ibid.


92 Ibid., p.191.


95 Ibid., p.244.

96 Ibid., p. 316.