CHAPTER 2

BRITISH RULE AND IMPOVERISHMENT OF THE PEASANTRY

From time immemorial agriculture has been the main occupation of the majority of people in India. In recent times, problems relating to various aspects of agrarian studies like "agrarian structure" and "agrarian relations" have acquired great significance attracting the attention of many scholars. Agrarian structure is an institutional frame work of agricultural production which includes land tenure system, distribution of ownership imposed on the peasant by the landlords and the government.

Tenancy which generally implies relationship between landlords and tenants was a part of the agrarian system. The study of agrarian structure would lead to the study of agrarian or the peasant class. Tenant was the actual tiller, who had so many parties to satisfy besides the state. The tenant had to bear the full cost of the cultivation and the landlords were generally confined to extract rent regularly. Land tenure refers to the condition under which
various classes and institutions held land\(^{(1)}\).

In South Canara District the formation of the various agrarian classes and inter-relation could be seen in a historical perspective as evolved by the pre-British period and the British Land Revenue administration. Land being the center of rural relationship, the mode of acquisition of land by purchase, or as gift or on lease etc. determined in the past the forms of control and utilisation of land. More over the policies and methods adopted by the rulers in collecting rather extracting the land revenue had significant impact up on the peasants among whom the possessed land was alienated from their holdings either by abandonment or mortgage or sale. This resulted in the formation of various agrarian classes\(^{(2)}\) in which rich landlords were at the top and insecure tenants and labourers at the bottom of the structure of the land relations.

The South Canara District was characterised by the presence of strongly developed landed property\(^{(3)}\) even prior to the 12\(^{th}\) century A.D. There existed military tenure, some what similar to the feudal system of Europe. The castes such Bunts were considered as the martial castes did not pay any land tax and instead they fought for the kings on the war fields. The Brahmins were exempted\(^{(4)}\) from payment of any land tax as they looked after the maintenance of the temples. Donations of land in the form of the ‘inam’ to

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temples were known as ‘Devadaya’ and those to Brahmins as ‘Brahmadaya’.

Further, rulers donated(1) the land to the monasteries, Jain Basadis, to some relatives of royal families, to military men of exceptional bravery and so on. However the inams to upper castes created a class of absentee landlords. They extracted rent and free services without any investment. The cultivating peasants in such inam lands were suddenly converted into tenants. The landed intermediaries dominated(2) the whole social existence of the agricultural classes and gradually the peasant cultivators were reduced to serfdom.

One of the dominant features of the land system in the medieval Karnataka was the common practice(3) of granting land or a portion of revenue from land, instead of money, military, social, economic and religious services rendered to the state by individuals and institutions in various capacities. This culminated in the feudal exploitation of land and in this process of feudalism the land system played a prominent role.

During the early historical period there existed slavery(4) in Canara and the greater part of the labourers were slaves. Thus land became gradually the subject of distinct properties, the labourer was the personal slave of the occupier of the soil. The slave was liable to be sold and mortgaged independently. Buchanan(5) reports that even the selling and mortgaging of slaves were a common practice that existed among the landlords, in Canara.

In South Canara District the Brahmans and Bunts claimed for themselves

the right on property in soil\(^{(1)}\). They subjugated the native population who enjoyed the right on land by reclaiming in to bondage first and serfdom later. They declared themselves as the "lords of the soil". Thus the humble cultivators were eventually reduced to the status of tenants. The actual cultivators had to pay rent in kind and were forced to perform unpaid labour for the intermediaries.

Caste superiority was at its acme in the agrarian relationship. It is possible to behold, three distinct\(^{(2)}\) interpretations from the available literature on the history of Kerala and Karnataka land tenure. They are the caste based, Brahmin centered and the upper caste dominated land system existed in the pre-British period in South Canara.

Let us examine the nature of the land tenure system during the pre-British period.

**LAND TENURE SYSTEM DURING THE ALUPAS RULE IN SOUTH CANARA**

The inscriptions\(^{(3)}\) of the medieval and later Alupas furnish more information on the economic conditions which prevailed during their times. Land revenue was the main source of income for the state. It was during this period that the word "balu"\(^{(4)}\) came to be used as a synonym for landed property. Land was owned by the ruler as well as the citizens. Land was measured generally in terms of seeds required to sow the field. It was popularly known as the 'bijawari\(^{(5)}\) mode of computation' (Bija means seed). Mudi or mude,

kanduga, mana, hane, kuduti were certain units of measuring grains and liquids. Though coinage did exist, the government received tax in kind. Land owners and cultivators paid part of their products in to the royal treasury as tax. The quantum of this levy\(^{(1)}\) is no where specified in the available records.

**LAND TENURE SYSTEM DURING THE VIJAYANAGARA RULE IN SOUTH CANARA**

The Vijayanagara rulers and their successors in Karnataka created a class of intermediaries in the form of land grants or assessment. They extracted\(^{(2)}\) the surplus produce from the peasant leaving them on a mere subsistence level. All over South Canara the royal revenue was collected by imperial officers (adhikaris) with the help of local guttedar or monopolist. Without this process of exploitation of the surplus production of the peasants, the glorious or luxurious life could not be possible for the upper class.

Brahamadaya Tenure, (lands held by Brahmins) Devadaya Tenure, (lands held by temples) Mathapura Tenure (lands held by Matts) and Service Tenure (lands granted in return for military service, village officers and for improving and extending agriculture) were the major tenures which existed\(^{(3)}\) during the Vijayanagara period. Lands of Brahmins, Temples and Matt's, were lightly taxed or exempted. The Vijayanagara rulers fixed the assessment by assuming the output to be 1:12 of the seed sown. Early traditions assign the one

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3. Ibid, p. 22-34.
sixth\(^{(1)}\) of the gross produce as the share claimed by Government up to 1252 A.D. After this the local prince added about ten per cent. Revenue was paid either in money or in kind.

This arrangement continued till 1336, the early period of the Vijayanagara dynasty. Harihar Ray's minister\(^{(2)}\) published a manual for the use of the officers of the state, in which the assessment of the land and the conversion of the grain revenue in to money were elaborately dealt with. The assessment took the Sastra rate\(^{(3)}\) of the one sixth of the gross production as the government share. The landlord received one fourth, the cultivator received one half and the rest had gone to the temple and to the Brahmins.

Leasing out land was a common system during this period. The system of leasing\(^{(4)}\) the tenants, Geni, Guttige, siddhaya and varna were common in South Canara. In addition to tenants, there were agricultural labourers in the period under review. They were grouped in to two i.e., hired labourers and serfs. The custom of hiring labourers for agricultural operations was very old in Karnataka. Huleyalus or simply holeyasa were the agriestic serfs of Karnataka. The South Canara serfs were known as\(^{(5)}\) muladalu or bought men or slaves who primarily served in the agricultural operations.

During the Vijayanagara period the land revenue arrangements\(^{(6)}\) consisted of two stages - assessment and actual collection. The first principle of

2. Ibid, p. 95, See also Letter Relating To The Early Revenue Administration Of Canara, Letter From Sir Thomas Munro To W. Petrie, Letter No 1846, Dated 31st May, 1800, para. 7, 8.
5. Ibid, p. 53-54.
any organised system of land revenue assessment demands that the sum payable by the cultivator should be determined mainly by the class of soil and condition of cultivation. This principle was followed during the Vijayanagar period. Four modes of cultivations were taken into account for assessment, they were Kadarama (Dry cultivation), Niraramba (wet cultivation), Totaramba (garden cultivation) and Kumari (Shifting cultivation). Any how it is believed that the land reserve assessment during the Vijayanagara period was moderate.

**LAND REVENUE SYSTEM DURING THE KELADI RULE IN SOUTH CANARA**

These rulers never recognized the proprietorship of the soil as a right vested in the land holders but levied land revenue from the subjects as rent and not as revenue\(^1\).

The revenue collected from the region of South Canara throughout the Vijayanagara a rule remained unaltered till 1618. In that year the Keladi or Bedinur Government levied an extra assessment\(^2\) equal to fifty percent of the ancient land rent except in Mangalore Hobli. Between 1618 and 1660 a special assessment was also imposed on coconut and fruit trees. In the vast stretch of land possessed by the poligars, the Bedinur additions were not so heavy. The Keladi rulers made proper deductions\(^3\) in the assessment owing to unforeseen reasons and thus hindered them from paying full amount of the demand. The rates of revenue were fixed in two ways, i.e. on the fertility of land (sowing capacity or bijawari) and on the basis of the number of ploughs.

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1. Report Of The Malabar Tenancy Committee, 1940, Madras, Chapter 11.
required for cultivation.

There were three kinds\(^{(1)}\) of assessments during the time of Keladi rulers; 1. Rekha assessment or standard rent, 2. Bijawari or seed assessment and 3. Shist assessment.

The condition of the tenant was worsened and he was left merely with 25 per cent of the total produce. By 1678 more than one third of the present districts of South Canara was held by local chieftains, but they were subjected to pay only a portion of the enhanced revenue and the rent was levied from the people.

The Vijayanagara and Keladi rulers discarded the traditional principle of land revenue, ie; one sixth of the gross produce as the share claimed by the Government. They followed a theory of differential taxation which imposed more tax on wet land than dry land, for raising more revenue to the government.

**LAND TENURE SYSTEM DURING THE MYSORE RULE IN SOUTH CANARA**

Haider Ali of Mysore conquered Canara in A.D. 1763. He ordered an investigation to be made in to every source of revenue\(^{(2)}\). He readily imposed a variety of oppressive extra assessments on the formerly deducted waste and uncultivated lands.

Haider Ali imposed\(^{(3)}\) an additional land revenue equivalent to fifty percent of its assessment fixed in A.D. 1618 by the Bedinur government which raised the state collection from 3,20,827 pagodas to 5,33,202 pagodas.

2. *The proceedings of the Board of Revenue, Dated 19\(^{th}\) September, 1831. para. 7.
3. *Ibid, para, 7-8.*
huge amount of money spent on wars drained the treasury of Mysore. They could realise more revenue for the state only by increasing land revenue. Between 1779-1782\(^1\) a number of other additions were made, so that when Haider died in 1782, the extra assessment or shamil amounted to more than the Shist or standard assessment.

Haider’s son Tipu sultan came to power in A.D 1787. He continued the excessive impositions of the land revenue which further worsened the situation. Tipu abolished\(^2\) inam land, inorder to raise additional land taxes and ordered the ryots to cultivate the lands of those who deserted it. Besides, the granting of Jaghirs\(^3\) was introduced by Tipu Sultan at the beginning of 1798.

The excessive tax imposed by Tipu Sultan hastened the process of extinction of the age old class of peasant proprietors or inam holders or landlords, most of whom were reduced to the status of labourers. The enhancement of taxation during the Mysore Government resulted in the impoverishment of the agrarian structure.

The chieftains of this area, eg. Rajas of Nileshwar, Kumbala and Vittal rebelled against the Mysore Sultans and supported the British because of this excessive land revenue. The Mysore rulers did not follow a uniform policy of revenue administration throughout their kingdom. In this aspect of revenue administration South Canara and Malabar were almost treated\(^4\) like “internal colonies”. In this region the land revenue extraction was too much. It ended in the failure of the cultivators paying the revenue and outstanding balances

became frequent.

In order to attain more revenue, the Mysore rulers introduced the assessment which was on the basis of elimination of intermediary, without the survey of land and fixity of government share on the basis of actual produce. Before the end of Tipu’s reign, there was a total depression in agriculture sector. This was mainly because of the excessive assessment and numerous vast stretches of land were left unoccupied owing to the fight or death of cultivators in South Canara. So the revenue collections fell short from 10 percent to 60 percent of the assessment. The Mysore rulers actually received the traditional land revenue system prevailed in Canara despite their enhancement in the land revenue. Thus the Mysore rulers ruined the traditional land revenue system prevailed in Canara during the later half of the 18th century.

LAND TENURE SYSTEM DURING THE BRITISH PERIOD

The East India Company annexed South Canara to the Madras Presidency in 1799. As it was a direct conquest by the company from Tipu, its Government also practiced the system of their predecessors and collected rent instead of tax.

A fairly satisfactory account of land tenancy system in the area was estimated by the Bombay High Court in 1875, in its judgment delivered in Vaikunta Bapujis Vs Government of Bombay.

After becoming the first Collector of Canara, Sir. Thomas Munro found

3. The Bombay High Court Report, Vol. XII, 1875, p. 52, 132, 153, 156, 159.
a very widely established system of private property in land. Without any alteration Munro accepted the existing institution as he found. Munro's policy was not to supersede the existing system by a new one, but to restore and strengthen it.

**RYOTWARI SYSTEM**

In Canara almost all land was private property, acquired either as gift or purchase or descent from an antiquity too remote to be traced. There were more title deeds and the validity of these deeds could not be established without annihilating all the rights of the present landlords. Munro opposed the introduction of zamindari system or the permanent system of land revenue, mainly on the ground that it would disturb the existing system of private property. He opined that dividing Canara in to great estates, would only be an attempt to carry it backward a century or two and to force from that state to which it must again inevitably return. The land revenue system which Sir Thomas Munro recommended was in its leading principles Ryotwari in character.

The system which was most prevalent on many parts of the Madras Presidency from time immemorial was known as amani'. The word is also usually applied to lands in the immediate possession and management of revenue office. It denotes the collection of revenue direct by government through its village servants without any intervention of village farmers or zamindars, either by taking a share of the produce or by collection of money rents. The ryotwari system is really amani system.

2. Ibid, p. 84.
The word ryot is a corruption of the Arabic word\(^1\) 'Rayot' which signifies literally 'pasture' or a herd of a cattle and was introduced into India after the Muhamedan conquest.

A ryotwari settlement means the division of all arid lands\(^2\) whether cultivated or wasted in to blocks or lots, the assessment of each block at a fixed rate for a term of years and the extraction of revenue from each occupant according to the area of land thus assessed which he occupies. The occupant holds under an annual lease from the government and enjoys all the advantages of absolute proprietorship, subject to payment of the revenue due on the lands he holds during the year.

Under ryotwari system each occupant dealt directly with the government and was responsible for his own revenue assessment only. A ryotwari settlement was thus a settlement\(^3\) with the peasantry, as tenants of the state enjoying a tenant right, which could be inherited, sold or burdened for debt in presiding the same manner as a proprietary right, subject always to payment of the revenue, that is to say that rent due to the state.

According to theory there was no intermediary or middleman in the ryotwari tenure. The government directly deals\(^4\) with individual who was assuming to be acting his own accounts. This individual was usually supposed to be a very small holder but in practice this was not true. The large land holders having thousands of acres of land were also included in the category.

The ryot who acquired the possession was permitted to remain in the

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4. Ibid, p. 121.
possession as long as he pays the rent to the government. Even when he becomes a defaulter, the government sells such portion of his land as is sufficient to cover the amount due.

Munro’s conception of the ryots is debatable. In ryotwari settlement the peasants or tenants were called as ryots. But in practice, the land monopolists or zamindars who possessed thousands of acres of land was the ideal ryot of Munro. The cultivating ryot or the real ryot did not come in to account. That means the term ryot certainly did not include agricultural labourers.

A scholar, after studying the land ownership and agrarian system in the Kasaragod Taluk during the period in question says,

Though scholars like R.C. Dutt had analysed Munro’s ryotwari system as a settlement with the ryot or cultivating peasant in his capacity as proprietor in practice the ideal ryot of Munro was, nothing but a land monopolist or zamindar who possessed thousands of acres of land and remained an absentee landlord.

The main object of the company was to make efficient exploitation of the economic surplus by systematising the pre-colonial agrarian relations in South Canara. The company mainly aimed to attain the support of the landlord class for establishing an efficient administrative system and colonial exploitation.

1. POLI, A Commemorative Value For Canara, (ed), Published By District Commissioner, D K District, Mangalore, p. 53.
At the end of the eighteenth century the agrarian situation in South Canara was a curious blend(1) of peasant propriety system and a system of sub-infeudation with landlords, sub-tenants and bonded labour representing different layers of interest on land, looked in ties of mutual interdependence.

NATURE OF THE LAND TENURE SYSTEM

As far the particulars gathered from traditions and accounts, it appears that in the 14th century at the time when the Rekha(2) or Bijnuggor standard was paid, the whole of the lands in South Canara were parcelled out among the large number of lands paying an annual rent or revenue in various gradations from five to five thousand pagodas. The greatest estates, however, were not common and the average being fifty pagodas.

Private property and hereditary proprietary right over the soil were the characteristic features of land ownership in South Canara. Munro and his successors were impressed with the system of property right that prevailed in this region.

In the early times, the total assessment paid to government by an individual in a village is called 'warg', hence it arose that in course of time people called this land as(3) warg. In other districts such land was called a 'khata'. The warg and khata both mean the same thing, an entry in village accounts was called a khata and hence the term originated as warg.

The estates are known as wargs. The word warg was derived from

Sanskrit(1) 'varga' a leaf having originally been used for the leaf accounts kept by the revenue authorities. The estates so framed went by the name 'warg'. In the course of time it turned out to denote, the holding for which the accounts are kept. A warg is often composed of unconnected parts(2) in different villages and sometimes even in different districts. Though the theoretical basis of assessment was a scheme of the produce in each field, the assessment was never fixed on particular fields or portions of a warg, but was a lump assessment for the whole warg.

A wargadar was a proprietor of a hereditary warg or estate. In that capacity he sometimes represents the whole village or more, collecting and paying the assessment as a whole. A warg or warga means(3) the registered holding and wargadar means a registered holder. The holder enjoys a proprietary right in his warg, subject only to payment of assessment to government and was not divested of the property except by sale of his land for default in the payment of revenue or in execution of decrees of court or by his own acts of resignation or private gift, sale etc. He enjoys the liberty to convert dry land into wet, to grow any crops he chooses and to effect improvements to the land without liability for the enhancement of assessment.

The warg or estates, were of two kinds. Muli warg and Geni warg or Sirkar Geni - warg. The 'Muli' tenure was the characteristic tenure of Canara and the position of the mulawargadar was the proprietor of the ancestral hereditary estate. The man in whose name has stood(4) in the village accounts

from ancient times was called a 'muldar' or 'muli wargadar'. 'Mula' was derived from the Sanskrit 'Mul' signifying literally a root and figuratively, inter alia, the root of a tree or origin of a family. Private property had been known as mulawarga and its owner mulawargadar.

Apart from private property there was also land owned by government Geni or Sirkar Geni wargs or estates. They were escheated to government by lapse of heirs or by abandonment by proprietors. In a large number of cases these lands were cultivated by tenant or genigars, who were either by old tenants or new occupiers put in by government. They paid their rent directly to Sirkar and hence the name Sirkar-geni. Numerous abandonment of lands were occurred during the invasion of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan. However, there was no essential differences between sirkar-ganiwargdar and mula-wargdar.

Wargs were also classified\(^1\) in to Kadim and hosagame wargs. The former suggesting that they were formed before the commencement of the company's government. Hosagame means newly reclaimed lands and the tenure of hosagame wargadar was exactly the same as that of Kadim wargadar except that the privileges and easements over jungle\(^2\) and pasture land attached to mulawarg had not been extended to hosagame wargs. The Tenure of a hosagame was exactly the same as that of a mulawargadar.

Sometimes, even after the wargadar had sold away a portion of the warg, the patta for the whole warg stands in his name and the purchaser, instead of paying his share of the revenue direct to government pays it to the

\(^1\) Vijay Kumar Thakur and Ashok Aoushman (ed), Peasants In Indian History, (Patna, 1996), p. 384.
\(^2\) Ibid, p. 384.
wargadar who there up on pays the full assessment to government and such
an owner was called walawargadar. When however, a sum was fixed on the
deed as the proportionate revenue on the portion sold and the purchaser
pays it direct to the government that was known as kudutaledar. A kudutaledar
in South Canara was in exactly the same position as a pattadar or joint pattadar
in Malabar.

Still other types of land which came to be assessed were known as
kumari and kumaki. Kumari was a method of cultivation by filling and burning
a patch of forest and raising on the ground, manured with ashes, a crop of
rice or dry grain mixed with cotton, caster oil, seeds etc. There were two
types of kumaris. Warg kumari where assessment was collected in total and
kumari cultivators were dealt only with the wargadar and Sirkar kumari, where
the assessment was paid directly to the government and the cultivators were
usually a migratory class.

Kumari cultivation was cultivation of land outside a warg by filling
and burning a patch of the forest and the ashes were used as manure. After
one or two crops are raised, the plot is abandoned and a fresh patch is
resorted to and treated in the same way for getting a more fertile area.
Kumari cultivation gives no proprietary right in the forest in which it was
carried or even over the spots which had been actually cultivated.

The government had control over the unoccupied and waste lands.

The wasteland was of two kinds (a) those which had once been cultivated

but had fallen out of cultivation and (b) the land which had never been cultivated. The first category\(^1\) of lands were owned by the wargadar and the second by the government.

Apart from the private lands owned by individuals and government property, there were lands owned and managed\(^2\) by religious institutions, like temples and matts. They managed the cultivation and paid revenue to the government. The religious institutions have been one of the land controlling units in the village and very often we could notice their involvement in the land transactions.

The High Court of Bombay said\(^3\) the Mulgar (Mulawargadar) of Canara enjoys a hereditary and transferable property in the soil and cannot be ousted so long as he pays the revenue assessed on land. Mulawarga and Mulawargadar of South Canara may be compared with Janmam tenure and Janmis of Malabar respectively.

**TYPES OF TENANCY**

For the purpose of cultivation, lands held either by the private landlords or by religious institutions were leased on certain particular terms and conditions.

Two commonly found classes of tenants under the wargadars in the South Canara District were the mulageni (or permanent tenants) and the chalageni (or tenants-at-will). Apart from these leases, there were other forms of tenancies prevalent ie, vaidigeni, private mortgages or Arwars and Fasalugenii or Phalageni.

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2. Ibid, p. 85.
MULAGENI

This was a kind of permanent and hereditary tenancy. It was a permanent lease. A mulagenidar could not be evicted except on non payment of rent and that too, only after being fully compensated for the permanent improvement made by him. The mulagenidar had all the liberties to mortgage or lease and bequeath his land at his interest subject to rent payment.

In the proceedings of the Board of Revenue dated 5th January 1818 says that, this class of people (mulagenidar) may, therefore, be considered subordinate land lords, especially as, though many of them cultivated their land by hired labourers or slaves, others sub-rented them to chalagenidar or temporary tenants.

Thus the mulageni tenancy was one which was a permanent deed, and the rent was fixed. The mulagar or landlord never had the right to enhance the rent of his mulagenigar. Therefore rent was high in ryotwari settlement. Mulgeni was known as Kayamgeni (Kayam means permanent) and nigdigeni (nidi means fixed). When the revenue payable to government on lands held by mulageni was increased, such increase was to be paid by the mulgar and not by the mulagenigar.

In short, a mulageni can be defined as a tenancy in perpetually at a fixed or invariable rent created in favour of a person called mulagenidar. Mulageni lands guaranteed a steady income to the landlords as well as to their heirs. The system had provided protection to the tenants as long as they paid rent without fail.

The Chalageni tenants though nominally mere tenants-at-will(1), used often to so on holding their lands from father to son at a rent paid on kind or money or both and determined by the custom of the country without any written agreement between the landlord and the chalagenigars.

'Chal' means move unfixed or not permanent. Thus chalageni means temporary lease. The chalagenigar was entitled to compensation(2) for everlasting improvements made by him before he was evicted. The chalageni tenure had been regarded as an inferior form(3) of tenancy entailing a relatively weak position. The landlord had a right to raise the rent or evict the tenant on the expiry of the term. They were entirely at the mercy of landlords. Indebtedness was common among these tenants. They had to supply free labour to cultivate the landlord's farms. It was only when the rent recovery act of 1865(4) in Madras Presidency made it necessary to produce documentary evidence. But in practice the landlords were not willing to issue the receipt for the rent. When the Raitha Sanghas formed in the 1940's, their important demand was the issue of the receipt for the rent.

Though tenants could be evicted at anytime in practice, however, the tenants were seldom ousted unless they were piled up arrears. The condition of the chalangeni tenants all over the district was getting from bad to worse throughout the 19th century. Indebtedness was common among the tenants. More than three forth of them lived in conditions similar to those of agricultural(5) labourers.

2. Ibid, p. 131.
VAIDEGENI

Vaidegeni was a term lease that ceased automatically after the expiry of specified term, unless removed on tenant’s request or at pleasure of the landlord. This system also facilitated a progressive enhancement of rent at which renewal but then, in contrast to the chalageni which was year to year lease, vaidegeni was usually\(^1\) held for a longer duration often ranging from three to ten years liable to be renewed at the end of each term.

This was especially common while leasing out the lands remarked for coconut plantation\(^2\) and was called 'nadagi' in the northern part of the district and 'kuikanami' in the south.

PRIVATE MORTGAGES OR ARWARS

Mortgage with possession was known as 'Arvar' 'Illadarvar' or 'bhogyadi aduru'\(^3\) and simple mortgage as 'aduvu'.

Money was advanced on landed security on the condition that neither the mortgagee should hold it as a tenant of the mortgage during the term, in some cases the lands were only hypothecated. Mortgage with possession may be for a fixed or for an indefinite period, the mortgage paying the government assessment and appropriating the rent or produce as interest on the money advance. When the produce of the land mortgaged was held in the agreement to be more than sufficient for this, the surplus was either paid over to the mortgager or applied to the reduction of the mortgage debt.

FASALUGENI OR PHALAGENI

It was a tenure confined to plantation crops like arecanut and cashew. The lessees never perform any agricultural work themselves. Their responsibility was confined\(^1\) to the protection of crops and gave a fixed share to the land lord as his rent, retaining the rest as their profit. The landlord was not supposed even to enter the garden area during the crop season once the fasalugeni contract was entered into. The rent was mutually decided between the landlord and the leases themselves. The lessees were entitled to only the fruits of the plantation for a limited period in the year usually four months and had no right over land.

LAND REVENUE ASSESSMENT

The main object of the company in the introduction of the new revenue settlement was to make efficient exploitation of the economic surplus by systematising the pre-colonial agrarian relations in South Canara. The company aimed at attaining the support of the landlord class for establishing an efficient administrative system which was favourable for colonial exploitation.

Actually the basis of ryotwari system was the division of the whole area into fields by survey, each field being valued at a fixed rate per acre and the assessment was settled there upon. But on the western coast the ryotwari settlement had been introduced even before conducting the settlement survey. In Canara, lands of different kinds of unknown extents and lying often in different villages constitute a holding, termed a warg and the assessment was fixed in lump sum there on. For making convenience\(^2\) in the land-revenue

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2. Ibid, p. 38.
collection, Munro decided to make settlement not on fields but on holdings (warg) without any alteration in their size.

In forming the first settlement after the British acquisition of Canara, Munro stated that\(^1\) he considered himself merely as a Collector, whose duty was to investigate and report upon the state about Canara. He did not consider\(^2\) himself at liberty to deviate widely from the system he found established. Accordingly he made no other reduction in the assessment of Tipu Sultan than such as was absolutely necessary to ensure the collection of the rest.

Munro stated that, the only reduction\(^3\) that he made for the first settlement (Fasli 1209) were by covering the land rent 2½ per cent and the export of customs on rice to two bahaudy pagodas per corge and abolishing the island duties on grain, cattle, sheep etc. Even though the reduction was made, there was an increase of about 3000 pagodas towards the land rent from the cultivation of waste. Reduction in the assessment of Tipu was absolutely necessary in order to ensure the collection of the rest.

As regard to South Canara Munro proposed that a fixed assessment of the northern portion should be the Bedinur assessment, plus 25 per cent\(^4\) of Haider's additions, while in the rest of the district it should be the Bedinur assessment, plus thirty per cent of the addition.

Still Munro had desired that caution might be observed in imposing the

1. The Proceedings Of The Board Of Revenue, Dated 15\(^{th}\) September, 1831, para 36.
new assessment on lands. He conformed to the British colonial policy in India in extracting the maximum amount of land revenue, though he had to make some reductions\(^1\) from the revenue collected formerly by Tipu Sultan. Such were the policies persuaded by Munro in the settlement of Fasli (crop or revenue year) 1209 or A.D 1799-1800. The land revenue of the whole province of Canara and Soonda for that year amounted to star pagodas\(^2\) 4,54,643 (or Rs.15,91,250.50) and that of South Canara to star Pagodas 2,70,593 (or Rs. 9,47,075). Munro's settlement of the whole province of Canara and Soonda was 20,434 (Rs. 71,519) less than that of Tipu, which amounted to star Pagodas 6,16,089 (or Rs. 21,56,311.50).

However, after six months of his experience of South Canara, Munro\(^3\) reported that the information he obtained had induced him to think that a smaller adjustment in the land revenue would suffice. Accordingly, he abandoned his recommendations of a hard and fast rule of fixing the assessment at the Bedinur Shist, plus a certain percentage of the Mysore additions. He\(^4\) stated that many other points were entitled to as much attention to the Shist which was probably extremely unequal originally and had been rendered more. The settlement\(^5\) reports and revenue records indicate a definite increase in the revenue collection both from the land and other sources of revenue.

Broadly the settlement of Munro was divided into Shist, ie old standard

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rent and Shamil, covering the extra taxes imposed by Bedinur and Mysore rules. Munro believed that the rent of land, however productive it might be, should never on any account be raised higher than it had been some earlier period.

According to Munro the Chief defect in the revenue system of Canara was the want of detailed accounts of the land revenue. The old revenue records in black books\(^{1}\) were prohibited during the Mysore government and a great part of them had been lost. Another important defect pointed out by Munro was that the district was not surveyed\(^{2}\) before the revenue settlement. If it had been surveyed, the government would not have been in the darkness, information upon every point connected with the revenue would have been always available.

Further Munro never introduced any major changes in the method of revenue assessment and collection. He made no reduction in the assessment\(^{3}\) of Tipu Sultan beyond such as was absolutely necessary to ensure the collection of the rest of the revenue. One significant change that he introduced was the collection of revenue only in cash which had made a drastic change in the traditional revenue system. It had a serious implication of introducing a wide network of money economy\(^{4}\) leading to the emergence of merchant money lenders in a basically agrarian economy.

Munro left Canara in 1800, but the revenue system introduced by him continued later also with minor changes. For about ten years the settlement

1. Letter From Munro To W. Petrie, Dated 31st May, 1800, para 5.
seemed to be realised without difficulty, but reports from AD 1810 to 1812
made references to a large number of demand for remissions from the agri-
culturists who had suffered excessive assessment. This fact was later stated
by Harris in his report in AD 1817\(^{(1)}\).

Alexander Read had expressed the difficulty he experienced in making
the settlement of 1808-09 and 1809-10. The ryots never came forward for
settlement and they refused to pay Kist (instalment of rent). The general state
of economic depression added\(^{(2)}\) to the already existing burden of the pay-
ments caused by high extraction of land revenue by the government. The
prevalence of a diminished trade hit hard the interest of the people. In reply
to the Board\(^{(3)}\) he recapitulated the substance of the instructions of Munro to
his subordinate collectors regulatory for fasli 1210. Munro had desired that
cautions might be observed in imposing any new assessment on lands that paid
the Bedinur rent and half of Haider's additions. No addition should be laid on
the ryots who paid the Bedinur and three-fourth of Haider's assessment.

Read suggested\(^{(4)}\) that the government share should be lowered and it
should be 30 percent of the gross produce. He held that it was necessary to
encourage the tenants and convert government lands in to private lands.

Harris expressed\(^{(5)}\) his belief that the ancient assessment or Shist even
did not bear with any degree of equality on the several estates. And he

\(^{(1)}\) Letters Relating To The Revenue Administration Of Canara, (Bombay Education Society
Press, 1866), p. 146.

\(^{(2)}\) N. Shyam Bhat, South Kanara, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 103.

\(^{(3)}\) Letters Relating To The Revenue Administration Of Canara, (Bombay Education Society

\(^{(4)}\) Letter From Alexander Read To The Board Of Revenue, Dated 1st January 1814, p. 1364-65.

\(^{(5)}\) Letters Relating To The Revenue Administration Of Canara, (Bombay Education Society
Press, 1866), p. 146.
explained that he had been guided in making the settlement by his estimate of the actual productive powers of each estate. But that his demand, had not been limited to the standard of the Shist and three-fourth of the Shamil as Munro had not himself adhered to it in his first settlement. Many estates assessed by him above that standard had continued ever since to pay the higher assessment.

Harris was of the opinion\(^{(1)}\) that the deplorable condition of the ryots of the district was not solely caused by over assessment. To him, it was also due to the stagnation of trade in general and the role of the money lenders in the society in particular. However he admitted the fact that while making revenue settlement, the market prices of the products were not taken in to consideration.

Reviewing this correspondence on 30\(^{th}\) October 1817 the Board remarked\(^{(2)}\) that the best standard of demand would be the average collection. A collection realised from each estate since the province had been under the British Government and directed that the settlement for Fasli 1227 should be formed on this basis. This principle was the basis of the 'Tharao' (fixed or determined) and ‘Sarasari’ (average) settlement in the district. But the land holders resented the 'Tharao' assessment.

Though the Board directed\(^{(3)}\) its introduction of Fasli 1227, it was not found possible to do so before Fasli 1227 (1819-20).

The low prices made it further difficult to release the demand of the

tharao standard. There appeared organised reaction in the form of Koots in the year 1830-31 with 'no tax campaign' in which the ryots met together and simultaneously declined to pay their Kist (instalment). Stokes who enquired into the matter, branded the collector's reaction as manipulated by the Head shiristadar and other Brahmins against collection and the employment of Christian officers, but ultimately agreed that the fall in prices was the crucial factor that increased the pressure of assessment.

Stokes recommended continuation of tharao assessment by fixing the maximum revenue demand on each estate at an early attainable standard, to encourage agricultural improvement and put an end to the annual fluctuation in the settlement.

On the inequality of the assessment Viveash, the Collector of Canara expressed the opinion that the settlement originally formed on the principles of taking one third of the gross produce and subsequently fixed at the average of 17 years of collection, is ample to secure both remuneration for labour and profit for capital employed and that remissions are unnecessary on occasions of loss. Taking the view expressed in stokes report Viveash conducted the settlement for the year Fasli 1243 (1833-34) by dividing all estates into two main categories:

1. Bharti or those holders who were able to pay full tharao assessment
2. Kambharti or those who were not able to pay full tharao assessment.

1. The Settlement Of Land Revenue Of Canara, Fasli 1229, para 16.
2. Report Of John Stokes On Revision Of Assessment And The Disturbances Koots, (Mangalore, 1885), p. 120, 121.
5. Ibid, p. 87.
The Board of Revenue considered the agreement likely to be beneficial to both the properties and the government. The revision of the revenue assessment made by Vivesh in 1834-35 failed to achieve its objective.

The Board of Revenue's proceeding's dated 16th November 1843, reviewed the opinions expressing that inequality in the distribution of assessment and arrived at the conclusion that the latest revision of the assessment had not been more successful than the proceeding’s attempts directed to the same end.

In accordance with the direction of the Board of Revenue Blane, the then Collector of the District submitted his report on the 20th September 1848. He put forward his opinion that a survey would be a measure of the greatest utility and benefit, that no satisfactory revision of the assessment was possible without it.

Agreeing with the Board, Blane also pointed out that a survey founded in the measuring of all the land in the district would solve the revenue problems. But the Board never took much interest in appointing more officials to introduce a general survey system in South Canara. There was no change in the revenue assessment in the 1850's, in which the revenue realised by the government registered a steady increase. Blane's report was sent to the government on 8th May 1851 by the Board of Revenue. However the usual demand for remissions by the ryots and granting of remissions continued in the subsequent years. Even in 1859, W. Fisher reported about arrears of

revenue, remissions granted due to over assessment and failures of the government to realise the revenue from the estates.

For average assessment for all kinds of lands, an average computed on that date was about Rs. 3-6-0 an acre\(^{(1)}\) and that was undoubtedly higher than the average for the Presidency as a whole. There existed some difference\(^{(2)}\) between the ryotwari tenure of South Canara and that obtaining in other districts of the presidency. In South Canara land of different kinds, of unknown extents and lying often in different places and even in different villages, constitutes a holding, termed ‘warg’ and the assessment was fixed in lump thereon. Elsewhere, the land was divided in to fields of convenient sizes known extents and each bears a fixed assessment.

In a letter\(^{(3)}\) to the government of India, reviewing the progress of the revision of settlement in this presidency, the Madras government having stated that the settlement of Canara was based on a fixed maximum demand which had been obtained in the majority of cases. The government agreed with the Board of Revenue and the collector. But there was nothing to show that they were in any way pledged to maintain the present assessment unaltered. The survey would be extended in due time to South Canara and be followed by a revision of the terms of settlement on such a basis as might appear expedient when the time arrived for commencing operations.

**General Survey**

The revenue survey started their work in 1889 and completed the last

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2. Ibid, p. 224.
taluk in 1896. The settlement operation began in October 1894 and at once brought to light the fact that the existing survey could not be made as the basis for any scheme of the settlement as it stood. Accordingly supplementary survey was undertaken to sub-divide the different descriptions of land. The classification of the soils and containing trees in bagayats, together with these revision surveys went on up to 1903.

The survey, classified the agricultural fields in South Canara District into various categories as follows\(^\text{(1)}\).

- **Bailu**: These were the low lying lands of good quality with an abundant water supply, capable of producing three crops of paddy a year.
- **Majalu**: This land was capable of producing two paddy crops a year and hence costlier and more difficult to irrigate.
- **Bettu**: These lands were capable of producing just a single crop of paddy annually.
- **Bagayat**: Such lands were specially suitable for arecanut plantation and coconut cultivation.

Each of these land was again sub divided into two categories and was assessed differentially depending on the income generated by the land- which was directly related to the quantity.

The general principles\(^\text{(2)}\) finally adopted for the settlement of South Canara were as follows.

**Wet lands**: Wet land was defined as land levelled and bunded and adapted

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to the cultivation of paddy.

Gardens: It was decided to class all bagayats under seven sorts, the rates of assessment varying from Rs. 2 to Rs. 8 an acre.

Second crop: The second crop change on lands registered at settlement as regular growing two crops had been consolidated at one-fourth of the single crop charge.

The settlement was introduced into the taluks in the following order:
Mangalore - Fasli 1312, Kasaragod, Udupi and Coondapoor - Fasli 1313 and Uppinangadi - 1314.

The area of the district\(^{(1)}\) was 25,71,923 acres of which only 7,37,142 acre was occupied. Deducting the Kumari area, which is occupied only for fugitive cultivation the actual occupied area was 5,96,265 acres. Reserved forests accounts for an area of 5,62,895 acres. The large unoccupied dry area of 11,55,217 acres is mostly uncultivable. The average settlement of dry rates was lower than the old minimum darkhast rate Rs. 9-7 as against - 1 an acre.

Prior to settlement the land revenue demand was Rs. 14,19,586. The settlement assessment was Rs. 23,41,260. Before the settlement the average assessment per unoccupied acre was Rs. 2-5-11 and after the settlement it was increased to Rs. 3-14-4 per acre.

The marginal table\(^{(2)}\) shows the average rates of settlement assessment on the different classes of lands.

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The average wet rate for the whole district was Rs. 4-7-11. The total area of warg Kumari was 1,40,877 acres and the average rate per acre was Rs. 2-1. The old assessment on this area was only seven per an acre.

Mulpatta wastes, the lands never brought under cultivation were ordered\(^1\) to be assessed at the rate of 4 annas for an acre. The total extent of the mulapatta wargs as the result of the survey was 9,934 acres and the assessment was Rs. 2566.

The settlement granted increment remission. The total increment remission granted for the whole district amounts to Rs. 33,84,537. According to the return made by the Collector to the Board\(^2\) the fasli 1310, there were only 48533 pattadars in the district, of which 10 were only joint pattas. The settlement pattas were 89,654.

2. Ibid, p. 33.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wet</th>
<th>Rs.</th>
<th>A.</th>
<th>P.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1(^{st}) Class</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2(^{nd}) Class</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>3(^{rd}) Class</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bagayat</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dry</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumari</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>
Re-settlement In 1934-35

On 4th November 1925(1) the Government directed the adoption of the following procedure as a tentative measure to issue rough pattas, as a part of the resettlement which was subsequently confirmed in November 1927(2)

1) that rough pattas should be issued on the basis of the land registers prepared by the survey department.

2) that objections to rough pattas need no longer be heard by special Assistant settlement Officers, but might be heard and disposed by Special Deputy Tahsildar’s.

3) that the work of the special staff empowered in South Canara be stopped.

Accordingly a branch office of the resettlement was opened(3) at Kasaragod in October 1925 and rough pattas was issued on the basis of the resurvey, land registers for all the resurveyed villages exempting 17 Kumari villages. In February 1927 the Government directed the settlement staff to inspect all porumbokes to classify them correctly and to assign unobjectionable encroachments and land held under effective sivaji jama occupations(4). The inspections required for these purpose was to be carried out before the hearing of objections to rough patta. The Government also directed that(5) the miscellaneous accounts of inspection should be made by the settlement staff together with the inspections of purambokes and sivaji janma lands

2. G.O.No. 2188, Revenue, dated 2.11.1927.
4. G.O.No.182, Revenue dated 1.2.1927.
5. G.O. No.428.MS, Revenue, dated 24.2.1928
before rough patta objections hearing. Thus rough patta objection hearing preceded the miscellaneous accounts inspections in Kasaragod taluk, (excluding kumari villages) while other taluks, the miscellaneous accounts inspections was completed\(^1\).

The government decided that the kumaki land should be deemed have been effectively occupied as a house site or planted with trees classified of the resettlement as garden products or otherwise reduced in to extensive possession, but that land around which walls were built merely for the purpose of facilitations the exercise of the normal kumaki privileges should not be deemed to have been effectively occupied\(^2\).

Owing to the financial stringency the Government ordered the postponement of fasli 1344(1934-35) of the resettlement of those portions in the district in which resettlement was due before that fasli\(^3\). This was resumed in 1933, the work was started on the old lines in the villages of Puttur and Mangalore taluks. Subsequently, in accordance with the further simplification of resettlement procedure ordered\(^4\).

The Board submitted\(^5\) for the information of government a combined programme of survey and settlement operations in several taluks of the Madras Presidency, including the South Canara District, which was due for the resettlement during the five years ending Fasli 1344 (1934-35).

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1. G.O.No. 182, Revenue dated 1.2.1927.
2. G.O. No.661.MS, dated 7.3.1929.
5. G. O. No. 1861, Dated 30\textsuperscript{th} September, 1930, Revenue Department (P. S.), Government Of Madras.
Re-survey preliminary to re-settlement was carried out\(^{(1)}\) in 178 villages in South Canara District (viz, 114 of Kasaragod, 27 of Mangalore, 33 of Puttur and 2 in each of Coondapour and Udipi taluks). In the rest of the villages, resurvey was considered unnecessary.

No lands were classified as unassessed at the last settlement subsequently the revenue department transferred to unassessed certain land which were registered as purumboke at the last settlement in accordance with instructions by the government\(^{(2)}\). This register was left unaltered at resettlement, exception in Karkal where an extent of 1672 acres of reserved forest classified as unassessed was treated as forest puramboke\(^{(3)}\).

The Special Settlement Officers proposals for resettlement were published and three months time was allowed for making representations from the date of publication of the report in the District Gazette\(^{(4)}\). A scheme of report for the settlement was published in South Canara District Gazette on 20\(^{th}\) April 1934. But the request of the South Canara Land Holders Association, the period was extended up to 1\(^{st}\) September 1934\(^{(5)}\). The proposals were laid on the table of the legislative council on 19\(^{th}\) July 1934. Altogether 116 representations were received, 97 up to 1\(^{st}\) September 1934 and rest after that date\(^{(6)}\).

The memorials had raised objections to the reclassification of dry lands converted in to wet or garden, on the ground that such conversion of the dry

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4. South Kanara District Gazette, on 20.4.1934
5. G.O. No.1513, Revenue, dated 31.7.1934
lands was affected at ryots expense and that the proposal to the government to levy higher rates of assessment on such lands will involve the taxing of the ryots improvements\(^{(1)}\). When a portion of an occupied dry field was converted into garden, each revenue should be considered as a whole for the purpose of determining whether or not it should be classified as garden\(^{(2)}\).

A separate patta was issued for each Mulageni lease hold showing the name of the Mulagar as pattadar and Mulagenidar as Mulageni tenant\(^{(3)}\). The procedure was adopted inorder to facilitate the prompt collection of the assessment by the attachment of the land in cases in which the terms of the lease did not provide for an enhancement of the land in case in which the terms of the lease did not provide for an enhancement of the rent consequent of the increase of assessment at resettlements the mulagar might refuse to pay the enhanced assessment if he could not make some satisfactory arrangement with the mulagenidar.

The Special Settlement Officer proposed that the existing kistbandi should be altered to one of four equal installment from February to May. The Government directed that throughout the entire direst the annual kist should be collected in four equal installments in February, March, April and May\(^{(4)}\).

As a result of resurvey, an extent of 4,800 acres was surveyed for the first time and included within village limits while 22,592 acres in Kasaragod and Puttur which really formed as part of reserved forests were excluded

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1. *Proceedings of the Board of Revenue No. 3, 16th January 1935, p.3.*
2. *G.O. No. 494,MS, dated 9.3.1934.*
from the village limits.

The main feature of the resettlement was the enhancement\(^{(1)}\) of the previously existing rates of assessment on wet and garden lands by 12\(\frac{1}{2}\) per-cent while the rate of assessment on dry lands were left unchanged.

The commutation rates\(^{(2)}\) were calculated in the usual manner from the average prices of these grains in the ryots' selling months during the 20 non-famine years ending (1932-33) after making a deduction of 25 per cent for wet lands and 20 per cent for garden and dry lands on account of cartage and merchant's profits.

**Commutation Rates**

The rate for paddy was Rs. 133 per grace at the last settlement. It had arisen to Rs. 241 in 1931-32, an increase of 81 percent.

The rise in the price of coconuts was from Rs. 22 to Rs. 36 or an increase of 64 per cent and of ragi from 175 to 390 or an increase of 123 per cent\(^{(3)}\). Inspite of these increases the enhancement sanctioned by government in the rates of assessment was only 12\(\frac{1}{2}\) percent for wet and garden lands while in the case of dry lands the rates were left unchanged.

The revised rates\(^{(4)}\) for first class wet lands were Rs. 7-14-0, Rs. 6-12-0, Rs. 5-10-0, Rs 4-8-0, Rs. 3-6-0, Rs. 2-4-0, Rs. 1-11-0, Rs. 1-2-0 and 14 annas for second class lands from Rs. 6-12-0 to 14 annas and for third class lands from

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2. Ibid, p. 185.

3. Ibid, p. 185.

4. Ibid, p. 185.
Rs. 5-10-0 to 14 annas, both in the above order.

As regards to garden lands the rates were\(^{(1)}\) for the first eight classes Rs. 9, Rs. 7-14-0, Rs. 6-12-0, Rs. 5-10-0, Rs. 4-8-0, Rs.3-6-0, Rs.2-4-0 and Rs. 1-2-0. In the special coast group villages the wet rates for each taram which had been raised Rs. 1 for single crop at the last settlement was raised to Rs. 1-2-0 at the resettlement. In the case of garden lands a new 8\(^{th}\) taram of Rs. 1-2-0 was created in order to give relief to new non-cocoa and non-areca garden.

There was no general reclassification of soils in the district, but the original soil classification was altered. ‘Purambokes’ and unassessed lands transferred to assessed during resettlement were also suitably classified. Villages were divided into three groups for purpose of wet and dry assessment at the last settlement in all the taluks except the old Uppinangadi (present Puttur) taluk, where a fourth group was added owing to the climate and other difficulties experienced by the inhabitants. Occupied dry land converted to wet were classified as wet I, II (single crop or double crop) and III according to the nature of cultivation and appropriate rates of assessment imposed. There was no reclassification of existing wet land and garden lands.

Kumari, the shifting cultivation in forests\(^{(2)}\), exist in 21 villages of Kasaragod taluk. In the reclassification they were permanently converted into dry, wet or garden and the productivity was taken as the chief factor for grouping. The previous Kumari rates of annas 3, 2 and 1 per acre of the first,

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second and third groups as revised were retained. The experimental resurvey carried out at first in 2 Kumari villages of Kasaragod taluk showed that the frame work of survey was unworkable for the purpose of revenue records and the government, therefore sanctioned a resurvey of the all kumari villages. During the final cheque of the resurvey records the settlement staff attended also in the reclassification of the warg Kumari’s that were permanently converted to dry, wet or garden(1).

The total extent of lands included(2) in ryotwari holdings is 10,22,212 acres. As a result of resettlement the total assessment on these lands increased form Rs. 25,12,100 to Rs. 28,53,257. Increment remissions both ordinary and special were granted from the years of introduction of resettlement.

At resettlement the government decided(3) that in respect of ground rent lands in the district, the existing rate of assumed agriculture assessment of Rs. 6-4-0 an acre should be raised by 80 percent so that the existing rates of Rs 6 and Rs 6-4-0 were raised to Rs. 11-4-0 and all other higher rates were raised by Rs. 5 uniformly.

The primary objective of the government was to increase the revenue derived from land tax. The settlement officer take(4) the average of the prices that obtained during the 20 normal years preceding the period of settlement for determining the land tax and calculating the rise in prices they enhanced the land tax.

1. G.O.No. 2082, MS, Revenue, 20.10.1927 see also, Proceedings of the Board of Revenue No 388, Mis. dated 4.2.1931.
The settlement officer had realised the increase of indebtedness of the agriculturists. The number of agriculturists who had raised loans and the amount borrowed by them had increased. The settlement officer had however recommended that the tax of wet and garden lands may be enhanced by 12½ per cent. There was doubt that, if the assessment was enhanced accordingly to his recommendation, the inhabitants, of South Canara District will be obliged to undergo great hardships. The enhancement of the assessment in these hard days affected them very much.

The land revenue in South Canara was collected in five kists\(^1\), beginning in January and ending in May. The Kist were levied by the village officers. The company government confined itself to revenue administration and revenue collection, particularly from the agricultural land, without being unduly concerned with developed schemes in agriculture, irrigation, transport, communication and education.

The village arrangements in South Canara were some what similar to those in Malabar\(^2\), each warg had its house situated up on it. The headman of village was called as Potail and the curnums, of whom there was one for each group of villages turned Magany or Taraf were called Shanbogues. The Jummabundy generally took place after December, by which time most of the important crops had been harvested and most of the changes likely to be take in holdings were ascertained. It was conducted in different places, mostly four or five in each taluk which were previously notified. The village officers

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concerned were summoned and ryots who had any representations to make were invited to attend.

The settlement officer was usually the revenue officer in-charge of the revenue division. It was the duty of the Tahsildar\(^{1}\) to see that all the village accounts were ready before the date fixed for the Jummabundy and this was usually carried out by causing the curnumes to come to the taluk Cutcherry two or three weeks in advance and there they finish whatever incomplete in their accounts.

The lands were divided into estates or warg lands which were registered and numbered for each village. A separate Jummabundy chitta (revenue account) was kept, in the Huzoor (Collector) and taluk officers for every estate. This account showed the name of the owner of an estate, the particulars of its assessment, net produce of the land at the village rates and annual settlements.

The rapid growth of population added to the pressure on the available agro-economic resources. In the absence of alternative avenues of employment more and more people were willing to lease-in and even sub-lease-in on higher and higher rental rates, in the hope of eking-out a living. In the first half of the 20\(^{th}\) century the problem of tenancy and alienation of land through sale and mortgages continued as the dominant class of money lenders-traders-landlords came to occupy a commanding position in the whole system of agricultural production and distribution. The situation was aggravated in the years during and after the economic depression (1929-30) followed by the

second world war. The newly enacted Madras Debt Conciliation Act 1936 and the Madras Agriculturalist Relief Act 1938 had served to reinforce the dominance of triumiratry-creditors-traders-land lords in rural society. The period after 1943 witnessed a drastic fall in land transactions in South Canara due to the fear of fall in the land values during the post war period.

IMPOVERISHMENT OF THE PEASANTRY

The rapid commercialisation of rural India and the inexorable monetisation of a rural economy under an imperialist system\(^{(1)}\) brought crisis among the peasantry. A study of the land revenue administration reveals that generally the government share was much higher than normal as recognized by the administrators themselves.

Maximisation of land revenue was one of the driving forces of the British in South Canara District and had become one of the major reason's for the impoverishment of the peasantry. The British continued the pre-existing system of rough and ready assessment without a regular survey or classification of land for a century. It is believed that ancient assessment even after the addition by Bedinur Government was moderate\(^{(2)}\) in South Canara. Numerous additions which were made to the ancient land rent by Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan had caused the impoverishment of South Canara. Munro expressed\(^{(3)}\) that had such an assessment as that introduced by Haider Ali and Tipu existed in ancient times, Canara would long ago have been converted into a desert. But actually the British continued the same extraction of land revenue policy of the Mysore rulers.

Prior to the British rule the land revenue assessment was paid in money or in Kind. The British enforced the payment of land rent through money. The commutation system of the grain in to market price and its fluctuations also caused more sufferings to the rural peasantry.

The administrative records reveal that, one of the characteristic features of the British land revenue administration in South Canara, since 1803-04, was granting of remissions at annual Jummabundy due to the increase in the revenue demand. Remissions granted in a particular year was collected in subsequent years. If a particular ryot failed to pay the arrears for four or five years, his property was auctioned by the government to realize the amount due from this. This was a common feature existed in the whole British period.

There was one important defect in the system of granting remissions to the ryots. As remissions were not generally allowed to the tenants, it added to the receipts of the landlords. The government gave remissions to the landlords though they used to lease out land for actual cultivation to their under tenants. So it brought no benefit to the actual farming cultivation.

Even though the ryotwari system was introduced in South Canara, it did not bring any relief to the cultivators. In fact, many of the revenue assessments were high and unequal, resulting the pattern of mounting revenue arrears, auction of the property and its transfer from the poor to the rich ryots, rise of money lenders and so on.

1. N. Shyam Bhat, South Kanara, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 95, 102.
2. ibid, p. 95, 102.
In addition to high extraction of land revenue, the revenue derived from various other source like salt, tobacco monopoly, village taxes, courts and stamps customs and so on added to the burden of the peasants. It resulted in the impoverishment of the ryots and agriculturists in the region. In fact the peasant unrest of 1810-11 and peasant uprising of 1830-31 were the responses of the peasant against their grievances and attempts to redress some of them.

The British administrators have attempted to prove that the British policy of revenue assessment and collection had always been fair. Sturrock\(^1\), for example, frames a vindication of Munro's assessment which was as high as Tipu's, by writing that the country was growing in prosperity and the demand was moderate. Stuart points out that both demand and collection of revenue increased and that the revenue had been released without any great pressure on the ryots.

There was much anomaly in the assessment of land revenue in South Canara. This resulted in arbitrary assessment of land leading to the same kind of land in different cases being assessed differently. Alexander Read\(^2\) recommended to the Board of Revenue, that inorder to arrive a standard assessment the government should take 30 percent of the gross produce. Same way Harris\(^3\) expressed that the deplorable condition of the ryots of the district - was not only solely caused by over assessment - but also stagnation

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3. Sir Thomas Munro's Letter To The Board Of Revenue, Dated On 17th June, 1823.
of trade in general and the role of the money lenders in particular. Harris\(^1\) also had the opinion that while making the revenue settlement, the market price of the products was also taken in to consideration. Stokes\(^2\) who enquired about the disturbances of Koots in 1830-31 found that the Koots had been caused by the rigours of assessment.

In its proceeding's the Board of Revenue\(^3\) also admitted the inequality involved in the distribution of assessment. In accordance with the directions put forward by the proceedings of the Board of Revenue, Blane submitted a report on 20\(^{th}\) September 1848. In his opinion a survey would be of greatest utility and benefit\(^4\) for a satisfactory revision of the assessment.

But the revenue survey for settlement was begun in 1889, and completed in 1896, at the same time the revision survey ended in 1903. The settlement of land revenue as a part of the survey had caused great burden upon the people. It paved for great increase in land revenue. Prior to settlement the land revenue demand\(^5\) was Rs. 14,19,586 and the settlement assessment was Rs. 23,41,260.

The immediate result was that the revenue assessment of district was considerably enhanced. The burden of revenue payment finally fell upon the cultivating ryots of the region. The rent payable to the landlords was

1. Sir Thomas Munro's Letter To The Board Of Revenue, Dated On 17\(^{th}\) June, 1823.
3. The Board Of Revenues Proceedings, Dated On 16\(^{th}\) November, 1843, para 36.
4. Mr. Blane's Letter Dated 20\(^{th}\) September, 1848, para 55-57.
revised under the provision of the mulageni rent enhancement act XII, of 1920. The state permitted the landholders to release more rent either in cash or in kind from cultivating ryots to meet the revenue demands.

As a result of the resettlement\(^{(1)}\) the total assessment on these lands increased from Rs. 25,12,100 to Rs. 28,53,257. This shows that there was a constant increase of the land revenue assessment during the British period. The assessment of land revenue at higher rents by the British Government and the demand of taxes in cash were new burdens on land owners who safely shifted the burden up on their tenants.

To put it brief, the colonial exploitation\(^{(2)}\) of economic surplus was more intensified causing large-scale rural poverty. The region (former Kasaragod Taluk) still remained one of the most-backward and under developed areas of Kerala state.

The following table shows the condition of the tenants in South Canara due to excessive land revenue assessment\(^{(3)}\).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fasli</th>
<th>Demand Notices</th>
<th>Distraint or attachment notices</th>
<th>Sale notice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1337</td>
<td>3223</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1338</td>
<td>3650</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1339</td>
<td>4186</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1340</td>
<td>5777</td>
<td>821</td>
<td>656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1345</td>
<td>16348</td>
<td>3488</td>
<td>2655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1346</td>
<td>16397</td>
<td>4221</td>
<td>2613</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The above table shows that an increase in the issue of the demand notice to the defaulters of revenue from the fasli year 1337 to 1346 and a rapid increase occurred during the fasli years 1345 and 1346. Same way the number of notices of distraint and sale was also increased during the fasli years 1345 and 1346. These two fasli years were after the resettlement period. This reveals that the resettlement had paved for heavy enhancement of land revenue up on the rural population and they were impoverished. The number of defaulters\(^{(1)}\) whose immovable property were attached during the fasli 1352 (1942-43) was 8687 against 18,939 in Fasli 1351.

On the other hand we can see a steady increase in the land revenue collection in South Canara\(^{(2)}\).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fasli</th>
<th>Land Revenue (Rs)</th>
<th>Fasli</th>
<th>Land Revenue (Rs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1210</td>
<td>1669314</td>
<td>1317</td>
<td>2195616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1225</td>
<td>1693990</td>
<td>1322</td>
<td>2499600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1245</td>
<td>1701823</td>
<td>1338</td>
<td>2762421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1255</td>
<td>1860734</td>
<td>1345</td>
<td>3076591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1263</td>
<td>1919283</td>
<td>1352</td>
<td>3330899</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The major aim of the colonial economic policy in India was the extraction of the Indian wealth as much as possible. South Canara became one of the fertile lands for the British to implement their policy.

2. *The Reports Of The Settlements Of Land Revenue Of Concerned Fasli's.*
Distribution of land-holders by assessment paid\(^{(1)}\) by them in South Canara

Table 1

Fasli 1330 of 1920-21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattas under Assessment (In Rs.)</th>
<th>No of single Holders</th>
<th>No of Joint Holders</th>
<th>Total No of Holders</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Holders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 1</td>
<td>19382</td>
<td>4266</td>
<td>23648</td>
<td>20.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>36780</td>
<td>10071</td>
<td>46851</td>
<td>41.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-30</td>
<td>19617</td>
<td>3781</td>
<td>23398</td>
<td>20.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>7679</td>
<td>1314</td>
<td>8993</td>
<td>7.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-100</td>
<td>6037</td>
<td>1029</td>
<td>7066</td>
<td>6.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-250</td>
<td>3070</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>3531</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250-500</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500-1000</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 and above</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>93596</strong></td>
<td><strong>21070</strong></td>
<td><strong>114666</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table states that 79,492 patta holders, out of 1,14,666 (82.59%) were paying below Rs.30 per year as the land revenue assessment. There were only 73 large land holders (0.06%) who were paying annual rent more than Rs.1000. Out of Rs.24,72,326 as the land revenue assessment of the Fasli 1330, Rs.1,15,906 was imposed upon the large land holders and

\(^{(1)}\) The Reports Of The Settlement of Land Revenue, Fasli 1330, p. 44-47 and Fasli 1340, p. 71-77.
Rs. 13,589 was paid by the 993897 patta holders\(^1\).

### Table II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattas under Assessment (In Rs.)</th>
<th>No of single Holders</th>
<th>No of Joint Holders</th>
<th>Total Holders</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Holders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 1</td>
<td>28819</td>
<td>6458</td>
<td>35277</td>
<td>25.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>42122</td>
<td>16818</td>
<td>58940</td>
<td>42.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-30</td>
<td>19001</td>
<td>5440</td>
<td>24441</td>
<td>17.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>6813</td>
<td>1692</td>
<td>8505</td>
<td>6.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-100</td>
<td>5572</td>
<td>1226</td>
<td>6798</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-250</td>
<td>2880</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>3372</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250-500</td>
<td>727</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>817</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500-1000</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 and above</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>106221</strong></td>
<td><strong>32247</strong></td>
<td><strong>138468</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of patta holders who were paying the land revenue less than Rs. 30 per year was increased from 79,492 (82.59%) during the Fasli 1330 to 1,18,658 (85.68%) during the Fasli 1340.

The exploitation of the Chalageni tenants continued persistently through the 19th and 20th centuries. The landlord had the right to raise the rent or evict the chalageni tenants if they refused to pay enhanced rents. Though tenants could be evicted at anytime, in practice, however, the tenants were

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seldom unless they were heavily in arrears.

Generally the tenants came from the class of landless labourers who entered into tenancy by leasing in paddy fields from the upper stratum of rural society. However there was no uniformity in the size of tenanted holdings as these ranged from less than an acre or some times more. Moreover, land under some tenanted holdings was fertile and capable of yielding two or even three crops while in most other holdings only one crop could be had. Further, those tenants who lived in the vicinity of the landlord’s house were liable to be exploited more in the form of free (unpaid) labour and other illegal extractions than those tenants who lived away from their landlords.

Generally the fertile lands were retained by the landlords for self cultivation and the leased out lands were often in poor quality. The landlords used to renew the lease at least orally, every year, thus the lease was so insecure.

It was customary obligation on the part of tenants to give priority to the work in farms under the landlords’ self cultivation and then attended to their plots. Before the monsoon broke out, the tenants had to bring their own pair of bullocks for ploughing the landlord’s fields, for which the landlord never paid anything to the tenants.

In the first half of the 20th century the problem of tenancy and alienation of land through sale and mortgages continued as the dominant class of

3. Ibid, p. 150.
money lenders-traders-landlords came to occupy a commanding position in
the whole system of agricultural production and distribution.

In Malabar, the forest lands and waste lands were not brought under
assessment. But in South Canara the forest and waste lands in the holdings
were also assessed. Therefore the colonial exploitation\(^1\) was more intensive
in the South Canara than in Malabar.

Even the legal provisions such as section 13 of the Rent Recovery Act
VIII of 1865, did not give any relief\(^2\) to the chalagenidars against the relentless extractions by the landlords. On the contrary, in response to the legislations the land owners resorted to large scale evictions of such temporary tenants. Suppression of the Chalageni tenants continued until the stringent and so called land reform legislations, introduced in Karnataka in 1974.

**EARLY RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS**

In the last part of the 18\(^{th}\) century and early half of the 19\(^{th}\) century, there broke out a number of local resistance movements against the British in South Canara District. Munro remarked\(^3\) that the most petty chiefs in ancient times existed in Canara have long since been deprived of all authority and confounded with the mass of the people. But there are still three, who from their long connection with the Bombay Government, deserve a particular consideration. These three are poligars or Rajah's of Kumbala, Vittal and Nileshwar.

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3. Letter From Munro to W. Petrie Dated On 16\(^{th}\) June, 1800, para 1.
The political structure consisting of Rajas, Chieftains and feudatories were destroyed by the colonial system. These political elements along with the priestly class (Brahmins) controlled the political social and economic affairs of the pre-British period. This dominant class enjoyed absolute control in all fields in their jurisdiction. For a short period Tipu Sultan of Mysore had completely suppressed all the old chiefs and disposed them all. When the last Mysore war broke out in 1799 the Rajas of Kumbala, Vittal and Nileshwar tried to regain their old position.

The British acquisition caused the loss of hereditary status (which the native chiefs had enjoyed) and their reduction in to mere landlords and pensioners. The ideology behind these revolts did not go beyond self preservation and their instinctual character agrees with their description as instances of what has been called "primary resistance". Primary resistance refers(1) to the opposition of pre-colonial as yet largely unchanged, socio-political structures of foreign intrusion, headed by traditional elements and having in the main's a 'restorative' aim.

These Rajas supported the British against the Mysore rulers. When South Canara passed into the hands of the British after the defeat of Tipu Sultan in 1799, the territories of these rajas were also included in this. For them the British annexation was as frustrating as the first time and another occasion to revolt.

The revolt of the three rajas were considered as restorative movements(2). Their fear of the loss of identity made them resist against the


imposition of the British rule. The revolt of the three former rajas were different from a peasant unrest.

THE RESISTANCE OF THE RAJA OF KUMBALA

When the last Mysore war broke out in 1799, the Raja of Kumbala returned from Tellichery, (the Raja took shelter at British at Tellichery during the Tipu's invasion) and began his activities to regain his territory. The Raja of Kumbala showed\(^1\) a disposition, when company took possession of Canara last year, to maintain himself in Kumbala; but was obliged to return to Malabar by an order from General Hartley. He left his nephew, behind, when a body of armed followers, for the purpose of keeping affairs in confusion, and prevented the inhabitants from coming to a settlement with Munro\(^2\), hoping that by that means the District would be given over to the Raja in his own terms. He succeeded so far, that none of the inhabitants came near Munro for settlement for two months. But General Hartely\(^3\) threatened to treat the nephew as a rebel and the commissioners of Malabar having stopped his own pension till he should have delivered up the arms he had received from the company's stores.

These measures of the British brought the rebel Raja to the knees of Munro and he acknowledged the British suzerainty. Sir Thomas Munro agreed to increase his pension\(^4\) from 200 to 400 per month, on condition that neither he nor any member of his family should ever reside in Kumbala. The

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1. Letter From Munro to W. Petrie Dated On 18th June, 1800, para 3.
2. Ibid, para 3.
4. Letter From Munro to W. Petrie Dated On 18th June, 1800, para 3.
government also stressed that the pension was granted to the entire exclusion of any claim to the restitution of the lands formerly possessed by his family.

RESISTANCE OF THE RAJA OF VITTAL

The Raja of Vittal returned in 1799 from Tellichery (he took refuge at there during Tipu invasion) to Vittal in 1799, ignoring the summons from the company’s officials. The Raja returned(1) with a number of followers, by whose means he had since armed the inhabitants and taken upon himself the management of the district.

The Hegade had collected and retained the revenue in his own hands, maintaining his position, according to Munro(2), entirely by terror. By the assistance of his personal followers, he at first armed a few of the inhabitants and with the idea of reviewing his fortunes, early in 1800, he combined with other disaffected elements in South Canara. Munro(3) at once called on Colonel Heart, who was the Commanding Officer of the province, to proceed against Hegade. An army was sent under Lieutenant Colonel Cumine to Jamalabad and it attacked the fort. The British stormed the fort and regained possession of Jamalabad. In the beginning of July 1800, the Tahsildar defeated the Vittal Hegade at Vittal and nine members of his family were imprisoned. With this event and the fall of Jamalabad, all disturbances came to an end and the country settled down quietly(4).

1. Letter From Munro to W. Petrie Dated On 16th June, 1800, para 3.
2. Ibid, para 3.
4. Letter From Munro to W. Petrie Dated On 16th June, 1800, para 3.
All property except his private ones was acquired by the British in lieu of which the family was granted an yearly pension\(^{(1)}\) of Rs. 6019 and Anna one or star pagodas 143-14-4 per month and 1719-33-48 per annum.

**RESISTANCE OF THE RAJA OF NILESHWAR**

The Raja of Nileshwar also resisted the British supremacy over South Canara, especially over their territory, Nileshwaram. He kept up armed followers and had dissuaded the land holders from appearing before Munro for settlement with the hope of regaining his former territories.

But all his efforts went in vain when the British forced him to accept their Supremacy. All territories except his private property was acquired by the British and he was given an annual pension of 1000 Bahadry Pagodas or Rs. 4000.

The movements led by the three Rajas of South Canara were apparently a failure. The driving force behind their resistance was the danger of losing their relatives. It was very easy to the colonial government, to suppress all kinds of the early resistance movements of South Canara. In brief, the transition of a feudal society in to colonial system in South Canara occurred without much resistance.

The British land revenue policy based on the exploitation of economic surplus had resulted in over assessment and inequalities in the land revenue administration. It caused indebtedness and impoverishment of the peasantry. Thus the agrarian structure of the district was indulged in unrest and

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1. *N. Shyam Bhat, South Kanara, (New Delhi, 1998)*, p. 76.
uprisings. Immediately after the establishment of the British power in Canara, the three Raja's of Nileshwar, Kumbala and Vittal started their resistance movements. However, the British never revised their land revenue assessment. In 1810-11 and 1830-31 the Koots rebellions spread in South Canara. These were resistance movements against the economic grievances enhanced by the colonial administration. In the early part of the 20th century the condition of the peasantry became worse due to the enhancement of land revenue through the settlement of 1902-03 and the resettlement of 1934-35 and the great depression of the 1930's. Thus the peasants were forced to rise against their land lords and their colonial masters.