National liberation movement in India brought new social classes into politics. Among these social classes the peasants occupied a prominent position. The national movement reached at the grass root paving the way for the growth of a new culture. During the British period the entire Indian rural scene had been indulging in protest, revolt and even large scale struggles. In these struggles against British colonialism, the peasants played a significant role in weakening the basic structure of the British administration. The study of agrarian system, social structure and their struggles in India has recently developed as an important theme of historical research.

In all agrarian societies, land is the most important means of wealth and source of power and prestige. Rights in land are often hereditary with power and prestige tending to the ascriptive attributes.
Consequently, changes in the institutional frame work of agriculture, the pattern of ownership, control and use of land or more briefly the land system as a whole, will have far reaching consequences on the land based social order in these societies.

In such societies the rulers extracted more land revenue and oppressed the peasantry for favourable revenue collection and caused discontent among the part of the peasantry against the established authority. This developed as a common feature of the 19th century. The 20th century marked the growth of national consciousness and the national movement, it made deep impact in channelising the discontent. Thus with the involvement of the peasantry, national movement became a mass organisation.

The peasants as a class have been the back-bone of the society through the ages. But, it is a paradox, that the class suffered from several handicaps. The British colonial policies and the new land revenue system (Zamindari, Ryotwari and Mahalwari) along with the new administrative system had transformed the rural agrarian structure. The traditional agrarian system and the industrial structure had collapsed, causing oppression, over crowding in agriculture sector culminating in the impoverishment of the peasantry. This resulted in the resistance movements against the colonial rule. These movements developed against the established authority which was a familiar feature during the colonial administration.

History had recorded some peasant movements, upsurges and insurrections. But in many cases its impact might not be far reaching. Moreland\(^{(1)}\) points out that the feature of the pre-modern Indian polity was a sovereign who ruled with an army that supported the throne and the peasantry paid for it. Some of the peasant insurgences that have been recorded in ancient and medieval India were caused by heavy taxation and oppression by the army in collecting land revenues.

R. S. Sharma\(^{(2)}\) has noted the first recorded peasant rebellion that occurred in the 11\(^{th}\) century in North Bengal, which resulted in the death of a Pala Ruler. During the period of the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526) many peasant uprisings took place, and the basic cause was heavy taxation. Several instances of lower-class uprisings\(^{(3)}\) in the Mughal Empire in which many poor peasants, the tax-payers, fought against the tyranny of the landlords - the tax receivers - or their police. In many of the peasant wars, religious ideology provided a powerful revolutionary force, therefore, both in terms of motivation and organisation they sharply resembled some of the peasant wars of Medieval Europe.

Many scholars have tried to define the peasants and identify the integral class division of the peasant society. Eric Wolf defined\(^{(4)}\) peasantry as a population that are essentially involved in cultivation

and making autonomous decisions regarding the process of cultivation. Theoder Shanin defined(1) the peasant as who, with the help of simple equipment and labour of their families produced mainly for their own consumption and for the fulfillment of obligation to the holders of political and economic powers.

There are differences in these two definitions. Eric Wolf took descriptive categorisation of peasantry. He stressed the potential(2) of middle class peasants in revolution. The poor peasants (landless peasants) who had no tactical power and were not in a position to organise or pursue rebellion. At the same time Theoder Shanin considered the position of peasants in the process of production as the most important one. Thus the peasant occupy a key role in the economic structure.

A. R. Desai expressed(3)

In fact, during and after the second world war, the metaphor troops and peasants were the two arms of the Kingdom which optimises the peasantry in a large number of colonial and semi-colonial countries participated on a massive scale both in the national liberation struggle to over throw imperialism.

In his review of land reform studies in India, P. C. Joshi states(4)

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3. A. R. Desai, Peasant Struggle In India (Delhi, 1979), p. XII, XIII.
History shows that peasantry is seldom capable of throwing up an autonomous social movement under its own leadership for its emancipation from the rule of feudal or semi-feudal interests.

The peasantry had played a key role to overthrow imperialism during and after the second world war in a large number of colonial and semi-colonial countries of the world. But, in India, there was almost a total neglect in the systematical study of the agrarian movements and their impact on the national movements up to 1970's. But there after many historians conducted their studies on the role of the various classes of the peasants in social, economic and political transformation and their attempts to resist oppression and injustice. Recently many of the modern historians have given importance for the subaltern studies in history.

In all feudal types of societies\(^1\) there have always, been individual and small groups driven by hunger and humiliation to commit acts of violence. These acts were not guided by any ideology but as a heroic action by an individual or a group against the feudalistic oppression. These acts were almost invariably designed\(^2\) as 'crime' by the rulers of such societies and were suppressed ruthlessly.

A study of the agrarian movements in India, in historical perspective shows that there have been movements of both rich and poor peasants.

The Santal uprising (Orissa, 1855-56) was basically a tribal movement\(^3\) of poor peasants. The introduction of permanent settlement

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2. Ibid, p. 76.
eventually led to the wholesale appropriation of land for recovery of revenue dues and land transfers to urban money lenders. This had deeply hurt the tribal sentiments. Santals revolted against the landlord, mahajans and darogas (police). But it was mercilessly crushed, thousands of Santals were massacred.

One of the causes for the revolt of 1857 was the impoverishment of the rural peasantry by the British colonial administration. Between 1840 and 1857, the transfer of land from cultivators to non-cultivating classes of money lenders, urban traders and so on had increased considerably. Evictions, the imposition of levies and illegal taxes by corrupt revenue officials had steadily built up tension. The unrest culminated in the revolt of 1857.

The Bombay peasant revolt (1871-75) was not well planned, nor were they widespread. The peasants aimed their blows not on the government, but on money lenders, to frighten them into surrender or to get possession of the documents or papers. The British suppressed the rising.

The Champaran movement of 1917 (Bihar) was held by rich and wealthy peasants who belonged to the so called 'superior castes'. The peasants struggled in connection with the indigo plantation against the British Planters. They invited Gandhiji and he undertook a leading role in the agitation. The movement marched to a success and created a new confidence among the peasants.

1. D. N. Dhanagragre, Peasant Movements In India 1920-1950, (Delhi, 1983), p.36.
2. A. R. Desai, Peasant Struggle In India (Delhi, 1979), p. 70.
The Kheda\(^{(1)}\) struggle of 1918 (Kheda District of Gujarat) was essentially a struggle of rich peasants. After returning from South Africa Gandhiji made the experiment of non-co-operation movement by leading the Champaran movement and Kheda struggle.

The progress of Khilafat Movement ended in an open rebellion in Malabar, called as the Malabar Mappila Rebellion. It was actually a rebellion against poverty and the harassment of the landlords. After the rebellion the need of tenancy legislation\(^{(2)}\) and the readjustment of landlord-tenant relationship was sharply felt.

The Aika movement (United Province) of 1921-22 was directed against the exploitation of the zamindars and landlords. Though this movement was suppressed by the zamindars, money lenders and the British, it played a significant role in challenging the foundation of the colonial and feudal authority in the region.

The famous Bardoli Satyagraha (1928) in Surat District of Gujarat was led by Sardar Vallabhai Patel\(^{(3)}\) with the blessings of Gandhiji. It was essentially a movement of rich and well to do class of peasants, which ended in victory.

The protest of poor peasants of Bihar in 1932 under the leadership of Sahajanand Saraswati, the leader of Kisan Sabha, turned out to be an important event in the history of the agrarian movement.

The Tebhaga Movement\(^{(4)}\) under the leadership of Bengal

1. A. R. Desai, Peasant Struggle In India (Delhi, 1979), p. 70.
4. A. R. Desai, Peasant Struggle In India (Delhi, 1979), p. 482.
Provincial Kisan Sabha (1946-47) was also certainly a movement of the poor peasants. Ultimately the Tebhaga movement failed due to the repressive measures of the British. It brought significant, immediate as well as far reaching changes, in the social and economic structure.

When we examine the above struggles, it is revealed that the movements led by rich peasants were a success but, the struggles of the poor peasants were suppressed miserably. The poor peasants generally revolted against their landlords and moneylenders. The British administration came forward to suppress the revolts and they acted as a protector of the landlords and moneylenders. This was one of the major significance of the colonial administration having a link among the British government, landowning class and the money lenders.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SOUTH CANARA DISTRICT

The use of the term South Canara and its geographical limits calls for some clarification. The present day districts of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi of Karnataka together with the Kasaragod of Kerala State constituted the South Canara District in the Madras Presidency during 1860 to 1956. The district was situated on the western coast of India, half way between Bombay and Cape Comorin. It was the northern district belonging to the Madras Presidency which occupied the western portion of the Peninsula of India. Geographically the South
MAP. 1: SOUTH CANARA DISTRICT (1860)
Canara region is separated from the rest of South Indian Peninsula by the western ghats.

The district was situated \(^{(1)}\) between the North latitude \(12^\circ 4'15''\) and \(13^\circ 58'30''\) and East longitude \(74^\circ 43'26''\) and \(75^\circ 44'31''\). It was bounded on the north by Northern Canara (Bombay Presidency) on the South by Malabar, on the east by Mysore and Coorg and on the west by Arabian sea.

The geographical features of South Canara give an insight to the climatic conditions and the nature of soil. The coastal strip of South Canara between the mountain ranges and the sea never exceeds more than 50 miles. The mountain range approaching the extreme north of South Canara district is within five miles of the sea. Then the main line of the range soon swerves abruptly eastward round the Kettur valley, to the south of this valley rises the prominent place of Kudachadiri (4411 ft). Then the ghats run south east of Kudremuch, the highest peak in the district (6215 ft) above sea level. The Coorg and Malabar hills are the Southern boundaries of the district. The west of the ghats, a broken laterite plateau, slopes gradually towards the sea. The area is a sea bed with rich soil, the annual rainfall is high, averaging about 150 inches per annum. The humidity is also high at 75% to 80% nearly one-half of the area is forestry and one half fully rocky land. The area under cultivation is only one fifth of the total. Rice is the major crop grown. It has been said that most \(^{(2)}\) of the farming

activities concede to religious activities and festivals in the region.

The name of the district, Canara, Kannada or Karnate is derived by Cladwell\(^1\) from the old Dravidian word K'ar, black cotton soil of the southern plateau of Deccan. Generally, the name Karnara spread to all the countries under the domination of the rulers Karnara and was corrupted into Kannada, the English name Canara\(^2\) is confined to the Western coast.

The name 'Kanara'\(^3\) (which was formerly spelt) is derived from 'Kannada' the name of regional language of the state. It appears that the Portuguese, who on arrival in this part of India, found the common linguistic medium of the people to be Kannada, and accordingly called the area as 'Canara', 'd' being not much in use in Portuguese. This name applied to the whole costal belt of this area and was continued to be used as such by the British. The Tulunadu is situated\(^4\) between the south of the river Kalyanapuram near Udipi, North of the Chandragiri river in Kasaragod and the western ghat.

The word Tulu\(^5\) meaning mild, is not in common use and though the Tulu people were mild and peaceable, as a rule marked more than their neighbours and have given trouble enough at times. According to the "Keralolpathi"\(^6\) the name comes from that one of the Perumals of

2. Ibid, p. 2.
Kerala who fixed his residence in the northern portion of his dominions just before its separation from Kerala called "Tulubhan Perumal".

According to B. A. Saletore\(^{(1)}\), the word Tulu might be traced to the Cannada verbal root, Tulu, which means "to attack". This signifies the native spirit of the ancient people and their war like activities.

The Mushaka Vamsa written by Atula mention's the expansion of Nannan, the ruler of Eli hill (Eli-malai, present Kannur District of Kerala) towards Konkan Desa and Tulunadu. Reference to Nannan in Sangham literature\(^{(2)}\) illustrate his occupation of Tulunadu and his attention further South. The date of Nannan was impossible to fix, as he might have lived and ruled sometime in the first three countries of the Christian era.

It is mentioned that the kingdom of Ezhimala under Nannan was included the whole of the present Kannur district embraced with in itself the southern most part of the Tulu country and the parts of the Coorg and Coondapur as well\(^{(3)}\). The death of Nannan ended the glorious period in the history of the Ezhimala Kingdom.

In the middle of the 4\(^{th}\) century A.D saw the advent of Mayura Sarma as the ruler of the Kadambamandak. We do not know how long Kadamba rule founded by Mayura Sarma continued to be existed.

During the early centuries of the Christian era, Tuluva was inhabited\(^{(4)}\) by the Kosar (Kosar were the tribal inhabitants of some

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other region, who migrated to Tulunadu) and again it came under the sway of Nannan with the appearance of the Vaddarse\(^{(1)}\) inscription. In the middle of the 7\(^{th}\) century the Tulu country emerges from historical darkness and from the inscription we know that the people of South Canara were subjected to a ruler whose name was Aluvasara and whose dynamic name was glanced from successive records as Aluva or Alupa. Thus the dawn of datable history in the middle of 7\(^{th}\) century to the end of the 14\(^{th}\) century AD, the region of South Canara was under the rule of Aluvas or Alupas.

The gramapaddhati\(^{(2)}\), is a tradition, which contains the history of the Brahmin settlement of the Tulu region. It is broadly divisible in two parts. The earlier part belongs to the realm of mythology, dealing with the role of Siva in the origin of Kingship and state in this region. In the second part there are details of the kings, some protest and even rebellions. It gives the details of rule of different kings like Mayura Varma, Chandraganda and Lokaditya. There are also references to the settlement of Brahmins in 32 gramas along with their family names in gramapaddhati.

Another part of the mythological story of gramapaddhati narrates the birth of Kadamba. When Siva and Parvati came to Sahya Hills, a baby was born to them under a Kadamba tree. The child had three eyes. He was succeeded by Vasu Chakravarti whose daughter Susile married Hemanga Raya of Surya Vamsa. Their son was Mayura Varma.

When Mayura Verma became the king he was advised by the Rishies to bring Brahmins from Achicchatras, on the banks of river Godavari and he brought Brahmins from there. The Brahmins settled in Haiva, Tuluva and Kerala. In Tuluva the Brahmins settled in thirty two villages. Sudras were brought along with the Brahmins to work for them.

Buchanan's Journey

In 1801 Dr. Buchanan was deputed by Wellesley, the then Governor General of India to investigate and report on the state of agriculture, art and commerce, the religion, manners and customs, the history, natural and civil antiquities in Mysore and other areas newly acquired.

Buchanan entered in the district from the south, Malabar frontier to Hosdurg. He was struck by the neglected appearance of the country owing to the want of inhabitants, which the Nayar informant attributed to depopulation by war and famines. Passing further north towards the Chadragiri river he called that place Tuluva or Tulunadu. He found the country showing some signs of arid deserted land, though there were traces of former cultivation. In the neighbourhood of Kumbala he found the paddy lands, more neatly cultivated than the further south area and saw many ruins of former gardens. At Manjeshwar(1) he found a number of Konkanies in flourishing circumstances and after visiting Mangalore he reported that to judge from appearances of occupants of land in Tuluva were richer than those of Malabar. The cultivation

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he found carried on partly by slaves, but mainly by hired servants. At Bantwal he noticed new house buildings and the people were busily engaged in commerce.

The region is referred\(^1\) as Tulunadu in Agananuru - a Sangham work of the early centuries of the Christian era and as Tulu - Vaishya in the Barakuru inscriptions. During the Vijayanagara period, South Canara was also referred in the inscriptions as Tulu-rajya or Tulu desa. Aluvakheda\(^2\), is the name given to this region by some outside inscriptions of Tulunadu.

Sturrock observed that\(^3\) the Brahminical influence in Tuluva dates only from the introduction of the Brahmin’s by Kadamba king Mayura Varma and prior to this Jainism had no doubt obtained a footing. The political history of South Canara District prior to the advent of the British rule may be broadly divided into four phases

1. The Alupas
2. The Vijayanagara
3. The Keladi and
4. The Mysore rule.

The Alupas

Gururaja Bhatt expresses that from the early centuries of the Christian era, the area was known as Alvekheda, which means\(^4\) the lord of the Alupas, thus the first century of the Christian era to the

\(^1\) K. V. Ramesh, *A History of South Kanara*, (Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1970), p. XVIII.
\(^2\) Ibid, p. XVIII.
middle of the 15th century the Alupas ruled over the Alvekheda, indeed a unique record of unbroken, political supremacy for a period of 1500 years. The regular history of this dynasty as revealed (through inscriptions) starts only from the middle of the 17th century.

Most probably, the Alupas were in the beginning, tribal chiefs\(^{(1)}\) of local origin, the evidence in this connection is, of course Ptolemy\(^{(2)}\), for it is he who speaks of Oloiknora (identified with Alvekheda) and this makes a direct reference to the Alupas. Ptolemy says this Oloikhara was one of the inland centers of pirates. Plini\(^{(3)}\) also refers to the pirates that infested the region between Muziris and Nitrias. Thus perhaps, in those days there were some tribes in the coastal region each of which included a band of fighters headed by a chieftain some of whom possibly lived by piracy.

These aspects reveal that, there were a number of petty chiefs who often engaged in internecine wars under about the beginning of the 6th century, when one of them ultimately rose into prominence. The Alupa Kingdom had later gained sufficient importance by about the beginning of the 6th century, since\(^{(4)}\) its subjugation has been mentioned by the Kadamba King Ravivarma and in the list of conquests of the western Chalukya 'king' Kirthivarman I.

During the period of the\(^{(5)}\) early Alupas, their kingdom was

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primarily divided into divisions called 'nadu', and it was placed in charge of an officer whose functions were expressed in the phrase-nattu-mudime, means leadership over nadu. The cities were placed under the administration of officers who had the designation of nayaka. Taxes on land and water were the main sources of income for the royal treasury. Agricultural products were subject to taxation. Taxes on water meant tolls collected from marine and river trades. There was no information regarding to administration of justice.

Information regarding administrative practices\(^1\) is found in greater detail in the inscriptions of the medieval and later Alupas. The early Alupas refer their regions merely as Rajya. The medieval and later Alupas used Vijaya-rajya and ekachatradirajya. The King was the supreme head and the ministers known as pradhana were the head of the official hierarchy the chief minister was called as maha-pradhan. There were also a set of officials known as\(^2\) desipurusharu means spiritual personages who guided the ruler. The Princes and princesses of the royal family took active part in the administration of the kingdom.

Various officials such as Adhikari was the administrator of nadu (a kingdom was divided into divisions called nadu), odea was the head of village, senabova was the village clerk, uraluva (ruler of a given village) tiadapa (servant), srikarna (royal scribe), sahani (another who tends war horses), behari (official who looked matters of trade) etc existed during this period. Guilds and associations find, frequent

1. K. V. Ramesh, A History of South Kanara, (Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1970), p. 43.
references in the inscriptions. Medieval and later Alupa inscriptions contain very little information on the administration of justice.

**South Canara Under the Vijayanagara Empire**

The Vijayanagara empire came into existence in 1336. It was founded by the five brothers, Harihara, Bukka, Marappa, Muddappa and Kampana. Harihara I was the crowned as its first emperor. Though its beginning was humble, but very soon, due to the prevailing political circumstances paved for territorial expansion and turned as an empire in South India.

The earliest inscription\(^{(1)}\) of the Vijayanagara period seen at Attavara in Mangalore Taluk in AD 1345, reveals that South Canara itself came to form a part of the empire with a decade of its birth. This marked the establishment of an efficient and centralised form of government in South Canara for about three centuries. For administrative convenience the Vijayanagara rulers divided\(^{(2)}\) South Canara into Mangalore and Barkur rajyas and two governors were appointed to look after each from Mangalore and Barkur as headquarters. But many times only one governor ruled over both Mangalore and Barkur rajyas. The authority who made these appointments was either the emperor or an imperial officer or both. The governors were changed at the will of their superiors with out any regard of their duration.

K. V. Ramesh\(^{(3)}\) opines that the Vijayanagara rulers annexed South

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Canara because of its strategic position connected with war. The rulers could hope to build up a formidable cavalry only with the help of horse, imported from Arabia and for doing this they needed suitable ports. South Canara possessed such ports in Mangalore and Barkur. Thus they annexed south Canara as a part of their empire.

In the beginning all the local Chiefs were recognised by the Vijayanagara rulers. The collection of revenue(1), general administrative powers and execution powers remained in their hands and they were allowed to enjoy certain portions of their territories free of tax and the revenue collected by them was paid to Vijayanagara Officer called Wodeyar at Barkur.

There are many inscriptions of the Vijayanagara rulers discovered from different parts of South Canara. For example, Kantavara of Karkala taluk, Udipi, Coondapur, Barkur, Mudabidure, Tiruvailu etc. These inscriptions gives information about the political life of the period. Of these the Barkur rajya comprised of the Udipi and Coondapur taluks, while in the Mangalore rajya was included the Mangalore, Karkala, Puttur and Kasaragod taluks. The inscription also gives the name of the governors who were appointed by the emperors to rule these rajyas. An inscription from Barakura(2) states that Mahapradhana Simganna-odeya was administering the Tulu and Mahala rajayas from his head quarters at Barakur. The Mahala rajyas is supposed to be the North Malabar of Kerala state.

2. K. V. Ramesh, A History of South Kanara, (Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1970), p. 43, (The Barakura inscription was in AD.1390).
An inscription from Mudabidare(1) of Karkala taluk records gifts of lands to Chandogra Parsvadeva during the region of the Chauta ruler Vikra-Chauta. The Chautas were the minor family of Jain chieftains who ruled over a small territory in the Tulu country from the 12th century to the 18th century.

Ibn Batuta(2) the African traveller, visited the coast of Canara in 1342. He had mentioned a number of places which he passed through along the coast from Karwar to Calicut. He describes the coast roads as well shaded with trees and states that at every half a mile, there was a rest house with a well in charge of a person and he found the country a fairly prosperous state. He also(3) mentions the Muhammadan Governor of Honore was subject to an infidel King Harihara of Vijayanagara.

Some time after the conquest of the Tuluva country by the Vijayanagara emperor Narasimha Saluva (1486-91), the Kolathiri(4) lost his supremacy over the territory lying the north of Chandragiri or Payaswini river. The current tradition prevalent in the Mangalore and Kasaragod taluk represents a branch of Bairusu Wodeyar family of Karnataka as having setup rule over the area till it was extirpated in the 17th century by Sivappa Nayaka of Bedinur. The Raja of Kumbala governed his kingdom acknowledging his suzerainty of the Vijayanagar

1. Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 59 (The Mudabidare inscription was in AD. 1390).
empire and it testified the overlordship of Vijayanagara.

It was during the reign of Salava Narasimha II (1491-1505) that the Portuguese arrived in India and in 1505 an ambassador of the Vijayanagara King gave permission to the Portuguese to build a fort anywhere in his dominion.

The Portuguese made attempts to establish their political supremacy over Mangalore considering its commercial and military importance. The Portuguese took possession of Mangalore after overcoming minor resistance in 1526 under the Viceroy, Lopes Vas De Sampaya. After this, they proceeded to levy a kind of tributes of grain from all the sea parts. The resistance of the Chieftains continued in Mangalore against the Portuguese which proved strong at Mangalore again in 1530.

Buchanan mentions two inscriptions of a Rayara Wodeyar at Barkur, the governor appointed by the Vijayanagara empire. It tells the grant by which the landlordship of Tuluva was made over to the founder of the Ikkeri family, Mangalore and Barkur.

The Tulunadu witnessed the emergence of a number of feudatory states enjoying semi-independent powers from the beginning of the Vijayanagara overlordship until the establishment of the British power.

The chronology of their feudatory state may be reconstituted as follows.

2. Ibid, p. 52.
5. Ibid, p. IV-V.
1. The Bangas of Bangavadi (Bengadi) (14th century to 19th century)
2. The Choutas of Mudabidre (14th century to 19th century)
3. The Tolahas of Suralu (11th century to 19th century)
4. The Bhairarasa wodeyars of Karkal (14th century to 17th century)
5. The Ajilas of Venur (12th century to 19th century)
6. The Samantas of Simanturu, Mulki (14th century to 19th century)
7. The Konnekambalis of Hosangadi (14th century to 19th century)
8. The Rajas of Kumbala (14th century to 19th century)
9. The Rajas of Vittal (14th century to 19th century)
10. The Hegades of Nandalike (14th century to 15th century)
11. The Rulers of Nagire (13th century to 17th century)
12. The Rajas of Hadavalli (Sangitapura, 15th century to 17th century)
13. The Kadambas of Chandavara (11th century to 14th century)

Abbakka Devi and Portuguese

The queen of Ullal, Abbakka Devi had engaged a brave and persistent opposition towards the Portuguese with a close alliance with several Chiefs of Malabar. The queen refused to pay tribute to the Portuguese of Goa, When they collided with the Chief of Canara her erstwhile ally. So in 1555 Dom Alvares da Silverira(1) was nominated admiral of a fleet of 21 sails, which had been specially fitted out for service on the sea coast of Calicut. He was sent against the queen of Ullal. The city of Mangalore was almost lost for the queen, but the Zamorin of Calicut averted the crisis by bringing an

amicable peace treaty between the queen and the Portuguese Admiral.

When the war between the Portuguese and the Cannannore came to a close, the Portuguese Viceroy Dom Antao de Nornha made preparation for war with the queen of Ullal. A punitive expedition sent\(^\text{(1)}\) against her by the Portuguese Governor under Joao Piexote, after some initial success, ended in disaster with Piexote himself being slain.

Enraged at this the Portuguese Viceroy Dom Antao de Noraha\(^\text{(2)}\) himself started from Goa carrying a total of 3000 fighting men, a veritable Portuguese armada determined to bring about the final subjugation of the queen of Ullal, in September 1567. In the actual battle that followed, however the Portuguese\(^\text{(3)}\) obtained complete victory over the queen. The Portuguese set fire to the city and cut down many palm and other groves.

South Canara Under the Nayakas of Keladi

After the destruction of the Vijayanagara empire the Nayakas of Keladi emerged as a dominant power in Canara during the 16\(^\text{th}\) century to 18\(^\text{th}\) century, up to the invasion of Haider Ali of Mysore. They belonged to an agriculturist family of Kelade and Chaudappa Gauda (1500-1540) of this family was appointed as the Chiefs of that area with the title

of Nayaka\(^{(1)}\) by the Vijayanagara emperor, Sadasiva Raya (1544-1565) with this accession, the Nayakas of Keladi or Ikkeri emerged from a period of comparative obscurity to one of the political lime light.

Sadasiva Nayaka (1544-1565) was the successor of Chaudappa Gauda. The power of administration of the central regions of Canara was entrusted to the Sadasiva Nayaka of Keladi by the Vijayanagara ruler Sadasiva Raya about 1550. And the destruction of the capital of Vijayanagara by the Mohammedans in 1565 had given the Keladi Nayakas an unquestioned political supremacy in Canara. Sadasiva Nayaka was a great warrior and he had done valuable military services to Sadasiva Raya, the Vijayanagara emperor. The construction of Kasaragod fort\(^{(2)}\) is attributed to him.

About 1613, the rulers of the Keladi continued as to be the feudatories of Vijayanagara and the Venkatappa Nayak I (1586-1629), made it independent. He was very powerful and successfully subjugated the whole of western coast from Honnavor\(^{(3)}\) (North Canara district) to Nileshwar.

The Raja of Nileshwar was a branch of the Kolathiri royal family. The territory of the Nileshwar was extended from river Bakel in the north to river Kavvayi in the south. In 1615-17 and again in 1646, the Nayakas of Keladi\(^{(4)}\) had tried to subdue the Raja of Nileshwar and annex his territory. However it was not annexed until 1737. It was

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2. Ibid, p. 54.
during the reign of Somasekhara Nayaka II of Keladi\(^{(1)}\) (1714-1739), the fort of Hosdurg was built and the Raja of Nileshwar was compelled to submit after a struggle of twelve years in which both the English and the French took part.

An agreement\(^{(2)}\) was signed by the Kolathiri (Nileshwar Branch) King with Captain Surappaiya, the Keladi General at Mangalore on 26 August, 1737. It fixed the line of connecting the Uraballi fort and the Taliparamba river as boundary between the two kingdoms. This agreement was signed in the presence of the British council of the Tellichery factory. The Nileshwar polegar paid an annual rent\(^{(3)}\) of 2500 Bahadry Pagodas (Rs. 10,000) to the Raja of Bedinur. The subordination of Nileshwar to Bedinur continued up to 1763, the innovation of Haider Ali of Mysore.

In 1755, during the reign of queen Veerammaji (1757-1763) the Raja of Cannannore in alliance with the Maratha followers of Angria, organised an expedition\(^{(4)}\) to Canara coast, and amongst other places, they plundered Manjeshwar and started expedition further north, which is said to have marched eighteen leagues island and secured a booty of 40,00,000 pagodas from the Kollur temple. It was at the time of Veerammaji that the power of the rulers of Bedinur\(^{(1)}\) came to its end.

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1. Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 56.
3. Munro's letter to William Petrie, Dated 16th June 1800, Selection from the records of the collector of South Canara (Mangalore, 1879), p. 8.
Haider Ali, taking advantage of the internal feud’s Bedinur, annexed its territory in 1763.

The Keladi rulers continued the Vijayanagara system of administration. The two provinces, Mangalore and Barkur existed during the Vijayanagara period continued. The provinces were administered by governors. There were two kinds\(^2\) of governors in Bedinur one was directly appointed by the king and he was responsible to the king and the other was the chief of feudatory states. The governor of Mangalore also acted as the governor of Keladi army in his province.

The trade relations existed between the Arabian countries and also with the Portuguese during the Vijayanagara period continued in the Keladi rule. The British also started their commercial activities with South Canara during this period.

Land revenue continued to be the main source of income of the state. Apart from the land revenue state received revenue from customs duty, professional tax, sales tax, commercial tax, judicial fines, property tax and revenue from religious institutions.

About 1673 the English traveller Eryer\(^3\) visited the coast of Canara and was struck with the number of Christian converts, while those who had not been converted were marvelously conversant with the devil, alluding apparently to demon or Bhuta worship. He also noted that the people of Canara had good laws and obeyed them and travelled

without guides along broad roads not along by-paths, as in Malabar.

Captain Hamilton(1), who visited Canara in 1718, mentions that the Dutch had by that time established a factory at Barcelore (Basarur) and that Portuguese used to send rice from that place to Muscat and bring back horses dates and pearls.

South Canara Under Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan

Mysore ruler, Haider Ali captured Bedinur in 1763 from the Nayakas of Keladi(2) and annexed it with the Mysore state. He sacked the city and renamed as Haidarnagar. Haider Ali occupied Basavaraja Durga, Honnavour and Mangalore and also Ballalarajaya Durga when the Bedinur queen had taken shelter. While regarding the importance of the Mangalore as a naval state, he established dockyard and an arsenal there and promptly commenced through the civil officers of the former government, an administration which, lasted both under Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan.

The struggle for power resulted four successive wars called Mysore wars between the British and the Mysore rulers. The first Mysore war broke(3) out in 1766 and in February 1768 Mangalore was taken by the English expedition from Bombay and on receipt of the news, Tipu made a lightning attack on the port to drive the English away. He was immediately followed by Haider Ali in person. The English army was

2. N. Shyam Bhat, South Kanara, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 32.
completely routed. Tipu had already taken Mangalore before the arrival of his father at there. The English left\(^{(1)}\) the port and sailed away abandoning 80 European sick, 180 Sepoys and all the guns they had. Mangalore had thus been retaken within a week of capture by the English. The English was ready to make peace with Haider. The Portuguese who had joined with the English hoping that the English would become master in the war and they would gain certain trade and commercial concessions. But the Portuguese was greatly disappointed.

A treaty\(^{(2)}\) was signed in September 1770 between Haider and the English. It provided for the supply of rice to Bombay from Mangalore and other ports. The following year Haider Ali concluded a treaty with the Portuguese also. In 1776 Haider Ali revoked all the privileges and ejected the Portuguese from their factory at Mangalore and ordered a navy of considerable size to be built and kept at the mouth of the river. After taking Mangalore from the English, in 1768 Haider Ali moved above the ghats by the Subramanya pass. At this time, he ceded the Raja of Coorg and Panja and Bellare maganes in the Puttur taluk. Thus the end of the first Mysore war saw Haider Ali as the complete master of South Canara region.

The second Mysore war\(^{(3)}\) began in 1781. Haider Ali died in December 1782 in a camp near Chittur, in the course of the war. He

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was succeeded by Tipu and he continued the war. General Mathews landed(1) at Coondapur with a force from Bombay, which achieved a remarkable and unexpected success. He was succeeded in capturing the Hosangadi Fort. General Mathews then advanced and entered Bedinur. On the 27th January, the gates having been thrown open by the governor who had been a favorite of the late Haider Ali, but had learnt that Tipu had determined to degrade him. The English general was however forced to capture on the arrival of Tipu with a large army.

Before the surrender of Bedinur, Tipu had despatched a force to appear before Mangalore. But it was attacked and defeated about twelve miles away from Mangalore. On receipt of this news of reverse, Tipu moved in person with a large army(2) Mangalore which was held by Colonel Campbell with a force of 700 Europeans and 2000 Sepoys. After a preliminary engagement at an out post on the twenty third may in which four officers and ten Europeans and 200 Sepoys were lost, Campbell withdraw all outposts and made arrangements to stand a regular seize.

Tipu soon perceived that either surrender or speedy capture by assault was not to be thought of and sent off his cavalry as the monsoon was approaching, but they were over taken by a storm and half of the horses were lost. After wards, Tipu made three regular assaults(3), but all of them entered in failure. Except in the extreme south

2. Ibid., p. 77.
3. Ibid., p. 77.
completed the suppression of the old chiefs which had began under the Bedinur rules and dispossessed them of all but their private lands. The Kumbala Raja\(^1\) was driven from his country and when he returned soon afterwards, he was taken and hanged. His younger brother was also hanged. A nephew of his was also put to death in 1794. The Hegade of Vittala had already fled to Tellichery some time before. Two of the princes of Nileshwar were hanged in 1787 by the commandant of Bakel, but their successor, who came to terms, was spared and he was in possession of his territory when Canara was annexed by the British.

The third Mysore war\(^2\) ended with the treaty of Srirangapattana on 18th March 1792. Tipu was forced to cede one half of his kingdom to the British. The uneven character of the enhanced land revenue and the oppression by the Mysore rulers the Rajas of Kumbala, Vittal and Nileshwar had given support to the British in the Mysore war. The diplomacy of Wellesley prevented Tipu Sultan from getting any foreign military aid or support of native rulers.

As soon as the last Mysore war broke out in 1799, the Kumbala Raja and the Vittal Hegade both returned to Canara, but the former at any rate acted more like a leader of banditti than any thing else, and the Raja of Coorg took opportunity of raiding in the direction of Jamalabad and Bantwal, and into the territories of the Raja of Kumbala, who was an old enemy of the Coorgs. On the downfall of Tipu, the

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English in order to reward the Raja of Coorg for the services rendered by him during the wars against Mysore, returned to him the Maganes of Amara, Sullaya, Panja and Bellare, which had been seized by Haider Ali in 1775.

On 4th May 1799 both Tipu and Srirangapattana fell. After the fall, the political supremacy over the west coast passed into the hands of the English. Sir Thomas Munro was appointed the first Collector of Canara in June 1799. From 1st February 1800 he was placed under the control of the Madras Board of Revenue.

The British and Canara

Under the British rule, both South and North Canara’s formed one district in the Madras Presidency from 1799 to 1860. They were bifurcated in 1860 and continued in to two separate districts as South Canara and North Canara Districts. In 1862 north Canara (excluding the Coondapur taluk) was transferred to the Bombay presidency while South Canara was retained in the Madras Presidency itself.

In accordance with the Town Improvement Act 1865, the internal administration of the towns was entrusted to municipalities. Under the provisions of this act, the Mangalore Municipality was constituted in 1866. South Canara got its first District Board in 1884, while Coondapur, Uppinangadi, Mangalore and Kasaragod taluks were given Taluk Boards.

MAP - 2: SOUTH CANARA IN 1956
(Before the formation of the lingustic states)
In 1896 there were only five taluks in South Canara District, namely Mangalore (Inclusive of the Admindivi Islands) Coondapuir, Udipi, Kasaragod and Uppinagadi. A new taluk called Karkal was formed with effect from first July 1912. In 1927 the taluk of Uppinangadi was renamed as Puttur. For the purpose of revenue administration, the district was divided into three charges(1) or divisions namely Coondapuir, Mangalore and Puttur.

In 1954, another taluk, namely Belthangadi was constituted for administrative convenience. But on first of November, 1956, the taluk of Kasaragod which was part of South Canara District was transferred to Kerala state due to the formation of linguistic states. Here after South Canara District began to be known as Dakshina Kannada District, and became a part of the Karnataka State. Apart from the transfer of Kasaragod taluk to the Kerala, the Amindivi islands(2), which formed a part of the district, were also transferred to the newly formed union territory of Laccadive, Minicoy and Aminidivi Islands.

Aliyasantana Law of Inheritance

A form of inheritance known as Aliyasantana or Aliyakuttu or Matriarchal law of inheritance existed in this district. According to this custom, the property vests in the females of a family and descends from mother to daughter. But, usually under which, the property descends from maternal uncle to nephew or sister’s son(3).Thus the

right of inheritance of the sister’s son to the property managed by mother’s brother namely Aliya-kuttu or Aliyasantana.

This system was supposed to have originated in the polyandrous habits of the primitive people, in which all landed property was vested in the women. When Vijayanagara rule was established in South Canara, a number of local ruling families, mostly Jaina families generally followed the Aliyasantana system of inheritance. Gradually, the system came to be adopted by a good section of the area and the wide prevalence of this system was attributed only to the 14th century.

The prevalence of this matrilineal system of succession in parts of the neighbouring Kerala state influenced the adoption of the Aliyasantana system by the rulers and people of South Canara. The system of inheritance was followed by all the old Tulu-land owning, cultivating and labour classes as well as the Mappilas, the descendants of early Arab settlers who formed connections with the Tulu women of the land-owning classes and adopted the then prevailing rule of inheritance. Among the Brahmin community and also in some non-Brahmin communities ‘makkalakattu’ or Marumakkattayam was prevalent. But majority of the non-Brahmins had been followed the Aliyasantana law.

The Madras Aliyanasantana Act, 1949, had defined the Aliyasantana

system in which descent was traced in the female line, but does not include the system of inheritance known as the Marumakkattayam\(^1\). The Aliyasantana custom differ from the Marumakkattayam law of Kerala in that\(^2\)

*a male is the head or the Yajaman in the Aliyasantana system, where as the women is the principal figure in whom the property is vested under the Marumakkattayam law. According the latter law, the eldest woman becomes the head of the family. In the Aliyakattu law, the eldest brother of the women becomes the head of the family and the property is inherited by his sister's son. If the eldest in the family is a woman, then the next male member becomes the head. Even though Aliyasantana law postulates inheritance through the female line, the principle figure, who is the heir, is always the sister's son. It is said that the Aliyasantana law is older than the Marumakkattayam system.*

According to the customary Aliyasantana law which existed formerly, there was no right for partition except by common consent of adult members and even then, a male member had only a life interest in the property. This custom, no doubt prevented the division of landed property and this gave rise to the pattern of large joint families among the many land owning families in the district. In principle, the Aliyasantana system vested the property rights in females, of a family descending from mother to daughter and in practice, the nephews succeeded their maternal uncles. The eldest member of the eldest

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2. Karnataka State Gazetteer; South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 114.
branch, whether male or female, is the 'Yajaman', Yajaman means(1) the oldest member, male or female of a 'kutumba' or 'kavaru'.

The Madras Aliyasantana Act,(Madras Act of 1949) had defined and amended in certain respects the laws relating to marriage, maintenance, guardianship, intestate succession, family management and partition applicable to persons governed by the Aliyasantana law of inheritance(2).

According to the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 (a Central Act) a division of the joint property has to be the per capita between all the members of the kutumba or kavaru. 'Kutumba' means(3) the group of persons forming a joint family with community of property governed by the Aliyasantana Law of inheritance. 'Kavaru' used in relation to a female, means the group of persons consisting of that female, her children and all her descendants in the female line(4). The Madras Aliyasantana (Mysore Amendment Act), 1961 (Mysore Act No. 1 of 1962), made some changes in the provisions in regard to partition of properties and also provided that any male or female member of a kutumba or kavaru having undivided interest in its properties should be entitled to claim partition of his or her share and the claimant should be allowed to share that would fall to him or her. If a division of properties were made for per capita among all the members of the kutumba or kavaru.

2. Ibid, p.3.
3. Ibid, p. 4.
The study of nationalism and peasant movements in South Canara District seeks to analyse the various aspects of the local history with in the broader national level. Even though the colonial policy of the British administration was same all over India, the regional differences resulted in certain peculiarities. For example, in South Canara, there existed a high land revenue assessment, comparing with all other districts of the Madras Presidency. Even though the British officials criticised the excessive land revenue assessment imposed during the Mysore rulers, the assessment continued during the British period also. Thus, the high extraction of land revenue and the existence of the intermediaries backed by the British officials had impoverished the peasants.

Sir Thomas Munro, the first Collector of Canara introduced Ryotwari system, but the real ryots did not come to the account. The ideal ryot of Munro was nothing but land monopolists or zamindars. The oppression of the peasants by the landlords, moneylenders and the government was the feature of the agrarian structure during the colonial period in the area, which ultimately resulted in the organisation of the peasantry and also the resistance movement against the landlordism on one hand and colonialism on the other.