CHAPTER I

GENESIS OF POLITICIZATION
"As a society matures to more highly organized stages, it becomes more and more difficult to make changes without shaking the whole foundation. Yet if these reforms are not made as they become necessary, they accumulate. Their postponement inhibits social and economic adjustment and generates resentment, political friction, and social dynamics. Eventually such delay of needed reforms leads to the major surgical operations on the body politic which we call revolutions—the most brutal, clumsy, and costly of all forms of adjustment.... In studying the history of the world's bloodiest revolutions up to this day, I find that inhibited, delayed, or otherwise frustrated reforms of land-tenure system were the most powerful factors responsible".

The acquisition of the Northern Circars by the East India Company was completed by 1765. From a revenue point of view the Jagir, which now comprises the districts of Madras and Chingleput, was the earliest acquisition. The E.I.C was given permission by Naick Damarla Venkatapathi Naick, who was ruling the coast from Pulicat to the Portuguese settlement of Santhome with headquarters at Wandiwash to build a fort in Madras on 27th July 1639, which later on became popular as Fort St. George.

The next in point of time to acquire was the large tract known as the Northern Circars. The next acquisitions were the districts ceded by Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan after the Mysore wars, namely, the Salem district, Dindigul and Palani taluks of the Madura and Malabar and Coimbatore districts. Then came the districts of Bellary, Anantapur, the Palnad taluk, Cuddapah and Kurnool, which were ceded by the Nizam to the E.I.C on 12th October 1800. The Carnatic districts, namely, North Arcot, Trichinopally, Tinnevelly and the feudatory State of Pudukottai all passed into the British control on 31st July 1801. These acquisitions virtually virtually complete the territory of the Presidency of Madras. As the present study concentrates on the Northern Circars a little greater chronological account is given.

The earliest possession of the E I.C on the East coast was Nizampatnam also then known as Patapally, a seaport in the district of Krishna. A factory was established there in 1621 with the permission of the King of Golconda. In 1753 it was ceded to the French along with the Northern Circars by the Nizam of Golconda, by in 1759 it was conferred on the Company along with the Northern Circars, which was confirmed by the Mughal Emperor in 1765.

Simultaneously with Patapally, the English touched Masulipatnam in 1611 and established a factory in 1621. After aturbulent history, the Masulipatnam Circar, Nizampatnam, the
districts of Kondaveedu and Akulamannanda (Bandar) were finally granted to the E.I.C by the Nizam in a treaty signed on 14th May 1759. The grant was confirmed by the Mughal Emperor in 1765.

The Circars of Chicacole, Rajamundry, Ellore, Mustafanagar and Moortuzanagar were ceded in 1765 by the Nizam in a treaty with E.I.C and confirmed by the Mughal Emperor in 1765. These Circars, the Masulipatnam Circar which was ceded in 1759 and the Badhrachalam and Rekapally taluks subsequently ceded in 1760, form what are popularly called as the Northern Circars.1

After the establishment of the Permanent Settlement in Bengal, the Madras Government was pressed to follow the Bengal example.2 A series of measures followed between 1795 and 1802 which decided the establishment of a permanent settlement in the Northern Circars.3 Thus the permanent settlement (popularly known as Zamindari system) was introduced under Regulation 25 of 1802.4 It was not difficult to introduce the permanent settlement in Northern Circars as there were a number of large estates in these territories. The Haveli lands or the Crown lands were sold out in estates of convenient size as permanently settled farms to the highest auction-bidder. The tracts already in the hands of native chiefs or Zamindars were confirmed to them in perpetuity according to the principles of permanent settlement.5

Prior to 1802 there was no 'Zamindari system' in its present form.6 Before the advent of the British rule, for administration purposes and for military assistance, the rulers entrusted certain tracts of their territories to some important persons in those territories and these individuals in their turn used to pay tributes to the rulers and render assistance by supplying men and money in times of war.7 The word 'Zamindar' is derived from the Hindustani term 'zameen' from which the State was deriving a good deal of its revenue. According to Baden-Powell no Mughal ruler ever created an official collector of rents or invented the word 'zamindar'.8 Any one who had some real estate was spoken of as Zamindar. It was largely during the period of political
weakness under later Mughals that all the _intermediaries_— the
Rajas or chiefs, the _revenue-assignees_ and the revenue-farmers
came to be called as Zamindars and 'even the Court favourites,
bankers and other officials came to be called Zamindars'.

However the pre-British Zamindars never had power as was given to
them later by the British. They never possessed the power to
alienate estates, to raise money on them by mortgage and the
like. Moreover of all methods of collection of revenue before
British rule, the most noteworthy was that of collecting it
direct from the cultivators through the heads of villages.

Baden-Powell looks **upon** the Mughal system as essentially a
ryotwari system which 'went straight to the _cultivator_'.

However the British created the zamindaries in order to
serve as a bulwark against the prospective mass defiances of
British rule and also to ensure the proper payment of the
company's revenues. They declared the Zamindars as
proprieters of the soil ignoring the fact that their tenants were
really not **ordinary** tenants but were in most cases 'the original
and hereditary possessors of the soil'.

Under the permanent **settlement** the Zamindars got the
authority to hold the Zamindari for ever. In return they had
to make a fixed payment to government called peshkush. The
zamindaries were made not only heritable but also transferable.
The peshkush itself was not arrived at **scientifically** and no
general rules were followed, regarding the area to be surveyed,
or fertility, or value of the produce etc. There was no
referene to any record of landed rights and in fact too much of
(local scrutiny into such rights was forbidden on the ground that
it would make the Zamindars suspicious and nervous. The rights
of the ryots were not defined nor were their rental dues to the
new landlords fixed at any particular level to prevent
exploitation. The Regulation XXX of 1802 which was intended to
fix the share to be paid by the cultivator failed to protect the
tenant as it was never **implemented**.
The permanent settlement was based on the principle that

a) there had to be some person who could take the responsibility for collecting the revenue punctually. This person was to be the Zamindar. In return for this responsibility he was to be given the assurance that he would not be removed from the land, i.e., he was to be recognised as the proprietor of the land with the power to raise money on credit, and to sell his land or to pass it on to his children. The proprietary right was to give full security to the Zamindar, but it was subject to the prescriptive or customary rights of his tenants since the tenants were not ordinary tenants but had certain rights to the soil. These rights however were not defined though the State reserved the right to do this later and to pass laws for the benefit of the tenants;

b) that the Zamindar was to pay to the State ten-elevenths of the assets (rentals) which meant that he could keep one-tenth of the revenue. The State also gave to the Zamindar the benefit of any future increase in the assets due to extension of cultivation or other justifiable causes;

c) the State promised that the amount of land revenue would be fixed for ever and that it would not make any further demand in consequence of any improvement on the estates of the Zamindars;

d) in return for all the privileges given the Zamindars were to be made liable to have their estates sold for non-payment of revenue by the last day fixed for each instalment. No argument could be used in defence of non-payment not even that of famine or failure of crops;

e) the remissions which were occasionally granted according to the custom of the country on account of drought, inundation or other calamity of the season would be ceased and never be revived and

f) that the karnams, the village accountants, would be appointed and controlled by the Zamindars but would not be liable to be removed from their offices, except by the sentence of a court of Judicature.

Thus with the Permanent Settlement loaded heavily against the interests of the peasants they, were virtually put at the
mercy of the Zamindars.

The total Zamindari area in 1938 was about one crore and eighty lakhs in the Andhra province comprising of 20,361 villages. The total income to the Zamindars in Madras Presidency was over two and a half crore rupees while peshkash due to government on them was about forty nine lakhs of rupees only. Of this the Andhra Zamindars paid about twenty four lakhs of rupees, as peshkush. However, all was not well with the Haveli estates and the zamindaries. Many of the estates were sold out owing to the failures of payments of revenue and purchasers were readily found for them. In some cases where there were no purchasers these estates were transferred into ryotwari settlement. Several of the ancient zamindaries were partitioned between the heirs of the Zamindars.

With the acquisition of permanency over the lands, the Zamindars started fleecing the peasants with heavy taxes and unauthorised extortions. The position of the tenants was not bettered by the fixing in perpetuity of the peshkush from the proprietors. The zamindari administration became well-known for gross inefficiency, corruption and sometimes for economic bankruptcy.

Despite the government's efforts to safeguard the cultivators through legislative measures, they proved elusive. These half-hearted measures and vagueness, and the inadequacy of safeguards in the land legislation resulted in the continuance of Zamindari tyranny, thus worsening the condition of the cultivators. Regulation XXVIII maintains that the Zamindars could not restrain or sell lands, houses or other real property of their under-farmers, tenants and ryots without any default. On the other hand, if it was found on trial that such a procedure was resorted to by the Zamindar without any default of the ryot in respect of payment of rents, etc., the Zamindar might be liable to pay damages for his unjust use of some of the provisions of the Regulation XXVIII. The Regulation XXX
authorised the Zamindar to issue pattas to his tenants, but this Patta Regulation XXX of 1802 was not at all implemented.20

Discounting the rights of the tenants, the Zamindars began a campaign of distraint and enhancement of rents. Mr. Fullerton, a member of the Council, in his minute, stated that the pattas were not regularly issued by Zamindars, the right of occupancy was not distinctly understood and that the Patta Regulation XXX of 1802 'had almost become a dead letter'.21

Citing that the permanent settlement of 1802 failed to protect the peasants from the oppression of the Zamindars, the government introduced the Regulation IV and V of 1802 giving more powers to the Collectors regarding arrears of rents, rates of assessment, occupancy and cultivation of land. It also restricted the power of the Zamindar to grant the lands of ryots without previous consent of the Collectors.22 But this measure did not prove successful, as the law enforcing authorities aligned with the Zamindars.

The next piece of legislation undertaken was the Act VIII of 1865, known as the Rent Recovery Act.23 It actually laid down rules for collection of rents by the landholders from the cultivators while it failed to define the rights of the tenants. In essence, the Act was supposed to embody the essence of all the previous regulations and to rectify their defects. The main feature of the Act was that for filing a suit for recovery of rents, exchange of pattas and 'muchilikas' (i.e. the receipts of rent payment) between the Zamindar and the tenant was made essential, unless both the parties mutually agreed to dispense with them. The Zamindar was armed with many powers. If the acceptance of a patta was declined by a tenant when it was granted by the Zamindar, the acceptance of the patta could be enforced by a summary suit before the collector. The Zamindar could only eject a tenant by a decree of civil court or by a summary suit before the collector for non-payment of arrears or non-acceptance of a patta. The provision for landholders for
distraint of crops and moveable property and even for the arrest and imprisonment of the defaulter for non-payment of arrears of rents was made. Infact, a tenant could file a summary suit before the collector for recovery of damages for excessive or improper distraint, loss of property during attachment, or irregularities in sale of property, but very few followed this course.

This Act became a source of rack-renting. Moreover, the introduction of certain clauses created confusion in the minds of the Judges. In their ignorance of the prevailing local tenures, the status and relations between Zamindar and tenant, they believed that the features of English land tenures could be similar to those of the land tenures of the Madras Province. The High Court's decision in Chokalingam Pillai's case in 1877 resulted in depriving the tenant of the right of occupancy intended to be confirmed by the Act VII of 1865 by throwing on the poor ryot in every case the burden of proving the custom of giving the tenant the occupancy right. This Judgement induced the ryots in several estates to sign muchilikas acknowledging that they were mere tenants at will.

The Government of Madras was compelled to admit that the Madras Act VIII of 1865 failed to assure peasants permanency of tenure as well as to provide security against exactions and oppressions.

In 1908, the Madras Estates Land Act was passed with two objects in view, one to rectify the evil effects of the Madras Act VIII of 1865 and two, to define the rights of landholders and their tenants in clear terms, since a definition was not attempted in the previous enactments, and to confer occupancy rights on the ryot and to protect him against eviction. Though Mr. F. G. Forbes while introducing the Estates Land Act Bill of 1908 declared that, 'Zamindar is in law no more than an assignee of public revenue', the Act of 1908 strengthened the hands of the
landlords for recovery of rents by making the rent as the first charge on land and by declaring that a substantial accurate patta was sufficient to proceed for the realisation of the Just dues of the Zamindar. However, the Act gave a right to acquire tenants land for buildings and for other purposes. The obligation of the Zamindar to maintain public irrigation works was specifically declared as recognised.

These legislative measures, instead of helping the peasants, strengthened the exploitative nature of the Zamindars. Moreover, with the rise in the value of agricultural produce following the advent of British rule and expansion of foreign trade, value of the land also increased. Consequently the interest in land by both the Zamindars and peasants also increased, which was absent in pre-British days, when cultivable waste was available abundantly. This resulted in cut-throat competition for land between the two parties and the Zamindars had always the upper-hand.

Though the British objective while introducing permanent settlement was to appropriate a large share of the agricultural produce, the Zamindar paid only a small portion as revenue from his rental collection. Land revenue from Zamindari areas remained inelastic from the time of its inception. It is stated that in the year 1939 the total rent received by the Zamindars was about Rs.232.6 lakhs, the amount of peshkush paid to the Government was only about Rs.41.2 lakhs. This is in addition to the unearned increment due to the growth of towns and improvement of trade and industries, income from mineral resources, fisheries, navigable rivers, etc, benefit of cultivation, cultivation of more improved and valuable money crops; benefit when prices of agricultural produce rose all of which accrued to the Zamindar while peasants share was completely excluded from these sources.

Apart from the estates, the Zamindars also owned private lands known as 'seri' lands. The seri lands were continuously
extended from time to time by the zamindar by occupying relinquished and evicted lands and lands brought from the peasants by questionable methods. Even communal lands were forcibly annexed by the Zamindar. To cite an example, a public lavatory ground in Gollaprolu estate was added to the Zamindar's property. The peasants of Viravaram and Kolanka estates in Pittapur division, complained to the Prakasam Committee that the Zamindar 'through his influence had unfairly occupied vacant house-sites, raised coconut gardens therein and leased them out and that he monopolised another elevated site which would be useful as a public grazing ground for cattle, to develop orange and mango garden.

In the Tuni Zamindari, burial grounds were assessed and granted on pattas and other communal lands were encroached by the Zamindar and the peasants reported that taxes were imposed for obtaining fuel, wood, earth and stone from these lands. In Challapalli estate alone the acreage of seri land consisted not less than 75,000 acres and in the Gangole estate of East Godavari income from seri land was larger than that from the ryoti land. Seri lands, according to the legislation, were lands either cultivated by the Zamindar and his men or with the hired labour or such land as was really set apart with the intention of future self-cultivation of the Zamindar. But this, law was abused in many estates and thousands of acres were brought under this head with the intention of continuing the old practice of rack-renting and evicting the peasants.

Infact the main object of creating seri land was to enhance rents freely, and were never cultivated by the Zamindar. In every estate where the seri head exists the Zamindar took special interest. Much care was taken to upkeep tanks commanding seri lands. Water was denied to ryoti lands unless the seri lands were first cultivated. This seri head remained a great impediment to the maintenance of the ayakut tanks.

The Zamindars were basically parasitic rent-receiving
landlords, without undertaking direct supervision and cultivation lands. They leased or farmed out some villages to muttadars or izaradars i.e., middlemen. This is peculiar to the Ganjam and Vizagapatnam areas. These middlemen in turn leased out to direct cultivators. Being influential persons in the rural power structure they used to add more to the village demand as their profit.

The village rent role increased whenever the estate villages changed heads (generally once in five years). In the Salur estate for instance ‘within 15 years, by which time four muttadar changed hands, the village rent-roll was raised by hundred percent'.

The occupancy ryot-cum-tenants came third place in the tenurial hierarchy in the Zamindari system. These tenants leased in lands in auction from the Zamindars, particularly the lank a lands of the delta region by paying a fixed amount of cash as rent and sometimes as per acre. The period of contract varied from five to thirty years in various estates. The renewals of contracts obviously led to increase in the rental, apart from renewal fee.

The non-occupancy tenants, but not tenants-at-will, were those who held the 'old waste' or the non-ryotwari lands in the Zamindars. They mainly belong to the near relatives of Diwans of the Zamindars and other relatives of the Zamindars.

The sub-tenants takes the last place in the tenurial hierarchy. Sub-tenancy was simple lease, usually of one year duration, in some cases for three to five years and in very few cases it was for ten years. Majority of the sub-tenants were mere tenants-at-will and they were the actual producers, forming the bulk of the peasantry. These sub-tenants were of three types, namely: a) the unauthorised or authorised claim of the Zamindar a right on the soil, whereby, he sought to treat cultivators as mere tenants-at-will, b) the Zamindars leasing the
seri lands to others and c) the occupant in the Zamindari areas sub-letting their lands.

The tenurial position in Zamindari system was as follows:

Government
Zamindar (responsible to pay peshkush)
Muttadar (intermediary temporary tenure-holder)
Occupancy ryot Non-occupancy ryot
Sub-tenant or under-tenant Sub-tenant or under-tenant
(tenants-at-will) (tenants-at-will)

The actual relationship between these classes will be taken later as mere descriptive analysis is insufficient for a thorough probe of the nature of the anti-zamindari struggles.

RENT

Collection of rent either in cash or kind was the dominant mode of surplus extraction in the Zamindari tracts. Though the permanent regulations of 1802 fixed the peshkush of the Zamindars in perpetuity, it was not so clear about the question of demand collection of rents from the ryots by the Zamindars, thus leading to many evils connected with the Zamindari rents and levies on the ryots. Infact, even the Sanads granted to the Zamindars under the permanent settlement did not specify the exact amount of rents payable to the Zamindars. 44

Even the Madras Land Estate Act of 1908 which was intended to protect the peasant gave Zamindars the power to have a share in the increased money returns consequent upon the rise in prices (though the government did not demand any increase in peshkush). In this regard, the government declared, 'he (the Zamindar) has a position in the country. No government would desire that the status of the Zamindar be lessened in any political or social manner and to deprive the Zamindar of a share in rise in prices was politically unsound'. 45 It is significant that whilst what the Zamindar paid to the government came to be called 'revenue', the payment of the cultivator to the Zamindar was called mere 'rent'. This was purely intentional to make the Zamindar more of a proprietor than he really was and to injure and destroy the
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rights of the cultivators.

The Zamindars collected rents according to their whims and fancies and the collections were not uniform in all the estates. While the maximum land revenue collected by the Madras Government from an acre of wet land, resettled in 1918-19 and afterwards was never more than Rs. 15, the peasants of a Zamindar had to pay Rs. 100 and more on their garden lands. It will be interesting to note the rates of rent charged in some of the estates. According to N.G.Ranga's investigation, the Raja of Bobbili charged Rs. 35 on an acre of wetland, the Zamindar of Venkatagiri Rs. 78 on garden land, the Zamindar of Pitapuram Rs. 22 on wetland, the Zamindar of Vizianagaram Rs. 20 on wetland, the Zamindar of Munagala Rs. 16-19, the Zamindar of Tuni Rs. 16-18. Even according to official estimates, the rent charged by the Zamindars was abnormal.

Rate of Rents in some Estates according to Prakasam Committee Report (per acre in rupees):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Estate</th>
<th>Wet:</th>
<th>Dry:</th>
<th>Garden:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vizianagaram</td>
<td>8-20</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobbili</td>
<td>15-30</td>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuni</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>15-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuzvidu</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>7-15</td>
<td>15-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venkatagiri</td>
<td>8-20</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>16-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasimkota</td>
<td>8-20</td>
<td>2-6</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telaprolu</td>
<td>5-11</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muktyala</td>
<td>10-18</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>10-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gampalagudem</td>
<td>4-3</td>
<td>5-12</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiruvuru</td>
<td>8-20</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>12-30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table below gives the difference in the amount paid by the peasants in ryotwari and Zamindari areas (per acre in rupees):
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the estate</th>
<th>Rates of rents prevailing in the estates;</th>
<th>Rates of assessment prevailing in the nearest ryotwari areas;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pitapuram</td>
<td>Dry 3-0-0 to 4-11-0</td>
<td>Wet 35-15-0 to 50-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ducharti-Yeravaram</td>
<td>0-4-0 to 1 3-8-0 (in addition water rate at Rs.2 per acre)</td>
<td>0-5-0 to 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gopalapuram</td>
<td>2 to 22</td>
<td>4-12-0 to 5-15-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangole</td>
<td>0-8-0 to 4</td>
<td>9 to 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows that the rates prevailing in the estates were very high when compared to the ryotwari assessment. This difference of rates between the two tenurial systems illustrates the reason behind the peasants demand for the conversion of Zamindari rates to ryotwari taxes.

Prior to the permanent settlement, there were no money rents. The system of paying rent was in kind. The rents were collected in different forms like Asra, Garsi, Vantuvardi and so on, the asara system being more popular and widely practiced. In asara system the produce was divided equally between the proprietor and the peasant and when dry lands were converted into wet cultivation the peasants were allowed to take two shares against one in the first year and one and a half shares against one in the second year. It was only from the third year that the regular system of sharing by half and half was resorted.50

The same system was adopted during the time of the permanent settlement and prevailed in most of the estates. Under the vantuvardi system the assessment of land was revised every year, the revision being made by a process of challenging. Any ryot could demand that the holding of another ryot be made over to
him at an increased rate of rental which he named. If the ryot who was in possession of the holding consented to pay the enhanced demand he was compelled to hand over the land to the ryot who challenged the rate and agreed to pay the higher rent. This practice was mostly prevalent in the estates of East Godavari district. The original basis of rent in the estates of Ganjam and Vizagapatnam was generally the garsi which was equal to 16 bags i.e., of 160 lbs of grain each. Irrespective of any measurement of land a plot of land yielding one garsi was taken as the basis of rent. In the central zamindaries from East Godavari upto Krishna the putties, pandums etc, were the basis. Here, land capable of being sown with a putti of grain was the basis. In some other Krishna zamindaries what was called kathies was the basis. These systems of assessment even after the introduction of the permanent settlement continued, the only difference being the rack-renting of the producers by the Zamindars who claimed themselves as the owners of the soil.

Extortion of rent was at its worst in the case of garden and wet lands. Sometimes water-rates were charged for lands cultivated with dry garden crops under wells dug and maintained by the peasants themselves at their own cost. These were called 'mulum' in the Nellore and Chittoor districts and 'jarib' in Krishna, West Godavari and East Godavari districts. Thus the Zamindars consistently increased the rents in season and out of season. For example in Chintalapati Vontu estate of Krishna district, the income from Chintalapadu village in 1887 was Rs. 4,979. It was increased to Rs. 9,392-2-4 in 1935 by the Zamindar. As early as 1898, Raghavaiyangar observed that the 'traditional share (i.e., half the share) of the ryots was reduced to one fourth to one fifth by the additional imposts levied on various pretext. Every pretext known to the civilized world to enhance rents was fully employed by the Zamindars till the passing of the Estate Land Act I of 1908.

Before 1908, there were no legal obligations on the part of the Zamindars to commute the rents in kind into cash, if and when
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demanded by the ryots, though money rents were collected on several occasions in several estates. The Madras Estate Land Act I of 1908 was the first enactment in the Presidency that brought under a statute the relationship between the landholder and his ryots. However, though it removed enhancements by contract in future, it confirmed the existing high rents and allowed further enhancements by suit and other operations if not by contract. Thus the old reign of enhancements continued though under cover of law. In the name of rise of prices under section 30 of the Act, the Zamindar could obtain a decree for enhancement up to two annas in the rupee from the court of the suits of the Deputy Collector by merely filing a price list from the taluk office.

If at the time of the permanent settlement the question of peasants' burden was ignored by the then authorities, the framers of the 1908 Act simply gave a blessing to the same, by a presumption that the rent burdens at the time of permanent settlement with all their later additions and exactions were equitable and fair without caring to examine the question in its entirety. Many oppressive measures were provided in the Act so as to favour and enable the Zamindar to make his collections easily.

However, one significant aspect of this Act which acted as a catalyst in stimulating the peasants resistance was the inclusion of the provision for monetisation of rents. As mentioned earlier, this Act permitted for the first time, the commutation, where and when the peasant wanted and instructed the local officers to comply with the demand of the peasants, thus giving the peasants a new legal right.

A new chapter started henceforth, where the peasants struggled persistently to commute their rents from kind to cash which the Zamindars opposed equally vehemently. In this trial of strength, which continued till the depression period, obviously the winner was the Zamindar as the ryot with limited resources
could hardly withstand the pressure of the Zamindar.

Added to this, the stabilisation of the occupancy status of the peasantry in the estates through the 1908 Act, gave enough confidence to the peasantry on the one hand and on the other resulted in the ruthless collection of rents with multiplied vengeance by the Zamindar every year, twice the current demand whatever the yield of the crops in the holding might be. They were determined to scuttle the ryots attempts to change over to money rent which would obviously strengthen the peasants position in the existing scenario of unprecedented rise in the prices of agricultural produce. This explains the peasants vigorous demand for commutation of rent from kind to cash.

The Statistical Atlas of the Madras Presidency and the Prakasam Committee Report provides irrefutable evidence of spectacular rise in the farm produce in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In the background of steep rise in prices the Zamindars preferred to collect rents in kind while the peasants sought to benefit by paying the rents in cash. Owners of some estates, for e.g., the Raja of Bobbili found it more profitable to use his revenue from grain rents as basis for grain dealing business. In the cases where commutation was carried, the price lists given by the Zamindars could not be questioned by the ryots. As was the case in Bobbili and other estates the ryots side was not at all represented in the commutation affair, and the officers generally accepted the rates furnished by the Zamindars which were very high.

Various factors contributed to the rise in grain prices. The development of communication, roads and railways in the late 19th century were important factors behind the price rise. The coastal region was blessed with canal transport. The Godavari delta was about 2,000 sq. miles, which was traversed by 500 miles of navigable canals. In other words, 'there is one mile of canal for every 4 sq. miles. There were 255 miles of metalled road in the delta or 1 mile of road for every 8 sq. miles' by the end
of 19th century. In the first two decades of the 20th century many new rail roads were constructed. The main line completed in this period was from Samarlakota to Malleswaram. The Andhra districts were linked to Madras, Bengal, and Bombay and the neighbouring princely state of Hyderabad by Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway, Madras Railway etc., A meter-gauge line which connected Bezwada with Masulipatnam tapped the rich section of the Krishna delta. The Nizam's state railway facilitated the export of delta produce to Hyderabad. The remainder of the delta, it was pointed out in 1899, was 'so well supplied with navigable canals that no railroad probably could compete with. ... 70 them.

The transport revolution intensified exports of foodgrains to the national and international markets. The existence of famines in other parts led to the rise in prices in the coastal districts. Thus at the turn of the century the increase in exports sometimes exhausted the local markets and the price rise was always chiefly due to exportation to other places.

The Madras government observed in 1921, 'from a purely economic standpoint the main feature of the decade has been the high range of prices for all foodgrains. Prices are indeed governed not only by the local market but by the rates prevailing in other parts of India'. During the first two decades of the 20th century, Masulipatnam-Bezwada region, 'a great rice producing tract' exported the largest quantity of foodgrains, owing to its railway and canal facilities its stocks were usually the first to come into the market. The merchants purchased large quantities of food grains for export to Bombay resulting in price rise during 1918-19.

The coastal ryot looked around and watch the imports of grains from Burma and sold his produce at an appropriate time. As the Royal Commission on Agriculture observed in 1929, 'once he (the peasant) has paid his land revenue he keeps a steady eye on the prices primarily for rice imports and is in no haste to come
to towns with the agent or buyer if the towns do not suit him. The better market for his produce (Madras and Tamil districts) is close at hand...'. 75

Chronic famine situation in other parts of the region and in northern India resulted in a great demand for food-grains of coastal Andhra which were in surplus. 76 For instance, the distress in North India during 1899-1900 led to large exports of grains from Nellore district. 77 Similarly, Krishna district exported paddy to Kurnool in 1900 to meet scarcity conditions. Higher prices and dearer markets outside the Presidency also caused increased exports of paddy and rice from the Northern Circars.

It is interesting to note that during 1915-20, the prices of cholam increased (106%) more than the prices of paddy (79%) thus affecting the lower sections of the agricultural population. These poor peasant land-less labourers cultivated the lands of the Zamindars, rich peasants and other sections of peasantry as share-croppers and under-tenants and paid exorbitant rents, often in kind. The factors which contributed for the growth in prices of food-grains, however, did not benefit these sections, as the regional and national markets were controlled by the rich peasants, merchants and of course the Zamindars. The heavily indebted cultivator was forced to sell his produce soon after the harvest to his creditor, who paid him a miserably low price.

The rise in prices also resulted in the shifting of the payment of agricultural wages from kind to cash especially in the first decade of the 20th century. This, however did not help the poor sections of the agricultural population, since wages did not keep pace with rising prices.

On the other hand, this price trend strengthened the rich peasants who possessed substantial landholdings and had security of tenure, stability of revenue and rent demand etc. They were also free from the exploitation of the moneylender as the debt burden on them was relatively less, while small peasants and
under-tenants came into the clutches of the merchant-moneylenders. According to the Collector of Krishna, 'the landowning classes benefited greatly by the price rise' and the Collector of East Godavari observed that the 'condition of the delta ryots is generally better off than that of the upland ryots'.

Thus, as the rise in prices benefitted only the rich peasants, even the commutation was advantageous to them. Moreover they were the people who could and did contest legally with the Zamindar for commutation, while the rural poor were crushed under the burden of expensive litigation involved in it. The observation of Biswanath Das before the Royal Commission of Agriculture was that 'the application for commutation means severance of all relations with the Zamindar and by the time he gets the commutation he would have gone from court to court--so very few ryots apply for commutation. In a few cases rents were changed into kind by force by the Zamindars in the wake of price rise.

In several estates assessment of rents in kind was prevalent despite the Act. Even in the commuted cases the level of rent was very high. By 1930, the total rent-roll in most of the estates had increased by 4 to 25 times of that of peshkush. This was mainly due to the commutation of rents, along with customary taxes and levies into cash during the period of relatively high prices; arbitrary enforcement of higher rents of inferior soils; due to cropwari assessment (i.e. rent according to the nature of produce or crop known as cropwari) and unjust levy of water-rates. According to a witness before Prakasam Committee, 'high estimates were made as a result of the high prices during the war time and rates were fixed at Rs. 25 per acre for wet and Rs4.50 per acre for dry lands which were Rs. 5.50 and Rs. 1.50 per acre respectively prior to 1906.

Moreover, the kistbandi system (the payment of rent in instalments) also proved detrimental to the tenants. Rents were
collected in several estates in instalments in September, October, November and December; that is, at a period when the crops were hardly underway and when the peasants had no chance of storing them to wait for reasonable prices that may be expected to prevail. Thus, even when prices were high, a number of peasants did not benefit from this price rise. It is not surprising that the peasants urged the Prakasam Committee to change the instalments period from the existing one to March, April, May and June.

As the 1908 Act provided provisions for enhancement of rent, the Zamindars resorted to this provision in the wake of rise in prices, wherever commutations occurred. Giving oral witness before the Prakasam Committee, a peasant disclosed that in Mallam village in Pitapuram estate, the rent of Rs. 8,317-9-0 in 1853 shot up to Rs.20,127-4-0 in 1937. Exhibiting documents regarding the village Koyyur in Gollapalli estate, a witness stated that the assessment of the village was Rs.2,448-8-4in the year 1894 and in the year 1938 it was found standing at Rs.5,537-8-9. An examination of the incomes of the estates at the time of the Prakasam Committee enquiry throws light on the extent to which the rents and incomes of the Zamindars had been pushed up.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estate</th>
<th>Total rent roll of the estate;</th>
<th>Peshkush</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vuyyur</td>
<td>3,64,319-10-1</td>
<td>24,565-13-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elamarru</td>
<td>1,91,878-0-11</td>
<td>15,330-12-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirzapuram</td>
<td>1,79,283-0-00</td>
<td>11,446-12-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indupally</td>
<td>12,754-12-8</td>
<td>1,759-4-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangole</td>
<td>2,61,572-00-0</td>
<td>5,050-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munagala</td>
<td>1,66,287-00-0</td>
<td>8,080-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gampalagudem</td>
<td>1,25,680-00-0</td>
<td>4,511-0-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is abundant evidence recorded by Prakasam and Ranga committees on rack-renting, which reminds one of pindarism. Apart from the commutation of rents from kind to cash, other factors also led to the problems of rents. In the early period...
an effective way of raising rents was the practice of the Zamindars to lease out their estates to rentiers at the highest sums who used to plunder the villagers. In the estates where the Zamindar dealt with the ryots directly every renewal of the lease led to enhancement of rents. The claim of survey excess under private survey operations was another way of enhancement. In many estates the classification of lands under irrigation, into the major and minor irrigation works resulted in increase in rents under the so-called major works, though there was no security of supply of irrigation water under both. More importantly, under the 1908 Act enhancements were provided for by petition and other operations, if not by contract (however, if prices fell, the tenants were not considered eligible for remissions). Under this Act, several Zamindars filed enhancement suits and many estates were said to have collected the decreed enhancements with retrospective effects and costs.

However, it would be noted that the effects of enhancement were not universal. It had different impact upon different sections of the peasantry. The rich peasantry, who possessed substantially holding and occupancy rights challenged the zamindari claims in the courts and outside. The Prakasam Committee Report observed that several of peasants accumulated surplus from their production. It is reported that the net profits for richer peasants from both the garden and commercial crops were between Rs. 40 and Rs. 50 per acre.

In the estates where rents in kind prevailed despite the introduction of commutation, this remained a constant source of irritation and litigation between the rich peasant and the Zamindar whose primary motive in maintaining the rent in kind in place of cash rents or in converting money rents into produce rent was to get a share of the benefits of rising grain prices.

Despite several defects, the 1908 Act especially the provision of commutation, in the wake of general rise
agricultural prices had tremendous impact on the rural structure in the Zamindari areas. The money-rents almost became universal and products of these lands had wider markets, both national and international and the rates of grains depended much on the price fluctuations on a wider network.

However, the measures which were introduced in 1908 Act, which intended to protect the tenant, in fact acted as a catalyst in the emergence of a rich peasant section. The occupancy tenants were protected from the arbitrary ejectment and enhancement was limited up to 12.25%. They paid primarily cash and fixed rents, and lower rents when compared to under-tenants. They were allowed to improve land and if they were evicted, compensation could be demanded. They had the right to sell their land. The increase in Zamindari rents was always slower than the rate of price rise as is evident from the report of Prakasam Committee. On the other hand, though the rise in prices also resulted in the shifting of the payment of agricultural wages from kind to cash, and a general rise in wages, the rise in wages did not match the rate of rise in prices.

Thus in both ways, i.e., relative stability of rent and comparatively low wages at a time of rising prices helped the substantially occupancy ryots to accumulate wealth, at the cost of agricultural labourers and under-tenants and reducing the landlords share in the agricultural surplus. The Zamindars envious at this developments always strove to maximise the rent while the tenants struggled to retain a larger portion of the surplus product, while both forced the sub-tenants to pay rents in kind. As the confidence of the substantial peasants grew, many of them started evading payments of rents even as the Zamindars tried to raise rents. In some cases even the Zamindars fell into debt...to the richer tenants. The over-all impact of price-rise and commutation along with some of the provisions of 1908 Act which favoured the tenants, resulted in the emergence of a rich peasant section within the category of tenants, which led
a powerful anti-zamindari movement in 1930s following the depression. The not-so-substantial ryots in the tenants class unable to bear the burden of rent fell prey to the greed of the Zamindars and were evicted and turned into mere tenants-at-will. This section followed the rich-peasant led anti-zamindari struggle hoping to better their economic and social position.

At the outset, though it seems that there were conflicting parties in the anti-zamindari struggles, viz., Zamindars and their tenants, it would be too simplistic to accept this categorisation. Leaving the Zamindars, who of course formed a single group, there was vast divergence within the tenant category and also between the tenants and under-tenants. As is seen in the above discussion, it was the rich peasant section who profited from the price rise and commutation and accumulated and appropriated more income and fought against the Zamindars. Added to this the confirmation of occupancy rights through the 1908 Act made them enjoy the permanency of tenure, free of transfer, and protection from arbitrary enhancements of rent. Moreover, the Act also divided the ryots into two categories, those with and without occupancy rights. This Act, in fact recognised a privileged class of tenants.

D.A. Washbrook observed that the full advantages of the Act 'went only to the wealthier section of the tenants who had money to pay legal dice and who were likely to control village records to prove occupancy.' It strengthened their position in relation to the Zamindars, stimulated social stratification and increased the distance between them and the smaller Zamindari tenants.

The position of the occupancy tenants also depended upon the number of acres they possessed. A number of tenants owned more than fifty acres of land. These tenants, in several cases leased their lands to sub-tenants and behaved like absentee landlords. The rents they collected from their sub-tenants were abnormal and were mostly in kind. P.N. Driver observed that, 'the conditions in Madras show that under landlordism the cultivator
is not only exploited by the landlord but also by those who are natural allies in the system and who are protected at the cost of the cultivator. The Act of 1908 conveniently forgot the case of under-tenants, who numerically formed the bulk of the cultivating population.

Thus in this background, where the rich peasant emerged in the wake of price-rise and 1908 Act and who appropriated and large share in the actual production depriving both the Zamindar and the sub-tenant, the anti-zamindari struggle was invariably led by this newly emerged rich-peasant section. Infact, it was a struggle between the two sections of rent recivers, viz., the Zamindar and the big occupancy peasant for the surplus.

Apart from the issue of rent, other factors such as evictions, alienation of land, usury, and other coercive practices also contributed for the growth of peasant discontentment. However it should be noted once again that these had a differential impact on different sections of the peasants.

DEBT

Although the list of serious, even tragic rural problems has not been exhausted, it is perhaps worth mentioning again a plague that was almost as serious as rent, namely vicious usury. There were atleast four important official enquiries made by the Madras Government since the beginning of this century which bear testimony to the rapid rise and total volume of rural debt of the people in the Presidency. They were the enquiry of Sir Frederick Nicholson; the Madras Provincial Banking Enquiry; the enquiry of W.R.S. Sathyanathan and the enquiry of Dr. B.V. Narayanaswamy.

The peasant often had to take out a loan to meet his requirements in a society where the problem of credit was a constant, unremitting torment. To pay land rent and clear arrears, and to buy the necessary minimum of equipment and essential items that the family could not produce itself. The peasant's main and sometimes only source of income was his small
marketable surplus. Marketing conditions were highly unfavourable to him, thus leading them to the position of indebtedness. The trade cycle and fluctuation in prices had their serious repercussions on the volume of debt. During the first half of the 20th century, there was a gradual shift in cultivation from food-production to non-food crops. This shift was brought about by the profitability of non-food crops owing to the pull of external markets in the decade prior to 1935. But during the depression years, in periods of shrinking international trade, the prices and profitability of the commercial crops began to drop and the obvious result was falling prey to the money-lender.

Moreover, lack of capital and access to transport, not to mention numerous tolls and local taxes, generally kept the peasant from selling his produce in distant markets. Thus having sold his produce at local markets to the grain merchant right after the harvest, when prices were at their lowest, the peasant was left with his needs unsatisfied. If he had no other way to subsist, he begged a loan from the village-money-lender, who was the main source of rural credit. In fact, the recognition of individual rights of transfer of land increased the credit power of the proprietors. On the other hand, the assimilation of the non-agriculturist money-lenders as agriculturists, and the surplus cash available with the big agriculturists as a result of a rise in prices resulted in the emergence of easy access to credit-machinery in the villages.

In the early thirties, unremunerative prices operated as a potent source of increasing indebtedness and for several decades usurious rates of interest directly contributed to swell the volume of indebtedness. With the introduction of money rent and the growing rates of enhancements the money-lender became a powerful force in the rural society. The rates of interest were exhorbitant, generally varying from 24% to 36% depending on the season, on whether the loan was in money or grain, on whether the harvest had been poor or abundant etc.
Borrowing was the classic road to dispossession, to the point where many peasants were resigned to sell their lands. There was a general trend of conversion of unsecured debts into secured or mortgage debts and forced sales of land. As the merchant was not only interested in profit alone but also the produce, he purchased all that the peasants sold, in the most cases at the rates previously settled at the time of advancing loans.

Moreover, as the 1908 Act clarified that the 'Zamindars rent was first charge on the holdings and he had the power to distrain the standing crops for his arrears', the merchants did not accept the crop as security, but started charging high rates of interest which varied from 18% to 24%, and demanded a greater extent of land as security. Sale of cattle, ornaments, household articles or handing over crops and lands were found to be widely prevalent methods of repayment of debts. Fall in prices and loss in cultivation led to arrears of rents which only enhanced the indebtedness of small tenants and agricultural labourers.

Apart from the traditional money-lender, even certain agricultural sections especially rich peasants who came to acquire liquid capital, advanced loans to the poor peasants, generally at higher rates of interests, which infact, accelerated the disintegration of the peasantry and consolidation of lands in fewer hands, as the 'small ryots who were indebted to big ryots surrendered their lands in discharge of their debts'. These type of landlords and peasants constituted 47% of the total lenders in 1928 while moneylenders contributed 31%, cooperatives 17%, Government 3% and other 2% only in the Madras Presidency.

The other source for the peasants to acquire loans was cooperative societies which advanced only 17% of the total credit in the Madras Presidency. Their growth was not significant either in expansion or in operation. Their development was
much restricted in the estates. On account of this slow progress of the cooperative movement, the grip of the indigenous money-lenders over the peasant could not be relaxed. Several witnesses before the Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee, had very clearly pointed out this difficulty both in oral and written evidence. The Cooperative Land Mortage Banks limited their operations as they could not advance loans on lands in the zamindaries owing to the peculiar conditions in the estates, due to the insecure rights of tenants, difficulties of obtaining patta transfers and correct certificates of encumbrances etc. So was the case with the takkavi loans under the Agricultural Improvement Act or the Agricultural Loans Act.

Even this limited operations were grabbed only by a microscopic minority of the peasantry. The Chairman of the Cooperative Commission Report in 1929 observed that the 'loans made under these Acts have been of help to the more substantial class of cultivators who can produce the necessary security but they have left practically untouched the lowest strata of the agricultural community'.

As the procedure to get loans from the Co-operatives was restrictive, the poor peasants lacked access to the same and inevitably depended upon the rich peasants or their agents to acquire such loans. The attitude of the money-lender towards his debtor was so unscrupulous that it has been said that 'the money-lender... works deliberately to get the ryot in his power to tempt him to borrow, to avoid him when he is ready to pay, to press him when he is in need and to exploit him in every way'.

Hence, the debt burden was borne more by the bulk of the poor peasants, which gradually resulted in transfer of lands from these sections to the rich peasants or money-lenders.

According to an enquiry conducted into 24 villages of Krishna and East and West Godavari districts in 1929-30, it is said that due to economic pressures, like rent, cost of cultivation, debt, etc, majority of the poor and middle peasants
had lost their pattas or holdings. The enquiry also reveals that those ryots whose assets were worth not more than Rs. 500 each were most heavily indebted. V.V. Sayana, who made a personal investigation in 1945-46 in Andhra remarks that 'the total number of persons indebted are greater in the lower income groups than in the higher ones'.

Most of the poor ryots were obliged to borrow money at more than 15% interest rate per annum, mostly for cultivation expenses, liquidation of old debts, family expenses and other. The government agencies were inadequate to meet this purposes of the peasants. Legislative measures to protect the indebted agriculturists like Land Improvement and the Agriculturists Loans Acts, the Co-operative Societies Acts, the Land Mortgage Banks Acts, the Insolvency Act, Debtors Protection Act and the Usurious Loans Act failed to release the peasant from the clutches of the money-lenders. For example, the purposes for which loans were made under the Land Improvement Loans Act of 1883 were a) construction of wells, tanks and other works connected with agriculture, b) preparation of land for irrigation c) provision of drainage facilities and protective measures against floods, erosion or other damage to land d) reclamation and other permanent land improvements for agricultural purposes e) reconstruction or renewal of any of the foregoing or additions or alterations thereto and f) other purposes relating to land development. The purposes for which loans were made under the Agriculturist Loans Act of 1884 were a) purchase of seed, cattle and breeding bulls and other purposes not covered by the 1883 Act b) rebuilding of houses destroyed by flood, fire or storm, c) raising of plantations and orchards d) purchase of fodder for cattle, manure, carts, implements etc., and e) relief of distress.

But the tenants, in general and non-occupancy tenants in particular were not normally given loans under any of these Acts unless sufficient security to cover the full amount of the loan was produced.

The Debt Conciliation Act of 1936 which was brought with a
The main feature of this Act was the provision for conciliation between debtors and creditors. In actual working it was found inadequate and defective in many ways. It was based on the principle of 'persuasion' as opposed to 'compulsion' at all stages, viz., in the matter of approaching the Conciliation Boards, approval of the award of the Board by the creditors and the enforcement of such an award in absence of coercive powers vested with the Board, or regarding credit facilities for payment of the scaled down debts immediately by debtors under the Act. Moreover, the Boards could deal with cases only when a creditor or a debtor approached them. Its machinery also was found complicated, cumbersome and inadequate to deal with a large number of applicants at a time. The creditors were offered no incentive to accept the award since the Act contained no provision for enabling the debtor to pay immediately the scaled down debts. Further, the agency set up by the Act was not vested with any coercive powers. Thus being proved impractical, the Debt Conciliatory Boards were abolished in 1944. Their contribution to the reduction of rural indebtedness was negligible.

Another legislation, the Madras Agricultural Loans Act, helped only substantial peasants as it applied to those peasants whose holdings comprised 5 to 7 acres of wet or garden lands, or 50 to 100 acres of rainfed dry land. Even the Madras Agriculturists Debt Relief Act of 1938 proved inadequate to help reduce indebtedness. After all, the logic was that low income was the cause of indebtedness of the peasant, while indebtedness made credit dear and again dear credit led to low income which perpetuated indebtedness. The situation was aggravated during depression years when rural credit contracted owing to the insecurity and insolvent position of the peasant. Thus it was but natural, that it was in this period the peasants, both rich and poor, and more vociferously the rich peasants started demanding liberalisation and expansion of the cooperative credit system and organised moratorium weeks.
Another critical problem which the Zamindari tenants faced was the piling up of vast sums of arrears of rent. Exorbitant rates of rents, absence of remissions, costly expenses of litigation, the practice of crediting payments made for current rents against old arrears, improper maintenance of accounts by Zamindari officials lack of a proper system of issuing individual pattas out of Joint pattas after land transfers, absence of scaling down arrears effectively, when they were found irrecoverable, were some of the factors which resulted in the accumulation of arrears.

Giving witness before the Prakasam Committee, a tenant of Thotapalli estate complained that the rents were doubled in 1915 and the Zamindar collected the exact amount due and for the rest of the enhanced rate they were accounted as arrears. Lack of remission facility was another culprit in destroying the cultivators fortunes. Legally speaking the Zamindari tenant cannot claim remissions as a right even in the face of a worst calamity. Baden-Powel remarked that in Zamindari estates remissions were not granted even for the loss of crops, 'if at all remission was granted it was only an act of mercy'. However, the memorandum submitted by the Andhra. Provincial Congress Committee to the Prakasam Committee observed that even in estates where remissions were granted as an act of mercy, 'they were granted on no principle or policy, on the other hand, they (the Zamindars) used it as a weapon for demoralising the ryots'. The Congress Committee also noted that in a few estates, for the purpose of remissions the ryots were classified as 'obedients' and 'disobedients' and the latter were deprived the facility of remission. In several of estates, only the heads of the villages were given remissions. The Committee concluded that especially after passing of the Madras Estates Land Act of 1908, the granting of remission was refused in the zamindaries and 'wherever it granted, it is more based on personal favour than on Justice'.

38
CENESIS OF POLITICIZATION

The arrears increased manifold during the depression years (1929-32) following steep fall in prices. It was also during this period that the peasants failed to pay even rents. The peasant resistance was also widespread during this period and many refused to pay both the rents and arrears. 'We are preaching people to withhold payment of enhanced rates' was the response of a peasant association activist of Challapalli estate to the Prakasam Committee. But this was not a common occurrence. The Zamindar always had the upper hand. Not only was the legal arm of the government always at the landlord's disposal, but the landlord could also take back his land and rent it to a more docile tenant. In many cases recalcitrant tenants were promptly clapped into prison. Omnipresent land hunger and the resulting competition among the peasants reinforced the landlord's position. But when such foreclosed lands were leased out to ryots, they were not leased out at the former rates but on higher rates.

It is interesting to note that considerable portion of the arrears constitute amounts involved in litigation of the ryots with the Zamindars. Though the 1908 Act puts the Zamindar and the tenant on an equal footing either to contract or to assert the rights or to contest claims in a court of law, in actual practice, it was the Zamindar who enjoyed and enforced his rights. In some estates there were instances where the estates itself took the law into their own hands were abundant. Either in forest cases, rent enhancement and commutation suits, attachment of movables and immovables, it was the Zamindar who could go up to the High Court, taking undue advantage of the cumbersome procedure by which the ryot was disabled to pursue his rights. Naturally, it was common to foreclose lands on account of arrears and appropriate them to the seri lands of the Zamindars.

Thus the threat of evictions and the execution of numerous decrees resulted in loss of lands by the peasants. It also worked as a bargaining stick for the Zamindar to increase rents.
The 1908 Act gave the Zamindar the power to attach immovable property even for an arrear of one anna. Another detestable process to collect the arrears was to confiscate the standing crop. Under section 151 of the Act, the Zamindar had the right to evict a ryot for materially impairing the value of an agricultural holding for agricultural purposes and rendering it substantially unfit for such purposes. This clause was negatively used for the benefit of the estate.

Enumerating the absurd use of the rights by the Zamindars, the Pithapuram Taluk Zamindari Ryots' Association complained, 'if they (Zamindars) are annoyed against a ryot, be the amount of arrears however small and negligible, they resort to the court and bring the tenants's holding for sale. They get it knocked down without proper publicity and for nominal value and in most cases without the knowledge of the owner of the land. The costs of execution and sale are unnecessarily swelled and magnified. The right of bringing a land for sale every year for each arrears of rent is a source of needless harassment to the ryot. In almost all cases, the value of the land will be at least twenty times the value of the rent'.

This is abundantly clear from the memorandum submitted to the Prakasam Committee by the Telaprolu Estate tenants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Sales</th>
<th>Area (in acres)</th>
<th>Cost of Sale (in Rs.)</th>
<th>Cost of land (in Rs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>44.29</td>
<td>1,041-8-0</td>
<td>6,650-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>95.41</td>
<td>2,145-0-0</td>
<td>15,700-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>98.03</td>
<td>2,170-8-0</td>
<td>12,700-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>231.61</td>
<td>3.577-11-0</td>
<td>35,525-0-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Especially during the depression, the rent arrears increased when compared to the earlier decade. The total number of defaulters in the estates increased from 3,510 (1928) to 6,018 (1931) and 8,309 (1933), while rent arrears increased by 137% between 1916 and 1936 as rent collections witnessed a sharp decline. This ultimately resulted in the forced sales of lands when the tenants were faced with an unprecedented fall in the
This distress sale of land in the Zamindari area reduced the land prices. The institutional barriers of the Zamindari system might have added to the low sale values.

Apart from the Zamindars exploitation of the peasantry, demographic conditions during 1901-1940 led to the distress of the vast majority. The rapid growth in population led to overcrowding, fragmentation and subdivision of holdings, which had repercussions on the land market. The growing competition for land too resulted in high lease values. However, the lease values increased disproportionately to the returns from land and interest rates. These evictions and forced sales sharpened the contradiction between Zamindars and the tenants which perhaps explains the emergence of a strong anti-zamindari struggles in 1930s.

IRRIGATION AND OTHER PROBLEMS

The bad condition of irrigation works, absence of construction of new irrigation works and the upkeep of old ones in good condition had been 'the matter of universal complaint in all the estates'. Several of the big tanks constructed centuries back commanding 1000 to 5000 acres of land were in a neglected condition. The Collectors' reports submitted to the Prakasam Committee reveals this fact. The Congress Committee's enquiry highlighted that about fifty percent of the old construction were rendered out of use and only about twenty percent of them were said to be hardly in good order. Many of the tanks had no feeder channels or the existing feeder channels were very narrow or closed up. Due to lack of proper arrangements to allow the surplus water to pass away, the bunds of tanks were in a breached condition and the tanks silted up. The tenants were not allowed to dig earth and clear off the silt without the Zamindar's permission. In several cases, portions of these tank-beds were given for cultivation by the zamidars.

The tenants were often afraid to move the government as they
However, there was a tendency on behalf of the Zamindars to repair such tanks where they may be benefited by their serl lands. They generally gave water to look after their necessaries for serl lands were carefully looked after. Considerations of political or other differences influence the Zamindar in carrying out the improvements. Even in the distribution of available water to the fields, the whim or caprice of the Zamindar’s employee or official was allowed to govern; and the right of distribution was ‘used as a weapon to put down opponents.

Many tanks for which water supply was scarce had no sluices and field channels, and in some cases where they existed, they were in disorder. A few cases in which repairs were taken up by the Zamindars were those taken up on the compulsion of the government, for instance when they considered to effect the railway lines. In some estates contracts for repairs were given to the estate’s favourites whose cosmetic repairs proved bad.

In few estates it was stipulated in the leases that the peasants themselves would have to execute repairs to the tanks, if any. Towards the repair of these tanks, the peasants were obliged to labour hard freely with their workers and cattle. For example, in Munagala estate the tenant, even if he wanted to relinquish the land, could do so only after doing his quota of work towards tank repair.

Even in cases where the ryots had dug wells and ponds at their own cost and maintained, rates were levied by the Zamindar. On the wells constructed by the Zamindar, the rates were abnormally high.

In some other estates, rents were enhanced on the promise that the irrigation works would be repaired or improved which was forgotten conveniently, though the enhanced rents were collected. In the Munagala estate the tanks had two kinds of sluices, one with ground level (musali bhavi) and another above ground level (manika bhavi). The ground level sluice supplied water to ryoti lands while the serl lands required high level
sluice. In the name of repairs to the sluices, all ground level sluices were raised by the estate, consequently water-supply to the seri lands was much improved which meant shortage to ryoti land. Where irrigation works were jointly owned by the government and the estate, the part of looking to the maintenance of the works appears to be nobody's concern. The Zamindars; rarely agreed to set apart some amount out of the total revenue they accrued from the tenants.

The fact that the Zamindars did not pay much attention to agricultural improvement is evident from the table below:

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Infact, the sad condition of irrigation works was the result of inadequate resources of the Zamindars, a good number of them being not so big as to be capable of constructing new works with a long range view of things according to a sound agricultural policy. The grievances regarding irrigation facilities remained one of the central factors for the growth of anti-zamindari movements in Andhra.

Zamin Ryot, a drama written in Telugu by V.V.S.Sarma describes very aptly the exploitative activities of the zamindars and the problems of the tenants. Infact, the drama was banned by the Madras government through G.O.No.576 dated 19.10.1938 on the grounds that the staging of the play might create unnecessary hitch and disaffection between the Zamindars and their tenants.

Apart from the rents, the Zamindars collected other levies all illegal taxes from their tenants. N.G.Ranga reports that 'for the karnam, local temple, watching of the forest, raja's carriage and lighting expense, raja's amusements such as fire
works, raja's festivals and Dasabandams are to be paid by the ryots'. 176

P. N. Driver observes that, 'the official figures of rent collections show only a part of the truth about the degree of extortion and the legal and illegal gains of the Zamindars. The real burden of rent and of Zamindari on the cultivator is considerably more than what official rent statistics can indicate since the Zamindar everywhere demands all kinds of extra illegal payments. They are the price the cultivator must pay to avoid molestation from the Zamindar'. 177

Infact, customary or other additional levies were not allowed under Regulation XXVI, XXIX of 1802, but the Zamindari exploitation in this regard continued unabatedly. In Munjulur estate 'meralu' was collected at the rate of three pies per rupee towards payments to the village servants such as vettis, dhobies, etc. This meras or meralu collection was levied almost all the estates to pay for village servants and artisans such as washerman, potter, carpenter etc., and were intended to encourage these people to settle in the village. But the complaint of the tenants was that the payments were to be made by those persons who use these services. 180 Gangole estate in the name of 'talari' and 'massooldar', watchman and horse mamool not less than twenty kunchams of paddy (Madras measures) were collected from the tenants' share on each holding, on each threshing floor and on every paddy heap considered to yield eight bags and over. 181

During the times of collections the grain rent of the estate due from the ryot was valued at the market rates without deducting for carriage or merchants profits despite protest from the tenants. This type of calculations were called 'niruku'. 182

Wet rents were collected for lands without guaranteeing water supply. Wet rents were collected even on rain-fed lands, on land cultivated with the help of drainage surplus water coming from higher tenements to the ryots low-lying lands. 183

Another
common *unjust* levy was the charging of water-rates for lands cultivated *with* dry garden crops under wells dug and maintained by the tenants themselves at their own cost. They were called 'mulum' in the Nellore and Chittoor districts and 'Jarib' in Krishna and West Godavari districts and the garden lands in the eastern districts and this complaint was universal. In Venkatagiri estate, *cropwari* rates were collected even if the ryot *did* not raise such said crop on his land. It is said that these garden and cropwari rates were greatly responsible for the crushing rent burden of the zamīn ryot.

In many estates rents were collected on 'meraca' or 'gograsam' lands which were set apart for grazing. In Pitapuram estate, money was collected on occasions such as Maharajah's Pattabhishekam (crowning ceremony), Diwan's sixtieth birthday celebration and for Zamindar's election propaganda, whenever they paid their rent. The estate officials credited those amounts towards the above purposes, leaving the rents as arrears.

Cocks and sheep were went to the estate palaces at regular intervals and if they were not supplied, severe action was amounted against the tenants who refused to supply.

Absence of government survey and presence of private survey was another common grievance in all the estates. Only a few estates predominantly those which were under the Courts of Wards were surveyed. Even in some of those estates which were surveyed, record of rights and settlement of rent were not effected. In the estates, where the Zamindar himself surveyed, the survey was conducted without the knowledge of the ryots in order to show a paper increase in the area and thus demanded higher rent on this plea. All the leases contained a stipulation that rents would be enhanced with the increase in area. Thus enhancements were forced upon the peasants on the plea of survey excess. In the unsurveyed estates, the problems of the tenants were further aggravated. Disputes between adjacent
ryots, between Zamindars and ryots were common. The extent of land recorded in the pattas and registers of the estate and in local cess accounts was not even nearest to the approximate tally with the actual state on ground, thus resulting in frequent disputes as to water and other rights. In such cases, the peasants were generally at the mercy of the estate officials whose oral statements were supposed to be the best evidence available in such disputes.  

The system of Joint pattas was the source of greatest possible mischief and injustice to the zamind ryots. On account of this Joint patta system there was no certainty to the ryot as to the actual amount he was liable to pay; nor security for his property. In each joint patta the number of holders were generally from five to twenty. Rent paid by one person was credited to the arrears of deceased holder. Sometimes rent paid by a transferee was credited to the dues of the transferor even after lapse of seven or eight years. Rent paid by a 'soft' ryot was credited to the arrears of a 'stubborn' ryot with reckless indiscrimination. In some cases when any one tenant of a joint patta falls into arrears, rent suits were filed against all the joint pattadars, although most of them paid their arrears, and these tenants were drawn towards law-courts, thus causing undue hardships. There was universal demand to put an end to the Joint patta system.

Arbitrary methods were employed in collection of rents. Peasants were stopped from harvesting the crop or from carrying the harvested produce until the estate dues were realised and estate watchers were employed at the cost of peasants who paid four to six annas per day. Another method adopted was that of locking up the cattle of the ryots if the dues were not paid and in several cases such cattle was sold. The restraint provisions under 1908 Act was used as a powerful weapon by the Zamindar for coercing the ryots into submission. Lands worth thousands were sold away even for Rs. 15 and sale of land was resorted to even for nominal arrears, say for example, of

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The Munagala ryots constantly complain of barbarous methods adopted in rent collection, such as making a defaulter bend forward and placing weights on his back.

The encroachment and occupation of communal lands by Zamindars was wide-spread. The communal lands served as grazing grounds, burial ground, thrashing floor, cattle-stands, public gardens, house-sites, footpaths, tanks and ponds etc., for the common benefit of the villagers. But the Zamindars greed for more lands made them to grab as many lands as they could, thus depriving the villagers of these common benefits.

Prior to the 1908 Act, the tenant used to have facilities as regards utilization of pasture lands, leaves for manure, wood for agricultural implements and cattle grazing. But since the advent of the Act, the Zamindars usurped the old said rights of the tenants and made them their own property and started levying rates for these services. In several estates grazing of cattle was prohibited and the pastures were leased out where the lessees charged Rs. 7 or 8 per tail of cattle. Heavy penalties were imposed if anything was used from the communal lands. The punitive tax was in the nature of a penalty to the ryots who do not apply for the pastures in time and who do not pay the amount due forthwith on demand. Even if farm houses were constructed in the agricultural lands the Zamindar filed suits for ejectment under section 151 of the 1908 Act. In order to build houses in the villages, the tenants were at the mercy of the Zamindar for grant of house-sites paying heavy amounts as nazarana to the Zamindar. Infact, in several estates, as the villages were immediately surrounded by ser1 lands of the Zamindar, there was no possibility for expansion of villages even in the wake of increasing population.

Adding insult to injury, compulsory labour existed in almost all the estates. The tenants were ordered to freely pen their cattle in the ser1 fields of the Zamindar and later to plough them free of cost. In many estates the ryots were required to
cart the produce of the estate freely and the artisans to serve freely. Every shepherd or a ryot who reared goats had to present a few goats per year to the estate. In many estates villagers had no other choice but submit their disputes, even their family quarrels for the adjudication by the landlord. The Zamindar in such cases decided and enforce punishments, imposed and collected fines. 

Upto the date of the Estate Land Act, the peasants were enjoying rights of free grazing, free manure, free gathering and cutting of fuel, bamboos for housing or fencing, housing timber and wood for agricultural implements, which was the universal custom in all the zamindaries. But, taking advantage of the failure of the 1908 Act to incorporate these rights, every Zamindar possessing forests had invariably laid an embargo on forest produce. Some Zamindars leased the forests to individuals, some others opened forests only to the cultivating tenants at high rates and generally rates were fixed for all the forest produce, which was used freely prior to 1908 Act. 

Several forest tracts were reserved by the Zamindars for their personal use, on the pretext that they had to preserve hill slopes from erosion and floods and to conserve water supply and to avoid famines. This is evident from the fact that the Telaprolu Zamindar laid a mango grove of hundred acres by deforesting the reserved forest. Moreover, many Jungles near villages were set apart for 'shikari' (hunting) for the Zamindars, where wild animals caused damage to the standing crops. The tenants could not shoot the animals nor did the estates provide any safeguards against beasts.

The 1908 Act provided that trees planted prior to the passing of the Act belong to the Zamindar and the trees which were planted subsequently belong to the tenant. Taking advantage of this provision the Zamindars claimed all the past act and pre-act trees to themselves. In several cases the zamindar denied the right to fell down trees to the tenants on the
plots on which the tenants were in full possession and occupation. There were some instances where the land pattadar was different from the tree-pattadar and the tenants could not use even a dead tree in his own field for purposes of agriculture in some estates.

The Zamindars were 'thoroughly incompetent' to discharge their duties as tax-collecting and land-revenue authorities. Several of the Zamindars never cared to visit the villages and left the administration to their subordinates, who were appointed on favour and not on account of administrative knowledge or training and as N.G.Ranga Committee remarks, 'most of the troubles of the ryots are due directly or indirectly to the incompetence and morbidity of the Zamindars and their crude and out-of-date officer'. In certain cases, Zamindars entrusted their powers of rent collection to influential villagers thus creating parties in villages and threatening the harmony of the village. A witness before Prakasam Committee states that 'the Zamindar is responsible for the worst crimes that are being done by his subordinates for they interfere in village politics and create village parties and thus to perpetuate the zulum'.

Much of the incomes of the estates went towards personal expenditure of the Zamindars especially on city life, foreign travel, building palaces, and all sorts of comforts and luxuries and economic waste. On account of the election mania some of the Zamindars like Bobbili, Pittapuram and a few others spent enormous amounts. In few cases they gave encouragement to art, literature and other cultural activities. In the name of art, the Zamindars of Mirzapuram and Challapalli had expended large sums on cinema studios and all that went with them. Litigation was another source of expenditure. Pittapuram tenants complain that 'the landlord does not visit some of the villages even once in his lifetime. He do not attend to the improvement of the economic or social or political or educational conditions of his villages. The Zamindar does not raise even his little finger for the improvement of his villages'.

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Another witness reported before the Prakasam Committee that 'the Zamindar (of Pitapuram) spends most of the year in cities and far off Ooty heights. Consequently, the oppression and tyranny of estate officials are proving beyond toleration. Except during the recent Assembly election (1937) the Zamindar of Pitapuram has not visited out village'.

The memorandum by the Andhra Swarajya Party submitted to Prakasam Committee says that 'we believe that these Zamindars are spending on their personal needs and luxuries quite a disproportionate part of their total incomes, with result that, in many cases, the peasantry and labourers are starved; the village tanks have got silted up for want of repair; the temples have gone into ruin; the village roads have been uncared for; and there is practically no love lost between the Zamindar and his people; and in certain payment of taxes and even resorting to violence in a few extreme cases against Zamindars here and there'.

Thus, in the background where the institutional impediments like bad irrigation facilities, absence of surveys, illegal exactions, compulsory labour, disappearance of communal lands over a period of time, the cursed joint patta system, arbitrary and coercive methods adopted in collection of rents, erosion of forest rights and when government measures like the Act of 1908 intended to protect peasants actually benefitted the Zamindars, the peasants already groaning under rack-renting, arrears, debts and land alienations were shaken in the wake of world-wide depression. The depression accentuated the grievances and precipitated anti-zamindari agitation.

During the pre-depression, i.e. prior to 1928, in the wake of steep rise in prices due to world war (1914-18) the substantial tenants accumulated wealth while the steep fall in prices during the depression drained their wealth which led to increased social tension between them and the Zamindars. The unprecedented fall in the prices stalled the growth of rich peasants and ruined those who had direct links with the export trade. Taking agricultural production, it is a matter of general
knowledge that whenever demand schedule falls, i.e. prices are down, supply schedule cannot so easily adjust itself to changed circumstances. Because the elasticity of agricultural supplies is very little and the staying capacity of peasantry much less while the elasticity of demand for its products is much greater. Thus economic depression affected peasants more adversely. The brochure of Food and Agricultural Organisation observes that 'the individual farmers are less able to control their output than those in business concern. When demand falls suddenly, farmers usually go on producing about the same total volume and feel the reduction mostly in the form of lower prices'.

Infact, the commodities fetched only about half the price in the mid-thirties as compared to a few years earlier in twenties. The fall in prices, also increased the burden of rent and indebtedness. The rich peasants, who earlier were increasingly sinking their capital in commodity production, were the worst hit. Due to storage of grain, by the rich peasant anticipating higher prices, an artificial grain shortage developed and smaller cultivators found it difficult to get grain either for food or for seed for future cultivation.

Traditional money-lenders and peasant-creditors cum traders were also hit severely by the depression. During the pre-depression years moneylending had been the safest and most profitable outlet for surplus capital in the countryside and consequently, there was a massive investment in moneylending resulting in the emergence of rich rural elites by 1920s. But when the commodity prices crashed most of these sections became bankrupt, as they gave loans with the year's crop as security speculating higher prices for the grain. Thus during the depression, 'hundreds of thousands of small traders and speculators have come to grief'. On the other hand, after 1929 the rich cultivator-traders found it much more difficult to secure urban finance to complement their own resources. A number of them became bankrupt then local depositors lost confidence in them and tried to withdraw their funds, while at the same time
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their urban creditors were pressing for repayments and their own 278
debtors could not find any cash. The Imperial Bank also
restricted credit by stopping advances to the 229
merchant-moneylenders.

Thus, the fall in prices meant, that the debtor had no money
to repay his loans and the creditor had no cash reserves to grant
loans. It was reported by the Sathyanathan Committee: 'the
direct result of an economic depression, given a fairly stable
currency, is a marked fall in the value of all commodities and a
pronounced rise in the value of money. How much more than was
the farmer affected, with his poor business education, want of
knowledge of world prices, and the ignorance of the trend of
market fluctuations. Before the onset of the depression, he
found that the prices of his crops were excellent and continued to
rise. So he speculated, often wildly upon land, borrowing at
heavy rates to buy more land. Suddenly came the depression. He
found to his bewilderment that his crops were fetching less and
less in terms of money. His commitments to government and others
in terms of money became harder and harder to meet, as he was,
obliged to sell more and yet more of his crops to get the money
required. The value of the land declined steeply and there were
no purchasers even at low current market prices. To add to his
difficulties, cheap rice from foreign countries was flooding
India and depressing the price of local rice still further. It
is any wonder then that the Indian agriculturist today is heavily
involved in debt; obliged to pay in money to government,
Zamindars and others the same as had bad to do before the
depression and forced, inorder to meet this demand in money, to
dispose of about twice the amount in his crop as before; unable
to dispose of his land at even half the price it easily fetched
in pre-depression day; unable, with credit shortened, to vow even
for current family and cultivation expenses; compelled,
therefore, to part with much his hoard of Jewels and ornaments in
order to get ready and hence, left more at the mercy of
unscrupulous money-lenders and middlemen than before'. 230

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But, even the few channels of credit in many parts of the Madras province had simply dried up. N.G.Ranga noted that 'none of the usual institutions which supply credit for current purposes are today willing to advance any credit to the peasants. Every one of them is still busy, in its own way, scraping up every pail that can be tapped from the ryots'. Hence, demands were made since thirties on the government to assist in financing the agricultural operations.

Thus when the depression struck, the credit became difficult, affecting both the ryot-moneylender and the debtors. On the other hand ruined many of the rich peasants who had direct links with the trade. At another level the fall in the commodity prices enhanced the rent burden on the middle and the poor peasantry and so also the burden of indebtedness. To make matters worse, many substantial peasants in the estates, since the 1908 Act made it easy for them, forced the Zamindar to commute their rent-payment from kind to cash; while prices were rising as they were between 1908 and 1928, these fixed cash payments weighed steadily less heavily on the tenants. When prices dived from 1929, the real value of these commuted rent-payments soared. Shorn of their levers of credit and piqued at their loss of profits, the rich tenants of many estates took up arms against their overlord in subsequent years. Thus the severity of depression made Coastal Andhra become a 'seedbed of peasant unrest'. All sections of tenants raised their voice over vices of the Zamindari system as a whole, as all were affected due to rents and illegal exactions though in different degrees. It was during this period, the Zamindari estates witnessed the emergence and rapid expansion of the peasant association.

On the other hand the Zamindari system itself was facing strains both politically and economically. The British, gradually started to bypass the Zamindars, to extend elements of direct control over the villages within the estates. In the wake
of new developments. This was achieved largely through the Estates Land Act of 1908. Even earlier the Proprietary Estates Village Services Act of 1894 transferred from the Zamindar to the government the responsibility to pay and discipline the headmen and karnams of villages inside the estates. The Zamindars complained bitterly about this Act right from its inception. The result of this Act can be best seen when several of the village officers participating in anti-zamindari struggles.

The 1908 Act, as noted earlier, was set out to define the rights and obligations of Zamindars and their tenants, and thus to guarantee to the tenant certain privileges and rights vis-à-vis the Zamindar. The Act though, was not implemented in actual terms and was misused by the Zamindars, yet it remained as an ideological step and influenced the tenants thought considerably. This is evident from the statements submitted by the Zamindari tenants to the Prakasam Committee, who basing upon the 1908 Act claimed that they were the actual owners of the soil. For example, the memo of Bulusu Sorousa, a tenant of Pitapuram estate says that 'the tenant is the proprietor of the soil after the passing of Madras Estates Land Act of 1908 for all practical purposes as the tenant is dealing with the land in his holding. He is having every right in disposing of the land either by sale or gift.'

Moreover the increasing use of legislation in general served to undermine Zamindari pretensions to autonomous lordship. The increase of representative institutions at the local and provincial level had much the same effect, for they created new channels of political communication between estate society and government. The President of Irrigation Advisory Board, Godavari Eastern Delta reports that the extension of Local Boards Act to Zamindari areas had contributed to the complete estrangement between the Zamindar and his tenants. The Forthnightly Report of the Nellore District Magistrate says that 'the Local Boards are now (1933) entirely in the hands of the Zamindars and this election is almost entirely a Zamindari versus anti-zamindari fight.'
Moreover, absentee ownership of the Zamindars, who started living in towns and cities far off from their estates, and administered their estates through officials, resulted in undermining the human relationship between the tenant and the Zamindar. The contacts became impersonal to the point where some tenants never knew who their master was. With the introduction of commercial crops and extension of cash-crops markets, most of the important economic transactions were no longer made at the Zamindar's estate office.

During depression, as rent collections went down, the Zamindars had to resort to courts, thus costing them litigation costs. The Report of the Delegation sent to India by Indian League in 1932 says that 'there was an increase in the number of suits. The reason for this appears to be that Zamindars and landholders are feeling the effects of the continued economic depression and are freely availing themselves of the coercive process open to them for the recovery of their dues from their tenants who are experiencing equal difficulty in paying them owing to low price of the chief agricultural produce leading to strained relations between them'. Many of the estates which were leased out periodically to the intermediaries did not bring any income to the Zamindars as the lessees defaulted. As a result, several Zamindars fell into arrears to the government. The indebtedness of the Zamindars further ruined the estates. Thus the Zamindar's slackening grip on the economic life of his estate, combined with the expenses of litigation and ceremonial grandeur resulted in a degeneration of his position. Finally when the fall in prices halved the monetary income from estate agriculture, the Zamindar and his leading tenants fought to preserve their own personal portion.

Thus in such conditions, when estates had lost much of their relevance as a political system at the turn of the 20th century, in the eyes of the British and the advance of cash-cropping gave full scope to potential tenants to move away from the mutual obligations and loyalties to the Zamindars. The price-fall of the depression transformed antagonisms into anti-zamindari struggles creating a movement in favour of abolishing the
Zamindari estates, A dividing line ran through the estates between the Zamindar and his tenants.

'Revolution is impossible', Lenin wrote, 'without a crisis affecting both the exploited and the exploiters'. Though what followed the depression could not be called a revolution, yet the anti-zamindari struggles accentuated the onslaught on the Zamindari estates affecting both the Zamindars and the tenants.

It would be appropriate, at this juncture, to characterise the agrarian structure in the Zamindari areas in order have a clear understanding of the nature of anti-zamindari struggles and the nature of participation in these struggles. The following classification has been made depending on the quantitative data on landholding, the hiring of labour, indebtedness, accumulation of rural surplus produce and its investment.

Landlords: Holding rights over large tracts extending over several villages, these are absentee owners. In this respect they are Zamindars who paid directly to the government and acted as intermediaries between the State and the peasants. They relied mainly on rent from land, forests and other cesses, often illegal. They also possessed private lands (ser1) and cultivated through farm servants, and compulsory labour by their tenants. Several of these private lands were also leased to sub-tenants.

Rich Peasants: They were rich tenants having established holdings and enjoyed secured rights. They largely carried on cultivation by themselves and with the help of hired labour and were basically the exploiters of the rural proletariat. They had easy access to the market conditions and freedom to market their produce. They had control over, what N.G.Ranga termed, the key services like marketing, financial institutions, communications etc. They also leased their lands to sub-tenants at normally...
higher rents and many of them collected rents in kind while themselves paid rents in cash to the Zamindars in the wake of price rise. They also leased in other’s land to accumulate more surplus. Following price rise, they accumulated profits from agricultural production and diversified their economic activities into trading and money-lending. These were the people who were mostly affected during depression years and led anti-zamindari struggles in later years.

Middle Peasants: They were the substantial tenants, but who paid higher rent than those paid by rich tenants. They largely cultivated land with family labour and rarely employed labour, and never worked for wages for subsistence. However, they resorted to tenancy cultivation and borrowing to supplement income. In pre-depression inflationary years, they benefited from price rise and during depression their position became insecure and precarious. The burden of debt and insufficient and low returns from land often pushed them down.

Poor Peasants: They are the poor tenants, having tenancy rights but less secure holdings too small to suffice for a family's maintenance and income derived from land often less than that earned by wage labour; tenants-at-will or share-cropper and other landless agricultural labourers. Poverty was the main overall characteristic of this section and the majority of them were subjected to the domination of merchant-moneylending-usurious money and were deeply indebted. Rise in prices did not benefit them as they had no access to the market and possessed very little surplus product which was largely consumed. The depression years had a disastrous impact on the poor tenants due to rise both in prices and rents as they were forced to buy in the market a portion of their consumption requirements. The wages were slow to respond to the rise in prices of foodgrains. This section of peasantry could not command credit to purchase bullocks and carts. High rents kept the landless labourers away from the competition in renting the lands and were forced to increasingly resort to selling of labour-power.
relatively free and mobile when compared to the poor tenants who, despite all the wretched conditions tended to be attached to their tiny plots of land.

Having classified the agrarian class structure, though loosely, it would be worth-mentioning that it was the rich peasantry that raised the banner of the revolt, the middle peasantry followed the suit while the poor peasants mainly remained as spectators or sided behind the rich peasants or the Zamindars depending upon under whom they were employed. However, these poor peasants too were drawn very superficially into the whirl-pool of anti-zamindari struggles when communists took charge of the movement in late 30s and 40s. The following chapter will study the various methods used by the peasant leaders in channelising discontentment and mobilising the Zamindari peasants into action.
REFERENCES


2. A tentative settlement of the whole of the Bengal for a period of ten years was announced in 1789 by Lord Cornwallis and the experiment of the Permanent Settlement was finally confirmed in 1792.


4. Report of the Madras Estate Land Act Committee, (hereafter RMELAC; this Committee was also popularly called as Prakasam Committee), Landholders Statement, Part IV, Madras, 1939, p.102.


6. That is there was no permanency right of the Zamindar over the land.

7. For example the ancestors of Nuzvid Zamindars acquired their Zamindari in this way by offering military assistance. RMELAC, Memorandum submitted to the Committee, Part II, p.119.

8. RMELAC, Memorandum submitted to the Committee, Part III, p.111.


11. Baden Powell, Op Cit, vol.III, p.134. The Board of Revenue opined that 'the origin of the Zamindar's office was comparatively a modern one and whatever its origin, the Zamindars, derived their rights from the State which could not confer more than it has possessed and exercised'. Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, No.7843, dated 2nd December 1864.


14. Section 2 of the Sanad issued to the Zamindars at the time of Permanent Settlement, reads thus, 'The British Government has resolved to grant to Zamindars, and other landlords their heirs and successors a permanent property in their land in all time to come.' RMELAC, Landholders Statement, Part II, p.15.

15. For causes of the failure of this Regulation see C.D.Field, Land-holding and the Relation of Landlord and Tenant in Various Countries, pp.564-565.

16. RMELAC, Memoranda, Supplemental Volume, p.603.; According to Indulal Yagnik, the total Zamindari area in India was 31 crores acres and amount of rent received by zamindaries from tenants was Rs. 80 crores and amount paid by them to government was Rs.18 crores. Ibid.; The Rytowari System comprised about two-thirds of the total area in the Madras Presidency and the extent under the permanently settled estates, Inams etc., constituted about a third of the area in the province in the first half of the 20th century. About forty percent of the area of the Telugu districts was under the non-ryotwari system. About half of the area of the seven Andhra districts of Vishakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Nellore and Chittoor were under the Zamindari system.

17. Baden Powell, Op Cit, vol.III, p.136. Many of the Zamindars who gave witness to the Prakasam Committee were the owners of the estates which were purchased from the original Zamindars who took sanads in 1802.

18. For example, Nuzvid estate which was under the management of one Zamindar till the year 1881 was partitioned into six estates. RMELAC, Memorandum Supplement Volume, p.98. A memorandum submitted to the Prakasam Committee complains that, 'in the districts of West Godavari and Krishna there are many villages which are estates within the meaning of the Madras Estates Land Act, most of which have be a series of partitions extending over a long period been divided and subdivided into small shares so that several landholders now own very small extents of land', Ibid, p.105. However, the dismemberment of the estates was stopped to a large extent due to the passing of a special Act the Madras Impartible Estates Act (II of 1904) which was passed to prevent the partition of estates and make them inalienable except under certain conditions.

19. Raghavaianagar, Progress of the Madras Presidency during the last Forty Years of British Administration, Madras, 1898, p.226.

20. The issue of Pattas was one of the major grievances of the Zamindari tenants in later years.


22. V.V.Sayana, The Agrarian Problems of Madras Presidency,
CENESIS OF POLITICIZATION


25. 'From the time of Chokkalingam Pillai's case onwards, the general impression was neither in Zamindaris nor in Inams the tenants had any occupancy rights', says the document submitted by Maharaja of Pittapuram to the Prakasam Committee, RMELAC, Part I, p.42.

26. Before introducing the Estates Land Bill of 1908, Mr. Forbes accepting the failure of 1865 Act states that, 'to protect the millions of tenants from the horrors of arbitrary eviction and against the oppression of rack-renting, some measure was felt necessary'. Infact this impression by the government led to the passing of the Estates Land Bill. RMELAC, Memorandum, Supplemental Volume, p.622.


28. RMELAC, Part I, pp.87-89.

29. Further the Act gave rights to the tenants over trees planted on their lands after 1908, to sue the Zamindar if he refuses to give receipt of rent payment to the tenant, it also empowers the Zamindar to own communal lands if they were un-utilised with the permission of the Collector and also to enhance rents in case of rise in grain prices and if improvements were made on lands by the Zamindar. R.M.Sarma, Op Cit, pp.8-23.

30. In those days the cultivators could and did leave the Zamindar and move to unoccupied land.


32. Statement showing the divergence between rent roll and peshkush paid for some estates in the year 1928:--

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Estate</th>
<th>Peshkush: (Rs)</th>
<th>Total rent-role: (RS)</th>
<th>Total rent role as no. of times to Peshkush</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chintalapatti Vantu</td>
<td>0,17,517</td>
<td>00,76,804</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munagala</td>
<td>0,04,510</td>
<td>00,17,229</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

61
33. Memorandum by the peasants of Gollaprolu estate submitted to the Prakasam Committee, RMELAC, Part II, p.93.

34. Ibid, p.95.

35. Memorandum by Tuni ryots, Ibid, p.96.

36. The manager of Challapalli estate himself gave this figure of 75,000 acres as belonging to the Zamindar. RMELAC, landholders Statement, Part II, p.250. The President of peasant association in Muktyala estate complained that the Zamindar acquired hundreds of acres in the estate where he had no single acre as seri land previously. RMELAC, Oral Evidence, Part IV, p.95. The existence of seri lands also posed problems regarding the construction of houses in the villages, as almost all the villages in the estates were surrounded by seri lands. If the villagers wanted to construct houses they were forced to pay heavy amounts as nazarana to the Zamindar. RMELAC, Landholders Statement, Part IV, p.287. Generally the origin of the seri land.
CENESIS OF POLITICIZATION

took place in the system when a part of the patta land was separated as the personal land of the muttadar by the Zamindar for his maintenance. When the muttadar was ousted it naturally went into the hands of the Zamindar thus forming his own land. Gradually, this serl lands were created by occupation and encroachment of communal lands including public paths and cattle-stands and of irrigation tanks in many places, RMELAC, Memorandum, Supplement Volume, pp.623-4. This home-farm land was at the absolute disposal of the Zamindar and the relations between a landlord and tenant of his private land were not regulated by the provisions of the 1908 Act, RMELAC, Part I, p.40.

37. RMELAC, Memorandum, Supplemental Volume, p.634.

38. All most all the tenants of all the estates gave instances of irregularities conducted by the Zamindar in the name of serl lands.

39. For example, in Kurupam estate of Vishakapatnam district out of 700 sq. miles of land, 154 sq. miles were rented out to muttadars in 1935, Court of Wards Reports, Madras, 1935-36.

40. RMELAC, Memorandum, Supplemental Volume, p.622.

41. Ibid.

42. Many of the Zamindars who own home lands issue pattar in favour of their wives so that to be free from occupancy rights and create their wives as their tenants, RMELAC, Memorandum, Part II, p.137.

43. For example in Challapalli estate, the tenants (pattadars) charged rates from their sub-tenants Rs.20 on dry land; Rs 100 on' garden land and Rs30 on wet land; In Vuyyur estate the rent on garden land collected from sub-tenants was Rs. 100 to 120. RMELAC, Landholders Statement, Part I, pp.277-278. The pattadar could eject his sub-tenant even if he pays the stipulated rent regularly, even without any means of a suit. RMELAC, Landholders Statement, Part IV, p.104. The relationship between the pattadar and his under-tenant was based on a contract between both of them. In several cases the pattadar collected exorbitant rate from his sub-tenants and this left the pattadar with a very fair margin of profit, which became a source of contention between the pattadar and the Zamindar. Several of the Zamindars who submitted memo's to the Prakasam Commitee argued that the sub-tenants be given occupancy rights and brought directly under the control of the Zamindars and complained that the tenants were rack-renting their sub-tenants, RMELAC, Part I, p.53. Several sub-tenants complained that the patta-owners possessing large areas of land were behaving like the Zamindars, RMELAC, Part II, p.103.

Some of the tenants argued that the question of under-tenants should not be taken at that stage (when Prakasam
Committee was dealing with the zamin-ryots) claiming that the position of the tenants itself was not stable. Ibid, p.124. In fact, many tenants do not even reside in the villages where they hold their lands. The 1908 Act divided the ryots into two categories, i.e., those with and without occupancy rights, thus giving more powers to the occupancy tenants which deteriorated the position of the sub-tenants. This Act conferred occupancy rights to the tenants who held land for 12 consecutive years, thus giving him power to transfer, sell or gift the land. Now the tenant had fixity of tenure, free transfer and were mostly protested from arbitrary enhancement of rent.

Moreover, 'owing to the slow rate of economic expansion, the rapidly increasing population had to remain in villages, thus causing overcrowding, ... leading to excessive splitting of the peasant properties'. League of Nations European Conference on Rural Life, Poland, 1940, p.8. This phenomenon was present even in rural Andhra. The following table shows increase in number of non-cultivating landowners and agricultural labourers per 1,000 persons engaged in cultivation in Madras Province:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Non-Cultivating Landlords</th>
<th>Non-Cultivating Tenants</th>
<th>Cultivating Landlords</th>
<th>Cultivating Tenants</th>
<th>Agricultural Labourers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901; 1911; 1921; 1931;</td>
<td>19; 23; 49; 34</td>
<td>1; 4; 28; 16</td>
<td>484; 426; 381; 390</td>
<td>151; 207; 225; 120</td>
<td>345; 340; 317; 429</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: V.V.Sayana, Readings in Rural Problems, S.Chand, New Delhi, 1950, p.171)

Thus, when there is a demand for land and price of land value is rising, no tenant would lease land on a long-term and would like to renew the existing lease from year to year, at higher rates of rent. Though the tenants demanded commutation of rents from kind to cash following the 1908 Act, they demanded rent only in kind from their sub-tenants, the actual tiller, thus depriving him the benefit from the price rise in food-grains. The following table demonstrates the surplus appropriated by the occupancy tenants in terms rent from the sub-tenants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repudi Estate:</th>
<th>Patta No.;</th>
<th>Rent collected (Rs)</th>
<th>Rent paid to the Zamindar (Rs)</th>
<th>Surplus with the tenant (Rs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: RMELAC, Memorandum, Supplemental Volume, p.405)

Infact, this surplus with occupancy tenants formed the basis of a struggle for rent between the two sections of rent.
receivers, i.e., the non-cultivating tenants and the Zamindars. However, some of the economic historians argue that the high rents demanded by the tenants was due to the Zamindars demand for a high rent from the tenants and that the ryot had no other way left except to ask for a still higher rent from the sub-tenant, which however is very fallacious as seen from the above table. See N.G.Ranga, et al., The Report of the Economic Enquiry Committee, Bezwada, 1933.

As a result of his sub-infeudation a large number of intermediaries were created and all of them were only rent-receivers or rent-payers. Simon Commission reported that 'in some districts... as many fifty or more intermediate interests have been created between the Zamindar at the top and the cultivator at the bottom', Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, vol.1, p.340. The main culprit for the failure of tenancy laws the freedom given to sub-let land, which converted the occupancy tenant into a rent receivers and an inferior absentee proprietor. The tenancy laws failed to protect the real cultivator and in trying to curb the Zamindar they only multiplied the number of oppressors of the real cultivator. When ryoti interests became valuable a large number non-cultivators, the money-lenders, middlemen and others became interested in land and entered the field as active purchasers of these interests. The privileges and protections meant for the cultivator were thus transferred from the non-cultivating Zamindars to other non-cultivators and rich cultivators, making actual cultivator become worse in the process. This situation resulted in the appropriation of the surplus by the tenant and witnessed the emergence of the rich peasant section within the Zamindari agrarian structure. It was these non-cultivating section and rich peasantry fought with the Zamindars in post-depression years for more surplus, privileges and protection at the cost of the sub-tenant, when there own position was threatened.

44. RMELAC, Landholders Statement, Part II, p.10.


46. N.G.Ranga, The Modern Indian Peasant, Anmol Pub., New Delhi, p.129.

47. Ibid, p.129.

48. Compiled from various reports of RMELAC.

49. Compiled from RMELAC, Collectors Report. According to Congress Committee's investigation, the average low rate was Rs.14-4-2 and the average high rate was Rs.24-8-0. It also reveals that the lowest rate collected by the Zamindars was not less than Rs.12 and the maximum being Rs.59 on paddy growing land. RMELAC, Memorandum, Supplemental Volume, p.624.

N.G.Ranga's survey also supports the same trend:
50. RMELAC, Landholders Statement, Part II, pp.7-8. The Godavari District Manual states that the most ancient revenue system in the country was the 'Asara' or division of the produce. Godavari District Manual, p.312. 'Visabadi' system was merely a method of dividing the revenue assessed under the village system according to customary shares in which the village body held their land. It involved the curious condition that if any one thought his share over, and that of his neighbour under-assessed, he had a right to demand that the latter be made over to him at an increased rate, which he named, in exchange for his own. But if the neighbour agrees to the enhanced rate, the exchange was not actually carried out; but the complainant was allowed a proportionate reduction on his land. Baden Powell, Op Cit, vol.III, p.46.


52. There are number of such examples in RMELAC.

53. RMELAC, Memorandum, Supplemental Volume, p.624.

54. RMELAC, Landholders Statement, Part IV, p.286. Also see Gorrepati Venkatasubbaiah, Mana Zamindarilu, Op Cit, pp.25-27.

55. Raghavaiaangar, Op Cit, p.220. For instance, the Maharaja of Pittapuram collected additional periodical enhancement of two annas per rupee promising to improve the lands in Venkatakrishnarayapuram village by providing a drainage channel. But, the Zamindar had never spend even a single pie towards their improvement, RMELAC, Part II, p.85.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area:</th>
<th>Dry Land, Rate per Acre: (Rs)</th>
<th>Wet Land Rate per Acre: (Rs)</th>
<th>Garden Rates (Rs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kalurayanguden (W.G.dt)</td>
<td>1 to 2</td>
<td>6 to 12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gajjaram estate( ' ')</td>
<td>5 annas to 2-8-0</td>
<td>7 to 11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Vallur( ' ')</td>
<td>6 annas to 2-8-2</td>
<td>4 to 20</td>
<td>N.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangellamudi (W.G.dt)</td>
<td>12 annas to 2-8-0</td>
<td>5 to 12</td>
<td>N.A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

56. RMELAC, landholders Statement, Part IV, p.279.


58. It is to remembered that under the Rent Recovery Act (Act VIII of 1865) section 2 permitted the rents to be fixed by express or implied contract between a landholder and a tenant.

59. RMELAC, Memo-Part III, p.85. On the strength of the price lists, which were actually prepared by the estate officials, several estates filed enhancement suits from 1928 and collected the decreed enhancements with retrospective effect, RMELAC, Memorandum, Supplement Volume, p.620-21.

60. RMELAC, Memo-Part I, pp.34-35.

61. A retired Sub-Magistrate and Diwan of Kottam estate states that, "following the Estates Land Act, dated 1st July 1908, the Zamindars began making his collections both current and arrears. He began to collect every year two times the current demand whatever the yield of the crops in the holding might be. He left nothing to the tenants in the crop by keeping watch over it and appropriated it to himself. The tenant was thus a perpetual slave and a poor man living always hand to mouth", RMELAC, Memo-Part II, p.95. The Act gave the Zamindar the power to collect rent due to him in one of three ways; a) by a suit before the collector, b) by distraint and sale of movable property, and c) by sale of a ryot's holding, RMELAC, Memo-Part I, p.47.

62. RMELAC, Memo-Part III, p.47.

63. Prices of Agricultural Produce:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Commodity</th>
<th>1876:</th>
<th>1910</th>
<th>1926(October)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paddy</td>
<td>33-5-4</td>
<td>60-70</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>32-40</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variga</td>
<td>32-40</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholam</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chillies</td>
<td>20-23</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton</td>
<td>25-27</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redgram</td>
<td>35-37</td>
<td>60-70</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greengram</td>
<td>30-37</td>
<td>60-70</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coriandar</td>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry Paddy</td>
<td>22-25</td>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>12-15</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Annual Paddy Prices, (in Rs.) 1902-1933
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>East Godavari</th>
<th>Krishna</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *RMELAC*, Volume on Prices and Graphs.


66. Memorandum by the Members of the Sub-Committee of the district Board, Godavari, in R.Ris, no. 235, dt., 21 August, 1900, p. 18.


68. Along with these, few important feeder lines were laid connecting Narasaraopeta, Gurajala, Guntur, Ponnur, Tenali, Macherla, Repalle etc.


71. Board of Revenue (Revenue settlement, Land Revenue & Agriculture), no.278, 29th October, 1896, p.4.

72. Memorandum on the Moral and Material Progress of the Madras Presidency, p.3.

73. CO. Revenue (Special) no.158, 9th August, 1918.

74. G.O. Revenue (Special) no.2806, 27th July, 1918.


76. See Statistical Atlas, 1940-41 and 1950-51 for average rainfall of all districts of Andhra.

77. Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement, Land Revenue & Agricultural), no. 438, 30th December, 1899.

78. G.O. Revenue, no. 1125, 5th November, 1900.

79. Review and Returns of Sea-borne Trade and Navigation of the Madras Presidency for the years 1899-1900 and 1903-1904.


81. Royal Commission on Agriculture p.267.

82. Statistical Atlas, 1940-41 and 1950-51. In fact the wages were slow to respond to the rise in prices in prices of foodgrains, see M.Aitchi Reddy, 'Official Data on Agricultural Wages in the Madras Presidency from 1873', in the *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol. XV, no.4, 1978, pp.451-466.


84. Statistical Atlas of Madras, 1940, see respective district statistics.

85. Madras Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee Report. Cash rents would have been advantageous to the ryots had there been regular or proper survey and settlement arrangements.

86. RMELAC, Memo-Part II, p.16.

87. Rents in kind was collected generally through three different methods, namely, varam, crop-appraisal and cropwari
systems. Under the *varam* the proportion of share usually was half the gross produce; under the crop-appraisement the rent was fixed; under cropwari system different rates of rents for various kinds of crops was collected, *RMELAC*, collected from various reports.

88. See *RMELAC*, Memorandum Supplemental Volume, pp.612-645. The main reason for this manifold increase was the commutation of rents, along with customary taxes and levies into cash during the period of relatively high prices, arbitrary enforcement of higher rents on inferior soils, unjust levy of water-rates etc.

89. *Ibid*.

90. *RMELAC*, Part II, p.16. The memorandum of Peddapur Taluk *Ryots' Committee states that, 'the assessment in the Zamindari areas was not based on any principles. By frequent revision of rent, creating factions in the villages and encouraging one ryot to bid against another, the Zamindar brought the rent to the maximum level they can'. *RMELCA*, Part II, p.80.


92. Almost all the memos submitted by the tenants supports this demand, *RMELAC*, all volumes.

93. For example, in Pittapuram estate, in Thondangi village, the Zamindar taking advantage of the Act of 1908 filed a number of suits for increment of rents just before the depression in 1928 and forced the ryots of the village to pay Rs.0-1-6 increment of rent, *RMELAC*, Memo-Part III, p.97.

94. *RMELAC*, Oral Evidence, Part VI, p.120.


96. N.G.Ranga et al., *Op Cit*.


98. N.G.Ranga et al., *Op Cit*.


100. In Gollaprolu estate the net yield per acre was from Rs.25 to Rs.100 on the lands grown with chillies and cotton. The Collector of the Krishna District reports that the lands in Gollaprolu estate were richly suitable for a peculiar variety widely known as 'Gollaprolu chillies' throughout India and produce of chillies in this estate was sufficient to supply chillies throughout Madras Presidency, Hyderabad and Bengal Province, *RMELAC*, Collectors Report, p.37.

101. This was the argument put forward by the Zamindars to show that the the tenants were sufficiently protected and that the
tenants complaints about *rackrenting* were baseless.

102. On an average the under-tenants paid 70% of their gross produce as rent.

103. It was said that since 1911, there was a 100% increase in wages, N.G.Ranga et. al., *Op.Cit.*, p.46.

104. This was more during depression years and it was the major complaint of the Zamindars to the *prakasan* Committee. V.V.Sayana observes, 'Rents are not paid regularly by powerful ryots, only small and weak ryots pay regularly'. V.V.Sayana, *Agrarian Problems of Madras Province*, *Op Cit*, p.110.

105. This economic activity undermined the Zamindar's role in the economic life of his estate and thus his ability to redistribute the material resources of his subjects while simultaneously increasing the bargaining strength of the tenant vis-a-vis the Zamindar.

106. In all of the legislative measures, a privileged class of tenants has been recognised, remarks B.V.Narayanaswami Naidu and P.S.Narasimham, in *The Economics of Indian Agriculture*, Part II, Madras, 1955, p.462.


108. Majority of the tenants who gave witness to the Prakasam Committee claimed as owning acres ranging from 10 to 50 and more.


Apart from these government surveys, private surveys were also conducted regarding this issue. Important among them were, N.G.Ranga, *Agricultural Indebtedness and Remedial Measures*, Tenali, 1931, B.V.Narayanaswamy Naidu and V.Venkataaraman, *The Problem of Rural Indebtedness*, P.J.Thomas, *The Problem of Rural Indebtedness*, Madras, 1934, *R.S.Vaidyanatha* Aiyar, *A Memorandum on the Ryotwari Landholders in Madras*, Madras, 1933 etc.

111. The following figures give the acreage under food and non-food crops with the total area under cultivation and percentages thereof from 1925 to 1945 in the Madras Presidency:-
It is clear that non-food crops have been steadily gaining ground. This gradual shift was owing to the pull of external markets for non-food crops in the decade prior to 1935. In periods of shrinking of international trade, however, the prices and profitability of the commercial crops began to drop as they were most susceptible to the vagaries of world markets.

Also see N.G. Ranga, *Economic Organisation of Indian Villages*, vol. 11, Kitab Mahal, Bombay, 1929, p. 103.

112. See D. Thorer, *The Agrarian Prospect in India*, Delhi, 1956 for a thorough discussion on this subject on all-India scale.


116. Biswanath Das, a leading peasant leader, giving witness to the Banking Committee says that 'the sowcar does not know the amount of rent he (peasant) owes to the landlord and he does not know when his (peasant) lands would be sold. So there is very little for the moneylender to be profited. Consequently the moneylender charged a higher rate of interest and more extent of land as security'. *Ibid*, p. 10.

117. Many of the moneylenders demanded, in fact, gold and silver rather than land or crops as security in the Zamindari areas probably because in the Zamindari estates lands were not surveyed, many tenants had Joint pattas, even in surveyed estates proper records were not kept and above all 1908 Act gave the Zamindars first right over the tenant's produce.

118. *Banking Committee Report*, Op Cit, p. 219. K.S. Narayana Murthy's investigation in a village in Krishna district reveals how a ryot had to hand his 12 acres to the moneylender on failing to repay his debt of Rs. 150 taken at the rate of Rs. 1-8-0 percent interest, Gilbert Slater, *Some South Indian Villages*, vol. 1, O.U.P., Madras, 1928, p. 116.
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120. Bruce's enquiry reveals that despite the growth in the number of credit societies, they failed to make a significant economic impact on rural society. He says 'moneylending continued unabated, the poor were excluded from the movement and societies were capable of capturing only a small fraction of the rural credit market'. Bruce L. Robert, Jr., Op Cit, p.163.

121. T.V. Achariyar, Report of the Committee on Cooperation in Madras, 1939-1940, Madras, 1940, p.9. N.G. Ranga's enquiry committee for instance reveals that in Pittapuram taluk, the Zamindar usurped the only two cooperative societies in the taluk to develop his financial fortunes at the cost of the tenants, N.G. Ranga et. al., Op Cit, p.66. W.R.S. Sathyanathan summed up the motives of those who dominated the movement by stating, 'the whole movement is now greatly in the hands of unsatisfactory men, who are exploiting the general institutions under it for the purpose of self-aggrandizement or self gain for the service of their political or other ends'. W.R.S. Sathyanathan, Op Cit, p.61. Bruce concludes his study thus, 'the societies worked to provide a structure which would more closely tie the rural elite with the political centre at Madras. It was a relationship the various actors cultivated for different reasons. The rural elite saw in the movement the opportunity to enhance their wealth and prestige. The politicians of dyarchy viewed it as a means of extending and strengthening their patronage networks in the countryside. Bruce L. Robert, Jr., Op Cit, P.184.


124. Sathyanathan's report indicated that in Andhra ryot-moneylenders outmatched the professional moneylenders in the rural credit market. He mentions that the domination of big agriculturist moneylenders over the 'small and medium landholders' rendered the latter landless, W.R.S. Sathyanathan, Op Cit, pp.38-39 and 90.

125. N.G. Ranga et al., Op Cit., K.S. Narayana Murthy observes, 'there are more debts now, that the gulf between the rich and the poor is widened more and more, that the once poor are now poorer and the once rich now richer'. Gilbert Slater, Op Cit, p.119.

126. Percentage of population involved in debt in Krishna, West Godavari and East Godavari districts by 1930:-
It will be interesting to note that in a Zamindari village the villagers were in arrears of Rs. 6,000 which had to pay an annual rent of Rs. 6,000. N.G.Ranga et al., Op Cit, p.31.

Para 5 of the Sanad states that, 'the remissions which have occasionally been granted according to the custom of the country on account of drought, inundation or other calamity of the season shall now cease and never be revived', RHELAC, Landholders Statement, Part II, p15.


141. Apart from the factors such as price fall and high rents the peasant resistance was very widespread during the depression period. The decline after 1935 may be explained by the rising prices and legal protection during the Congress ministry by means of debt relief legislation.

142. For example in **Yerrampet** estate in West Godavari several of the villages were in arrears due to the Zamindar:--

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Demand (all in rupees)</th>
<th>Collection</th>
<th>Balance (all in rupees)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinnayagudem</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>2,133-6-9</td>
<td>1,468-7-4</td>
<td>664-15-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>4,116-2-3</td>
<td>2,913-10-2</td>
<td>1,202-8-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chopparamannagudem</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>313-1-9</td>
<td>152-10-6</td>
<td>160-7-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>881-6-4</td>
<td>570-13-5</td>
<td>310-8-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vadalakunta</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>242-10-2</td>
<td>41-3-4</td>
<td>201-6-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>1,472-5-7</td>
<td>1,287-3-1</td>
<td>185-2-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vedullakunta</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>278-4-8</td>
<td>123-6-11</td>
<td>154-13-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>694-14-6</td>
<td>565-13-4</td>
<td>129-1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yerrampeta</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>1,170-4-10</td>
<td>469-13-11</td>
<td>700-6-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>2,879-5-11</td>
<td>1,721-12-9</td>
<td>497-9-2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Number of Defaulters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>1929</th>
<th>1930</th>
<th>1931</th>
<th>1932</th>
<th>1935</th>
<th>1939</th>
<th>1940</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Godavari</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>1388</td>
<td>1782</td>
<td>2682</td>
<td>2950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Godavari</td>
<td>1187</td>
<td>1367</td>
<td>1020</td>
<td>1527</td>
<td>1316</td>
<td>827</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krishna</td>
<td>1414</td>
<td>2069</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>2349</td>
<td>1019</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>970</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


144. *Ibid*, p.87.


146. V.V.Sayana, *Op Cit*, p.110.

148. Rent Suits:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>1928</th>
<th>1929</th>
<th>1930</th>
<th>1931</th>
<th>1932</th>
<th>1935</th>
<th>1939</th>
<th>1940</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E. Godavari</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>809</td>
<td>724</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>2642</td>
<td>1076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Godavari</td>
<td>1471</td>
<td>1063</td>
<td>1181</td>
<td>1238</td>
<td>899</td>
<td>956</td>
<td>1316</td>
<td>951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krishna</td>
<td>1115</td>
<td>782</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>1467</td>
<td>1402</td>
<td>1498</td>
<td>3046</td>
<td>3392</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


149. It has to be remembered that 1908 Act gave the Zamindar to collect his rent in one of three ways, a) by a suit before the collector b) by distraint and sale of movable property and c) by sale of a ryot's holding.

150. For example the Zamindar of Gangole estate who had 714.04 acres of private land at the end of 1927 possessed ownership of 1431.47 acres of land by the end of 1936., RMELAC, Landholders Statement, Part II, p.21.

151. RMELAC, Memorandum, Supplemental Volume, p.616.

152. RMELAC, Memo-Part II, p.68.

153. RMELAC, Memorandum, Supplemental Volume, p.54.

154. | Years: | No.of Defaulters: | Arrears(Rs. in Lakhs) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1916-18</td>
<td>10,561</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919-22</td>
<td>12,556</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923-25</td>
<td>7,710</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926-28</td>
<td>8,393</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929-31</td>
<td>9,378</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932-34</td>
<td>12,346</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935-37</td>
<td>7,101</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939-40</td>
<td>6,191</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source:– Compiled from the Madras Estates Land Act Report for the respective years.

155. Ibid.

156. Ibid.


158. See V.V.Sayana, land Sales, Land Values and Land Transfers, Delhi, 1952 for a detailed and descriptive study on this issue".

159. Like lack of proper and regular survey and settlement of fields, existence of Joint-pattas, and the difficulty of patta transfers, lack of proper irrigational facilities and loan facilities etc.
160. Population Growth in Lakhs from 1901 to 1941:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>1931</th>
<th>1941</th>
<th>% variation of 1901 &amp; 1941</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W.Godavari</td>
<td>8.61</td>
<td>9.81</td>
<td>10.51</td>
<td>12.23</td>
<td>13.80</td>
<td>60.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krishna</td>
<td>8.83</td>
<td>10.17</td>
<td>10.82</td>
<td>12.54</td>
<td>14.44</td>
<td>63.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from the Census Reports of the Madras Presidency.

Agricultural Classes in 1950 in the following districts:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Total Population in 1950</th>
<th>Agricultural Classes</th>
<th>% of Agricultural Population to the Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E.Godavari</td>
<td>22,07,024</td>
<td>16,59,730</td>
<td>68.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.Godavari</td>
<td>16,97,727</td>
<td>12,44,876</td>
<td>73.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krishna</td>
<td>17,79,484</td>
<td>11,56,245</td>
<td>65.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


161. RHELAC, Memorandum, Supplemental Volume, p.625.

162. RHELAC, Collectors Report.

163. RHELAC, Memorandum, Supplemental Volume, p.628.

164. See N.G.Ranga et. al., Op Cit., p.64.


166. RHELAC, Memo-Part II. p.135. RHELAC, Part III, p.96.


168. RHELAC, Memorandum, Supplement Volume, p.629.


170. RHELAC, Memorandum, Supplement Volume, p.629.

171. N.G.Ranga et.al, Op Cit, says that in all the estate the condition was the same.

172. RHELAC, Memo-Part III, p.97.

173. RHELAC, Memorandum, Supplemental Volume, p.630. RHELAC,
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Landholders Statement, Part II, p.310.


175. *Zamin* Ryot, a drama written by V.V.S.Sarma describes very aptly the exploitative activities of the Zamindars and the problems of the tenants. Infact, the drama was banned by the Madras Government through G.O.No.576 dt.19.10.1938 on the grounds that the staging of the play might create unnecessary hitch and disaffection between the Zamindars and their tenants.

The following is the summary of the plot. The drama starts with some agricultural labourers who were on their way to the lands of the Zamindar of their village for transplantation work, express their discontent that they were not properly paid for their work by the Zamindar. One person complaints that the Zamindar does not allow the labourers to work in tenants fields who pays sufficiently until the work in Zamindars home farm was finished (p.2) Chowdary, one of the influential tenants of the place, meets them, dissuades them going to the Zamindar's home-farm and takes them with him to his own lands promising them a higher wage. The Zamindar who comes to know of this sends one of his servants to bring the workers back by force.

He threatens the villagers to vote for him in the ensuing district board elections and frightens them of dire consequences if they were found talking with opposition parties contesting against the Zamindar (10-11). It was a tradition in the estate to provide cocks and goats to the estate free of cost. The shepherds were forced to manure his fields with their sheep-folk.

Once, a poet approaches the Zamindar for help in his attempts to dedicate some of his patriotic works to Mr.Gandhi. The Zamindar treats poet very rudely. Thus insulted, poet goes to Chowdari who promises his help. Fearing trouble from Chowdari, the Zamindar causes his house to be looted and all his cattle to be killed one night (136-37). Then Chowdari and his family shifts to another village along with the poet and work with him for enlistment of workers and peasants to Gandhi Seva Sangh. Accordingly, a meeting was held under the presidentship of Chowdari. On that occasion the poet speaks first on the vices of Zamindars and officials. He compares the Zamindars with Hindu mythological demons like Hiranyakasipa and Ravanasaurs. The Zamindars, he says, having control over Legislators, Governors, District Board Officials, Collectors, Police Inspectors, Post-Masters etc., makes the agricultural labourers and tenants to shiver with his unabated tyranny. He alleges that Zamindars of illegal exactions (49-53).

Chowdari next addressess the meeting. He accuses the Zamindars of acquiring the estates and speaks on the origins of the Zamindari system. He says that they were first appointed as revenue farmers and later on they became the owners through back-door (54-55). But before he concludes his speech, he was
arrested by the police on a false charge preferred against him by the Zamindar that he has burnt down his hay-stack and killed four of his cattle. Chowdarl was tried and sentenced by a Magistrate to two years rigorous imprisonment (64).

While in Jail, he was given oil-mill work and whipped by the Jail warden for not doing his work properly, in the presence of poet and other ryots who have come to the Jail to see him. Poet begins to address the ryots present on the sad plight of zamindar ryots but the whole party was turned out of the Jail by the Jail-warden. The drama also comes to an end.

From the beginning to the end in this drama the ill-treatment meted out by the Zamindars to their tenants and resulting hardship to the them is very well depicted.

177. P.N.Driver, Op Cit, p.68.
178. 'In Madras the Zamindars have not been less enthusiastic in coming forward to levy all kinds of illegal dues of which the most scandalous are the cess and fees for use of communal lands, the tax in money on garden lands, the tax on trees etc.', K.G.Sivaswamy, Feudal and Extra Levies in Zamindari Areas, p.24.
179. RMELAC, Landholders Statement, Part I, p.275. In some estate it was called 'Kharejuulu', RMELAC, Landholders Statement, Part II, p.252. In some other estates it was called 'Karnam Selagalu' or 'Sharabu Rusumu', RMELAC, Memo-Part II, p.122.
180. RMELAC, Landholders Statement, Part IV, p.103.
181. RMELAC, Memorandum, Supplement Volume, p.623.
182. Ibid.
183. This was a universal complaint of almost all the tenants who presented their views to the Prakasam Committee and was also confirmed by the N.G.Ranga enquiry committee.
184. All volumes of RMELAC confirms this illegal levies.
185. RMELAC, Memorandum, Supplement Volume, p.624.
187. RMELAC, Memo-Part III, p.100.
188. RMELAC, Oral Evidence, Part IV, Part IV, p.126.
189. This was officially confirmed by various district collectors, RMELAC, Collectors Report.
191. Ibid, pp.82-83.
199. All volumes of *RMELAC* supports this point.
202. The following figures of a village in Venkatagiri estate indicate the extortionate character of the punitive tax:-(in Rs.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Punitive tax</th>
<th>Pasture tax</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29.1.1928</td>
<td>134-8-0</td>
<td>144-4-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.6.1928</td>
<td>70-0-0</td>
<td>180-0-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

207. For instance, the rates of forest fees prevailed in the Kottam Estate were as follows:

| Firewood (dry wood only): Rate per Head Load | 1 anna |
| Rate per Bullock Load | 3 anna |
| Rate per Ass Load | 2 anna |

Grazing Fees
- Calf | 2 anna |
- Buffallow | 8 anna |
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Calf - 4 anna,
Sheep - 1 anna,
Goat - 2 anna.


208. RMELAC, Landholders Statement, Part IV, p.104 & 125.


210. RMELAC, Memorandum, Supplemental Volume, p.638.

211. RMELAC, Memo-Part II, P.84.

212. Ibid, p.112.

213. RMELAC, Memorandum, Supplemental Volume, p.640.


216. RMELAC, Memo-Part II, p.142.

217. V.V.Sayana, Op Cit, p.110.

218. RMELAC, Memo-Part II, p.66.


220. RMELAC, Memo-Part III, pp.112-3. Gorrepati Venkatasubbaiah enumerates a number of ways of how the Zamindars spend their incomes. He says they spend on dogs, cocks, horses, on pomp and show, drama companies, on cinema stars, polo games and on guindy races. Gorrepati Venkatasubbaiah, Op Cit, p.38-9 & 54.

221. The Farm and the City, Brochure issued by Food and Agricultural Organisation, 1953, pp.9 & 14.

222. "The sufferings of our peasants can only be imagined when I tell you that they have received only 534 crores of rupees in 1932-33 as against 1,018 crores in 1928-29", N.G.Ranga, The Modern Indian Peasant, Anmol Pub., New Delhi, p.69.

223. RMELAC, Memo-Part II, p.64; Memo-Part III, p.97; Memorandum, Supplemental Volume, p.59; and also see N.G.Ranga, et. al., Op Cit, p.8.

224. All the government and private enquiries confirm this point.

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229. Bruce L. Robert, Jr., *Op Cit*, p. 182, also see *Andhra Pratrika*, 7.2.1933.


232. CO. Revenue, No. 948, 1st May, 1931.

233. They formed the social base for *anti-zamindari* and communist movements in Andhra.


241. Financial position of some Estates (Rs in lakhs):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estate</th>
<th>1928</th>
<th>1929</th>
<th>1930</th>
<th>1931</th>
<th>1933</th>
<th>1934</th>
<th>1935</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kurupam</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.Vallur</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Madras Court of Wards Report for respective years.

242. Arrear Balances (Rs in lakhs):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estate</th>
<th>1928</th>
<th>1929</th>
<th>1930</th>
<th>1931</th>
<th>1933</th>
<th>1934</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kurupam</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.Vallur</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources *Ibid.*, 

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243. Infact this heavy indebtedness was one of the reasons for taking down the administration of the estates by the Courts of Wards.


245. Considerable theoretical work in differentiating rural structure has been done by several scholars.

Lenin discussed the agrarian classes of the European countries as follows:

a) first, the agricultural proletariat, wage-labourers who obtain their livelihood by working for hire at capitalist agricultural enterprises,

b) second, the semi-proletarians or peasants who till tiny plots of land, i.e., those who obtain their livelihood partly as wage-labourers, and partly by working their own or rented plots of land, which provide their families only with part of their means of subsistence,

c) third, the small peasantry, i.e., the small-scale tillers who, either as owners or tenants, hold small plots of land which enable them to satisfy the needs of their families and their farms and do not hire outside labour,

d) fourth, in the economic sense, one should understand by 'middle peasants' those small farmers who, 1. either as owners or tenants or as tenants hold plots of land that are small but, under capitalism, are sufficient not only to provide as a general rule a meagre subsistence for the family and the basic minimum needed to maintain the farm, but also produce a certain surplus which may, in good years at least, be converted into capital and 2. quite frequently, resort to the employment of hired labour,

e) fifth, the big peasants pre-capitalist entrepreneurs in agriculture who as a rule employ several hired labourers and are connected with the 'peasantry' only in their 'low cultural level' habits of life and manual labour they themselves perform on their farms,

f) sixth, the big landowners who, in capitalist countries, directly or through their tenants farmers systematically exploit wage-labour and the neighbouring small peasantry, do not themselves engage in manual labour and are in the main descended from feudal lords. V.I.Lenin, *Preliminary Draft Thesis on the Agrarian Question*, presented to the Second Congress of the Comintern, Moscow, 1920.

Mao Tse-tung's classification of China's rural classes is as follows:

a) the landlord; a landlord is a person who owns land, does not engage in labour himself or does so only to a very small
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extent, and lives by exploiting the peasant. The collection of land rent is his main form of exploitation.
b) the rich peasant; the rich peasant as a rule own land. But some rich peasants own only part of their land and rent the remainder. Others rent all their land. His main form of exploitation is the hiring of labour. A person who owns a fair amount of good land, farms some of it himself without hiring labour, but exploits other peasants by means of land rent, loan interest or in other ways, shall also be treated as a rich peasant,
c) the middle peasant; many middle peasants own land. Some own part of their land and rent the rest. Others rent all their land. A middle peasant derives his income wholly or mainly from his labour. As a rule he does not exploit others and in many cases he himself is exploited by others. Some middle peasants do practice exploitation to a small extent, but this is not their regular or their main source of income, d) the poor peasant; among the poor peasants some own part of their land. Others own no land at all but only a few odd farm implements. As a rule poor peasants have to rent the land they work on and are subjected to exploitation, having to pay land rent and interest on loans and to hire themselves out to some extent. In general, a middle peasant does not need to sell his labour power while the poor peasant has to sell part of his labour power,
e) the worker; the worker (including the farm labourer) as a rule owns no land or farm implements, though some do own a very small amount of land and very few farm implements. Workers make income through their labour power., Mao Tse-tung, 'How to Differentiate the Classes in the Rural Areas', Collected Works, vol. III.

Engels divided the peasantry into three classes; the small, the middle and the big peasants, Fredrick Engels, The Peasant War in Germany, Progress Pub., Moscow, 197, pp.14-15.

According to Hamza Alavi, the first sector in the rural economy or India is the landlord who own land and who do not undertake cultivation on their own account. Their land is cultivated by landless tenants, mostly sharecroppers who are classified as poor peasants. The second sector is that of independent small holders who own no more land than they cultivate themselves and enough of it to make them self-sufficient. They do not exploit the labour of others. They are the middle peasants. The third sector is that of capitalist farmers, also described as rich farmers, who own substantial amounts of land and whose farming is primarily based on work themselves. Unlike landlords, they undertake the business of farming and employ capital in it. Hamza Alavi, 'Peasant and Revolution', in K.Gough and H.P.Sharma (ed), Imperialism and Revolution in South Asia, New York, 1973, pp.292-94.

Dhanagare classifies peasants into four types basing upon the nature of rights, extent of field work actually performed and
type of income obtained from the soil. They are a) landlords holding rights over large tracts extending over several villages, they are absentee owners, b) rich landowners, proprietors with considerable holdings but usually on the same villages and rich tenants, having established holdings and enjoying secured rights, c) middle peasants, having holdings sufficient to support a family, who cultivate land with family labour one who do not either employ (except during harvest) or receive rent and substantial tenants who have to pay higher rent than those paid by rich tenants, d) poor peasants; landowners with holdings that are not sufficient to maintain a family, and therefore forced to rent others land; poor tenants, having tenancy rights but less secure holdings with income often less than that earned by wage labour and tenants at-will or share-cropper,


N.G. Ranga classified the holders of six acres and below as poor peasants, seven to nine acres as middle peasants and ten to twenty acres as big peasants. He further argues that the unit of six to eight and half acres should be considered as an 'economic holding' and a plot of fifteen acres as the 'best paying holding', N.G. Ranga, Economic Organisation of Indian Villages, vol.1, Bezwada, 1926, p.61.

According to V.V. Sayana, a) agricultural labourers were the holders of two acres and less; b) small peasants were the holders of five acres and below; c) medium peasants were the holders of five acres to twenty acres and d) big landlords were the owners of more than twenty acres, V.V. Sayana, Readings in Rural Problems, S.Chand & co, Delhi, 1950, p.121.

Sunil Sen, Agrarian Relations in India, 1793-1947, New Delhi, 1979, p.41.

Alok Sheel feels that with the integration of peasant society into the expanding capitalist market, a process of permanent differentiation will begin. He divided it into three categories, a) rich peasant or the emerging rural bourgeoisie, b) middle peasant or the consumption-oriented peasant, striving to survive in the new context and c) the poor peasant or the disintegrating middle peasant in the process of being depressed into the ranks of the emerging rural proletariat, Alok Sheel, 'Peasant Nationalism in India in the Gandhian era', in Amit Kumar Gupta (ed), Agrarian Structure and Peasant Revolt in India, Criterion Pub., New Delhi, 1986, p.72.

Saith and Tanaka distinguished into five classes on the basis of ownership of assets, tenancy, utilisation of loans, repayment capacity etc. They are a) owner cultivators b) largely owner cultivators c) largely tenant cultivators d) tenant cultivators and e) poor peasants. Saith and Tanaka, 'Agrarian Transition and the Differentiation of the Peasantry: A Study of a West
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On the basis of revenue payments, W.R.S. Sathianathan classified the rural population into three groups, a) labourers and tenants at-will b) small and medium landholders and c) larger and bigger landholders, W.R.S. Sathianathan, Op Cit, pp.42-43.


Royal Commission on Agriculture opines that the agrarian society consisted of rich, middle and poor peasants, Royal Commission on Agriculture in India, vol.14, p.268.


246. N.G.Ranga, Credo of World Peasantry, Indian Peasant Institute, Nidubrolu, 1957, p.11.

247. N.G.Ranga observes that more and more landholders of the delta villages were leasing out their lands, finding it more profitable than to cultivate directly, N.G.Ranga, Economic Organisation of Indian Villages, vol.11 Bezwada, 1926, p.60.


249. For 1000 persons engaged in Agriculture:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>1931</th>
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<tr>
<td>Agricultural Labourers</td>
<td>27.04</td>
<td>42.09</td>
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<td>Cultivating Owners</td>
<td>39.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Cultivating Tenants</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.16</td>
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Source: Census Reports, Part I, Madras, 1931.