From the foregoing pages it is evident that commercialization of Indian agriculture was the sole aim of the British Government to satisfy their own vested interest of extracting raw materials from the Indian soil for the upkeeping of the trade transaction and for the supply to the industries in Britain. The hungry need of the industries in Manchester and in Liverpool forced the authorities to hunt for raw material either in the British colonies or from anywhere in the world. The raw material supply from America could not give a guarantee for the flow of the raw material into the Manchester industries due to the unfriendly political climate. In fact Senator Hammond declared in the Senate Chamber at Washington in 1858 "if the British makes war on America, we would bring the whole world to our feet.... What would happen if no cotton were furnished for three years"? Accordingly the years between 1861 and 1865, the Southern cotton ports in America were closed by the vigorous naval policy of the Union. The workers in Lancashire suffered most from the lack of cotton. But England did not submit tamely to the situation. The British endowed the colonial world with cotton plantation. The mechanization of every process in the textile industry from ginning to weaving pushed up the demand for raw cotton in England and the constant anxiety of raw cotton supplies from America prompted Britain to explore alternative sources of supply of raw cotton.

Within a few years of taking up the governance of Madras Presidency in 1801, the East India Company wanted to secure raw cotton for as a low a price as possible for export to Great Britain. Consequently the Board of Revenue in Madras took a further step in proclaiming that lands which grew cotton crops need not pay any extra assessment. The growth of cotton was encouraged within the company’s territories in the beginning, later extended to as many places as possible with a view to ascertaining the real sources of the Peninsular in the article of cotton. However the Board of Revenue collected reports on the state of the cotton cultivation from different districts in the year 1812. Many Collectors furnished information about the area under the cotton cultivation in their district. A detailed report of cultivating operation of Uppam, Nadam and Shemparuthi varieties were sent to the Board of Revenue by the Collectors.

These varieties of cotton were found to be native and low yielding. So the Company wanted to grow exotic verities of cotton in the territory considering the demand of the time. And so the Company initiated the introduction of the cultivation of Bourbom cotton into Madras State. The Directors of the East India Company were anxious that India should take part in the supply of cotton. Consequently Dr. Anderson started distributing foreign cotton seeds obtained from Malta and Mauritius throughout the Madras Presidency. As a result of Dr. Anderson’s endeavors, Bourbon cotton was
introduced into the districts of Tirunelveli, Salem and Coimbatore. Meanwhile Hughes propagated the seeds very successfully in Tirunelveli district. He had instructed the neighbouring cultivators about the method of raising Bourbon cotton, the exotic variety, for the economical benefit over the native cotton. In 1814 the Government granted certain areas of land in the district to Hughes to encourage the cultivation of Bourbon cotton. However the land assessment in Tirunelveli was the same whether cotton was grown or a grain crop was raised. Hughes held the view that the best means to induce the extension of cotton cultivation was not by the remission of land revenue but by the grant of advances to the cultivators and a promise to take their produce at the market price.

J. Sullivan, Collector of Coimbatore, reported that Coimbatore district offered great possibilities of extending the finer sorts of cotton such as Nadam, Shemparathi, Bourbon and Nankin cottons, since the soils everywhere in the district were found suitable for cotton cultivation. Heath acclimatized Bourbon cotton successfully in Coimbatore district. The Uppam and Nadam cotton yielded about 100 lb of lint per acre with a ginning outturn of 20 to 22 per cent. But Bourbon showed a ginning outturn of 30 to 33 per cent. Though the cultivation of Bourbon cotton was introduced into the Madras state, the ryots could not be persuaded so easily to take up the cultivation of the exotic Bourbon cotton.


4 Coimbatore Collectorate Record, dated 4-5-1810.
Not having been satisfied with a small success attained with the cultivation of Bourbon cotton in some districts of Madras state, the Court of Directors were constantly exercised over the question of further improving Indian cotton. Consequently the Madras Government established cotton farms of four hundred acres each in Tirunelveli and Coimbatore. Each farm was placed under the direction of the Commercial Resident of the concerned district. Meanwhile a memorandum prepared in the year 1819 by Randall, Commercial Resident at Cuddapah, recommended the import of exotic varieties of cotton seed from America for the introduction into South India. By the third decade of the nineteenth century, the Lancashire Textile Industry had established its markets not only in India, displaying handloom cloth, but had captured also the other markets in China and elsewhere. In the previous century there was monopoly of the Indian goods for superfine cloth in these markets. Since the Lancashire industry depended, to a substantial extent, on supplies of raw cotton of superior grades from America and since that industry apprehended a stoppage of these supplies at any moment consequent on development of international factors, the representatives of cotton industry at Lancashire constantly urged the Court of Directors to develop cultivation of the superior grades of cotton all over the British possessions. Accordingly the

5 Ibid for 17.5.1819.
Court of Directors procured supplies of cotton seeds of Upland Georgian and Sea Island directly from America and sent them to Madras state. In 1831, Upland and Sea Island cotton seeds from America were distributed in the districts of Tirunelveli, Coimbatore, Salem and South Arcot for trials, on the condition that the ryots to whom the seeds were given, should return one-half of the seeds obtained from the crop raised therefrom. The trial made in 1833-34 failed due to the unsuitable condition of soil and other factors. The Indian farmers were accused of their indifference shown to the need for bestowing proper care in growing the exotic varieties and also in gathering the cotton crop in a clean condition free from dried leaf bits, sand etc. In November 1836 the Agri-Horticultural Society at Madras received from abroad a supply of seeds of New Orleans, Uplands, Pernambuco or Brazilian, Egyptian and Sea Island cottons. The Society wanted the Board to distribute them to the Collectors of various districts for trial on the condition of getting back one-half of the seed from the crop cultivated from each person in order to supply seeds to other growers thereafter for cultivation. However the trial also did not come up to the expectation of the colonial Government.

In the meanwhile the Court of Directors in London were flooded with innumerable entreaties and memorials to pursue with the utmost vigour the development of cotton cultivation in India. In 1838 the Directors of the

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Chamber of Commerce and Manufacturers in Glasgow pointed out to the home authorities that Britain was dependent on America for supplies of raw cotton and that if war broke out between England and America, the textile industry at home would seriously suffer.\(^8\) The East India Association at Liverpool and Glasgow also urged the Court of Directors on the immediate need of augmenting exports of raw cotton from India to England. Having regard to the failure of previous attempts to augment Indian production of cotton, the Court wanted to import into India American cotton seeds with the adoption of American methods of the cotton cultivation.\(^9\) In 1840 the Court of Directors sent three America cotton planters James Morris, I. N. Hawley and Samuel Simpson to Madras to teach the cultivators about the American method of cultivating the exotic varieties of cotton. The three planters, later, were sent to Tirunelveli to be placed under the superintendence of Captain Hughes to teach the farmers.\(^10\) However, the local farmers were not willing to adopt the American method of cultivating cotton.

The following year the planters and Captain Hughes were transferred to Coimbatore district. During the year 1842 Dr. Wight took charge as Superintendent of cotton farm in Coimbatore in the place of Captain Hughes. The first year experiment failed. In 1843 three more cotton farms were started. The farm at Coimbatore was under Dr. Wight and the American


planters were in charge of farms at Kurichi, Coimbatore and Udumalpet. On the conclusion of the second year trial, Dr. Wight concluded that the result was greatly a disappointment. After the trial from 1842-43 to 1844-45, though the experiments failed, it was observed that the American method of cultivating cotton was not so superior as the native and the country plough was as good as the American plough. Though the New Orleans was better than Uppam variety of cotton, owing to the nature of the soil, the experiment was a devastating failure.

During the three years 1846-1849, Finnie, a farmer from the U.S, worked in Tirunelveli district and Dr. Wight, an agricultural botanist, worked in Coimbatore district. But their approach to the experiments of cotton cultivation differed fundamentally. Finnie based on his practical observations and experiences with the ryots asserted that American cotton could never be grown in any part of Madras. But Dr. Wight taking the meteorological factors of Mexico and those in South India concluded that the climate here was cold when compared to the hot climate of Mexico and that patient endeavours would give success. Whatever may be the observation, the yields were very poor and ryots could not be persuaded to grow American cotton despite 10 years of trials. Therefore the Government ordered the discontinuance of the experiments on July 20, 1853 and Finnie returned to America. The Court of Directors also

ordered the Madras Government authorities for a gradual relinquishment of all
direct interference in the culture of cotton.

Though the trials with American cotton seeds with the assistance
of American cotton planters were terminated, endeavours to improve the
quality of indigenous cottons as well as to introduce certain other exotic
varieties of cotton continued. Unfortunately to the greatest disappointment,
these trials too proved futile. Robertson, the Superintendent of the Government
Farm at Saidapet observed: “the desultory attempts of improving cotton in
Madras Presidency was a complete failure which was a lesson that should not
be forgotten.”

As for Groundnut there was an ever expanding export market and
hence the area under its cultivation expanded rapidly. South Arcot remained the
largest groundnut cultivating district. Salem where the area under groundnut
cultivation was mere 1,465 acres in 1900 rose to 42,274 acres in another ten
years. Groundnut and its oil were exported to France, U.K., Mauritius, Ceylon,
Straits Settlement, Italy and Burma. The British also made money out of this
trend by levying 3 per cent duty on groundnuts exported. It worked out to Rs.3
per maund.

Since the fluctuation of the monsoon and the frequent failure of
rain ruined the agricultural practices and crops adversely, an attempt was made
to attempt cotton crop cultivation in irrigated terrains in the Presidency. Till the

Board of Revenue Proceedings, dated 21.6.1871, No. 2491.
year 1848, the possibility of growing cotton by irrigation was not known. The first experiment in this direction was performed in this state by Captain E. Lawford, Civil Engineer at Srirangam in Tiruchirappalli. But the opposition against cotton cultivation in irrigated tracts was that the value of the cotton crop would not cover the assessment of Nunjah land and that the extent of irrigable land in the province was insufficient for the purpose of producing the quantity of cotton required to meet the demand. However the produce from the irrigated cotton crops were pronounced to be remarkably fine in quality. Regarding the employment of artificial irrigation Captain E. Lawford held that firmly cotton cultivation when sufficiently irrigated produced an equal quantity of cotton as the American and African crops produced and concluded that artificial irrigation when properly applied at the right stages of growth of cotton helped the plant to produce a good crop.

The development of irrigation work after 1846, helped at least to certain extent the cultivation of commercial crops and other agricultural crops during the unfavourable seasons. Extra tax was levied as water tax on the peasantry who used water for his cultivation from a Government source. Around Rs. 2-0-0 was collected over the normal rate of those descriptive land assessment as water tax. The water rate collected from the ryots for the use of water source aggravated the indebtedness in rural parts. The irrigation development, though a positive improvement attempted in the development of

the infrastructure of the Tamil country, was a burden on the poor ryots since the water tax was levied in addition to land tax. Consequently the ryots most of the time had to depend on moneylenders to pay up the revenue dues to safeguard his little property not to be auctioned off in settlement of his land revenue due. However the development of various irrigation sources should be considered a positive contribution to the Tamil society made by the British Government. Traditionally paddy field was irrigated and after the introduction of commercial crops, the crops like cotton was also irrigated for commercial gain. In the cotton districts like Tirunelveli, Coimbatore and Madurai, comparatively a very high percentage of land under cotton cultivation was irrigated.

The Land Revenue policy of the Government added up the misery of the peasantry. The land rent fixed was considerably very high. In addition the rate was revised without any regard to the prevailing prices. The land rent on dry land in Salem district before 1860 was maximum of Rs. 15-7-6 and minimum of Rs. 0-1-1 per acre. On the wet land it was with the maximum of Rs. 27-2-2 and minimum of Rs. 9-7-0 per acre. The rent of dry garden land was with maximum of Rs. 25-9-2 and minimum of Rs. 0-10-8 per acre and the rent of wet garden was with maximum of Rs. 46-10-8 and minimum of Rs. 3-4-3. But in the next settlement operation the land rent was revised dividing the land into almost 38 classes of soil showing a vast difference in rent from Rs. 14-0-0 to Rs. 4-12-0.
The high land rent assessment and the rigidity with which the land revenue was collected, made the cultivator a prey at the hands of the revenue officials. With all its advantages, the ryotwari settlement itself became a misfortune to the ryots. With the Ryotwari Tenure the whole responsibility of paying the land rent fell on the shoulders of the peasantry. Many of the ryots under Ryotwari Tenure could not pay the land rent. They were considered as revenue defaulters. Land revenue remission was very rare. Though occasionally land revenue remittance was sanctioned by the Imperial Government, it was not sufficient enough when one compared them with the loss incurred through the unfavourable seasons. The revenue defaulters were tortured and when torture was abolished their land was seized and auctioned off. To avoid all these misfortunes the ryots borrowed money from the moneylenders to settle the land revenue arrears. The additional money obtained from the moneylenders to discharge their land revenue arrears increased the amount of their debt year after year and finally one fine day the moneylender alienated his land.

The failure of the commercial crop cultivation and the high rate of land rent collected adversely affected the peasantry. It had great impact on the Tamil society especially on the ryots. The devastating effects utterly broke effects the economic backbone of the agrarian society. The failure of cotton cultivation owing to the appearance and recurrences of drought increased the burden of indebtedness of the peasantry. To what extent was the incidence of
indebtedness is not within the scope of the present study. It deserves in-depth analysis as another study.

The infrastructural development such as railroad development and the developmental activities undertaken for the improvement of agriculture were considered as positive impact. The development of Railways in India was considered one of the positive impacts on the society in the level of infrastructural development. The railway helped interlinkage of the towns in Tamilnadu. However through the interaction of railway the Imperial Government practically killed the indigenous industries, especially cotton textile industry in cottage form.

Another positive impact was the development of agricultural research and extension work. The interest shown by the colonial Government on the raw material production promoted the development of agricultural research and education in Tamilnadu with the object of impairing scientific training to band of men for such undertaking. It was realized, after a prolonged trial of cotton cultivation with improved method, that only on the basis of the sustained labours in training and research that the cultivators could be told how they could improve their agriculture. Since the effects of the Government on the promotion of cotton cultivation failed utterly without getting the desirable result, the Government left those initiatives of teaching the cultivators and shifted to agricultural research works for the instruction of the agricultural development and of the improved methods of farming. An experimental farm at
Saidapet was opened for such instruction on developmental cultivation in April 1865. Since the results attained at the farm were purely negative, the farm was closed down. Instead, an agricultural college at Madras was established in March 1875 to instruct the students in knowledge as well as in trial on agricultural improvement. A number of many other farms was established throughout Tamilnadu for the experimental purposes.

Traditionally the native plough was used for the preparation of the ground for sowing. The age old plough's performance was considered ineffective for the successful growth of the improved variety of cotton and other exotic seeds. So the colonial Government introduced various other types of ploughs suited better for the cultivation of cotton in Tamilnadu. But the local ryots were reluctant to try them up. The ryots were very much attached to their age old plough, being simple in nature and easy to handle. In addition, the native bullock could not draw the imported ploughs like Swedish plough owing to the heaviness of its nature. More over the imported ploughs were costly ranging from Rs. 8-0-0 upto Rs. 18-0-0, which the poor ryots could not afford to buy owing to their poor economic background. Even if the ryots bought the other improved ploughs like the Cotton plough and E. P. Plough which bore the same cost of the country plough, the Indian bulls could not drag them. So the Government started establishing farms to breed oxens.
The livestock improvements were conducted in various farms in Tamilnadu to suit the ploughs imported from various countries. Veterinary Colleges were established in Madras and in Coimbatore for the study and the improvement of livestock. Cattle breeding was conducted at various levels for the upbringing of good bulls that suited for the agricultural purposes and the transportation in the country. In the later years Hosur Central Cattle Farm, Ongole Cattle Farm, Agricultural College Diary Farm and Madras Breeding Bulls at Veterinary College did wonderful work in the midst of various set backs.

In spite of the positive effects of the promotion of commercialization of agriculture on the Tamil society, one could not forget the negative influence that affected the Tamil society. The peasantry were pauperized to the core through the repeated failure of the commercial crop cultivation owing to the failure of rain, seasonal fluctuation and over assessment. The ryots normally cultivated the paddy, which did not need much capital to be invested. The cultivation of paddy also did not need much care and attention. Even if the paddy crop failed owing to the seasonal fluctuation and drought, it did not harm much the economy of the ryots, because the investment needed for the cultivation was very low.

Whereas the cultivation of commercial crops such as cotton, groundnut, tobacco etc needed a considerable amount of capital to be invested to begin even the process of ploughing. Not only that, the crops was needed to
be paid special attention and care throughout to which the native ryots were unfamiliar. And so when commercial crops failed, the ryots were directly affected materially. The economic condition of the peasantry was on the whole deplorable. The large majority of the cultivators were always in poverty and generally in debt finding very difficult to make both ends meet. The peasantry and the ryots got regular employment only on the favourable season. During the unseason they had to find work in other places for their survival. The ryots wedded to the soil stayed around the small cultivable land even during the unseason. If his crops failed in one season, he had to wait for other season to come, till then he and his family had to be fed through the money obtained from the moneylender. His food and that of his family comprised of porridge made of grain boiled in water. He lived in thatched houses built of mud walls liable for destruction in flood. They slept on the ground. His bed sheet was made of coir and rope in rough frames. Very often high wind collapsed their houses.

The misery of the ryots were not only intensified through the failure of the commercial crops but also increased by the death of his livestock owing to diseases, famine and lack of fodder. Since the livestock was considered as the property of these ryots a loss incurred through the calamity of these livestock would be a serious set back in the economy of the peasantry. Even the local bull cost around Rs. 15-0-0 which was the three months salary of ryots obtained in a favourable season. Famines of 1866-68, 1877 and 1887
washed away the livestock population from the country. Lakhs of cattle died owing to various reasons, leaving the peasantry to a pitiable condition. The death of the imported and high breed variety of the bull caused a heavy economic distress to the peasantry.

Thus failure of rain, seasonal fluctuation, low wages, famine and drought necessitated the migration process from the native to unknown places within the Tamil country, or out of the Tamil country to distant places. The labour demand created by the natives as well as the foreign in the plantations of Tea, Coffee, Indigo and Sugarcane, activated the process of emigration from district to district, province to province and country to country. Normally most of the people emigrated to the nearby places. In Tamilnadu from the districts of Tirunelveli, Madurai and Thanjavur, a majority of the population migrated to the nearby country Ceylon to work in the Tea and Coffee plantations. They worked in the plantation one or two years and returned home with hand full of money. The life style of those migrated people and their savings obtained from their wages in the plantation attracted a lot of people towards overseas migration. The bulk of emigration that shifted to the other country for survival affected the agricultural development in the districts of Thanjavur and Tiruchirappalli. Collectors had reported to the Board of Revenue about the scarcity of labourer created through migration. The exodus of population was not felt seriously in other districts. Thus the commercialization of agriculture became a cause for the disintegration of the Tamil society.