CHAPTER - II

'LAND-OWNERSHIP' - UNDER 'COLONIAL PRESSURE'
(A.D.1771 - A.D.1799)

The post-Chōla period and those of the Nāyak and Marātha rulers do not stand in comparison with the Chōla-rule which had a strong central power. Judged by the conditions that prevailed in the Eighteenth century the deterioration had become irreversible. Rejuvenation had revitalisation of the economy was still possible. Occasionally, the Country had also enjoyed settled Government and benevolent administration as under Shāji.¹ Shāji's rule extended for over thirty years, when the cultivators regularly paid the dues to the Sirrār. Serfōji I and Tukkōji, who succeeded enjoyed the fruits of the labour of Shāji. The Country is reported to have yielded "seventy-five lakhs kalams of rice worth about lakhs of pagodas".² Such conditions mark the life of the third-quarter of eighteenth century Tanjore.

The Marātha rule continued upto A.D.1799. The last quarter of the Eighteenth century records disturbing trends. The Marātha rulers of the later era had


to bear the heavy pressure-tactics of the colonial powers competing for political supremacy in India. This was the "Era of colonialism". The European Companies tried to acquire commercial and territorial interests. It is well-known that the English (British) emerged as the most successful of the competitors. The British by this time had decided to build up "an imperial fabric on the ruins of the Mughal Empire".  

With this end in view, the English interfered in the "Politics of Tanjore" and acquired the fort of Dévikottah in A.D. 1749, during the reign of Pratāp-Singh.  

The motives of the British are patent in as much as in their letters to the Directors of the East-India-Company they openly declared that "it appears most unfortunate to us that the Rāja of Tanjore should hold the most fertile part of the country".  

To achieve their object, they offered help to the Nawāb of the Carnātic. The Nawāb had already looked to Tanjore "as an El Dórado and was making plans to invade it". The Company helped the


Nawāb in his campaigns of A.D.1771 and A.D.1773, by lending troops. Between A.D.1773 and 1776, Tanjore was controlled by the Nawāb. The land was plunged into confusion, and in A.D.1776, the Company restored the Raja to power. The arch-enemy of the British, Hyder Ali of Mysore was determined to oust them with the assistance of the French and the Dutch. He invaded Tanjore and the impact of his thrust was disastrous.

Tanjore suffered because of the Nawābs' occupation and Hyder's invasion. The impact of these two happenings can be summarised:

1. The Nawāb's creditors took advantage of his impending bankruptcy. They usurped the wealth of the subjects using the debtor's political authority.

2. Many deserted their homeland (Tanjore) during Hyder's invasion. Their lands were transferred to fresh immigrants.

3. Revenue-farmers (Pathakdārs) appropriated the lands of the timid and poor, taking advantage of the weakness of the political authority after Hyder's invasion.

4. 'Maneum' lands were added to the existing patterns of land-ownership.

The Carnatic Nawab was immersed head over ears in debts. Even the occupation of the fertile territory of Tanjore for three years (A.D. 1773 to 1776) could not relieve him of his obligations. The servants of the British East-India Company became his principal creditors. He bequeathed Tanjore to his creditors. The foremost among the list of creditors was Paul Benfield. He advanced large sums of money to the Nawab, Nawabs' sons and inhabitants of the Tanjore country. As security for repayment, they assigned to him their individual shares of current-revenue. The Nawab, in addition issued "Tankas" or "Assignments" on the country of Thanjavur, to a sum of "one hundred and two million pounds".

These actions, practically implied the hypothecation to the creditors of the Nawab, of the standing crops of the agriculturists and the prospective revenue


11. Defence of Lord Pigot (London, 1777) p.69


to the state. This served as the green signal for the creditors to collect the revenue from the cultivators to make good the amount due to them. For the purpose of collection they appointed "Agents" who came to be called as "Dubāshīs". Most of them were principal land-holders of the country having intimate relationships with the East-India Company. At the cost of petty land-owners, they usurped lands whenever opportunities arose. In this hypothesis, the worst sufferers were the petty landowners and the cultivating peasants. Creditors like Paul Benfield "exacted the last pie from the hungry, dumb and helpless cultivators".

The total quantity of rice produced in Tanjore-country during A.D.1775 is estimated at 13,300,00 kalams of paddy. The price being five panams per Kalam, the Nawāb is said to have collected as Sircar share of

15. Ibid., p.108.
paddy 17,45,625 star pagodas. This sum is the net income after customary deductions of 7,850,000 kalam that is 89% of the gross produce.\textsuperscript{18} According to Lord Pigot the Nawāb exacted 97½ lakhs of chakrams. Evidently, the Tanjore country must have experienced economic degradation. As Schwartz puts it "These three years may be described as the most lamentable period in the glorious history of the Tanjore country".\textsuperscript{19}

Petty land-owners could not meet these heavy demands and bear forced exactions. The 'Agents' adopted deceitful methods and usurped lands. Approaching the defaulting peasants, the Agents offered to clear the arrears on their behalf, and ultimately appropriated their lands.\textsuperscript{20} Many left the country under such circumstances.\textsuperscript{21} The net result was the usurpation of lands by the 'Agents' of the Nawāb's creditors who were already affluent. Many cultivators died of starvation, and a large number of


\textsuperscript{19} Quoted by C.K.Srinivasan; 'Maratha-rule in the Carnatic' - Op.Cit. p.303.


\textsuperscript{21} Ibid. p.364.
people wandered for want of food and work.  

Hyder Ali's invasion created a stir and paralysed the economic scene. The weakness of Rāja Tuljāji's administration, and the devastating effects of Hyder's raids caused heavy exodus of petty-landowners and agricultural labourers. After A.D.1785 the Marātha ruler, attempted rehabilitation. Tanjore-country suffered most between A.D.1781 and 1785. Hyder was the supreme master of the country during the interval. Hyder's cruelty had become proverbial.  

Edmund Burke said "For eighteen months, the destruction raged from the gates of Madras to gates of Tanjore". Schwartz wrote that "he happened to witness a heap of dead bodies like a hill "while he was passing through the streets on a morning of a day at this time."

Wars were followed by famines. Schwartz gives a graphic description when he writes "As the famines were so aggressive and of long continuance... many thousands died of want....... It is not at all surprising to find desolated villages". The statement quoted hereunder will give a true picture of the situation:-

24. Selection of Essays from Hazlitt and others.(Oxford-Clarendon Press 1966) p.120.  
### Statement of the Nanja or Paddy of the Tanjore-Country for a Series of Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fasli</th>
<th>Produce of Paddy Kalams</th>
<th>M.M.</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1,19,09,085</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Prior to Hyder's war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>18,00,807</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>15,63,123</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>During the War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>43,60,911</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>First introduction of Pathak system by Bava which effected the recovery of the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>60,83,473</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>74,54,387</td>
<td>8.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>69,01,311</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>75,27,856</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>Shiva Row 'Sirkleship'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>74,96,530</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>81,08,306</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>91,17,863</td>
<td>0.1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>91,19,863</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>Company's management during war with Tippu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>92,44,218</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>1,00,29,365</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>97,11,782</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>Country restored to Raja.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>1,04,16,746</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>1,03,23,326</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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27. Extracted by the Commissioners from the Daftars in the palace. This is exclusive of lands under fixed rent, Manums etc. (Report of Tanjore - Commissioners, 1799) p.5.
The Table suggests that in A.D. 1780, an
year before Hyder's assault, 1,19,09,085 Kalam's of paddy
had been produced. The yield had remained at 'Nadir'
(very low level) upto A.D. 1784. Since then, it shows signs
of improvement. The destruction of embankments and
channels by Hyder's troops must have caused great havoc
and hence the low yield. Sixty-two percent of the
standing crops was looted by Hyder's men. The terror-
stricken cultivators were frustrated. The exodus began
and many cultivators flocked to the fort of Trichinopoly.
Cultivable lands were abandoned and agricultural opera-
tions were smothered. There were also forcible migra-
tions by Hyder Ali.

Even after the restoration of the Maratha-
country to the Rāja in 1785 by the British, same conditions
appear to have prevailed. "The weak administration was
harsh with the ryots". Appeals for redressal by the
people and the advice tendered to the Rāja by the

29. Bayley and Hudleston: "Papers on Mirāśi rights"
(Memo by Col. Black-burne, the resident at Thanjavur
to Lord William Bentinck dated 27th September 1804)
(Madras, 1892) p.90.
p.92.
British Governor of Fort Saint George went unheeded. The cultivators of the Southern and Western parts of the country in righteous indignation suspended agricultural operations.\textsuperscript{32} Agriculturists deserted their homes and fled to neighbouring areas of Kāraikkāl, Pudukkōttai and Trichinopoly in search of asylums.\textsuperscript{33} An unprecedented decline in the total population of the Tanjore-country is noticeable at this point of time.\textsuperscript{34}

The native ruler had to face problems of great magnitude. The "Mirāsī papers" portray the situation in the following words. "If a mirāsādār abandons his land, the government grants to another person. This is a circumstance which never happened except in times of war or famine or in consequence of particular oppression. Such thing had happened in Tanjore-country during and after Hyder's invasion".\textsuperscript{35} Tanjore witnessed large-scale migrations, too, since economic conditions prevailing in other areas of Tamilnadu at this juncture were equally miserable. Absence of a strong native rule and Colonial-


\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.


competitions ruined the economy.

As a result of the migrations, certain parts of the Tanjore country were filled with new entrants into the region. To cite an instance, the "Padayāṭchis" from Salem and South Arcot moved across in the outer reaches of Tondai-country and down into East and North of Kāvēri-delta. Among the new-comers a considerable number of immigrants belonged to Vellālar, 'Padayāṭchi', Mooppanar and Kōnar castes and they should be specially mentioned. It was this circumstance that came to the rescue of the native Marātha Government. The deserted lands were distributed among the new immigrants. Venkasami Row makes the following observation: "The events of Hyder's invasion afforded hoards of Kailars from south and other interpoling communities a wide opening for gaining footing in the delta and they formed new landholdings. In course of time under settled Governments, these became valuable properties for them. In many cases, these new settlers occupied the lands that had been deserted by the old


Mirāṣīdārs and for which there were no living owners". 38

Few of those who fled, however returned when matters improved. They filed their claims over their erstwhile estates. The claims of the newly created mirasdars were disputed. 39 In certain cases, the successors of former land-lords demanded compensation for their labour, buildings they had erected and other expenses they had incurred. They were dissatisfied with the compensation dispensed by the Government. The period witnessed number of sales, mortgages and transfers of lands among Mirāṣīdārs. 40

The Sirca's share of the produce at this time was also very high. Fifty-four to sixty-two percent of the gross produce was collected. The newly created landed-gentry was ready to accept any term imposed, in their anxiety to win favour. Others were unable to cope-up with the demand of the Sirca. The pioneer immigrant-communities were first accommodated as "Pycāri settlers".

38. Ibid., p.407.


This meant that they had the right of "Kudivāram" only. The arrangement was of a temporary nature. Only a section of them, in course of time, acquired "Melvāram" and gained status of land-owners. Others continued as tenants.

In the process of settling the deserted lands on the immigrant pycaries the native Marātha Government had taken extra care in safeguarding the rights of the brahmins. "To the properties of brahmins, their rights had been firmly asserted, and to the properties of others, the Government did not show such assertions". 41 As a result, the affected persons were the traditional Vellāla land-owners. "A bulk of their (Vellāla) holdings passed directly into the hands of non-brahmin classes. Of these classes, the most prominent are Kāllars, a recent colony from the wild-country to the south, and next perhaps are the Padayātchies, a class of immigrants from the north of Coleron". 42 Particularly during the weak rule of Amarsingh, these militant communities, by

41. Ibid., p.407.
threatening the people and appropriating "kāvalī" rights (rural police) forced the timid and weak ryots to part with their lands. By the end of the Eighteenth-century, they also joined the ranks of "Big land-lords" along with brahmins and Vellālas.

The dislocation caused by Hyder's invasions, also resulted in the Marātha Government making experiments with revenue-administration. After Restoration, Rāja Tuljāji introduced a system of revenue-administration called "Amāni". The crops were harvested, supervised by the officers of the Government and the actual amount was taken as the basis of village rent. To secure the Governments' share of the produce, village-accountants and other officials were appointed. The weakness of this arrangement was that the poorly paid officials were corrupt. Unrealistic accounts were prepared and the Governments' share dwindled. The system was short-lived.

43. Ibid. Pp.4-7.
45. Ibid.
Opposition came from the land-owners. Hence, it was dropped after two years of trial. The 'Grain rent' system was restored. Commuted in terms of money, part of the dues were realised in money and part in grains.

Groping in the dark, the Maratha Government was unable to strike at a suitable arrangement for collection of revenue. Internally, production-relations were affected. Under the advice of the British Governor, the Raja's Government devised a new arrangement to remedy the situation. Tuljäji's minister Bāva Pundit was the architect of the system. This system known as the 'Pathak system' encouraged intermediary landowners as Revenue farmers. It had the noble objective of restoration of agricultural operations paralysed by Haideris. Blackburne observes that "the measure was introduced with the objective of stemming deterioration". The arrangement was not extended to certain areas, and


in those areas the old system continued to operate.  

Under the new arrangement the country was divided into many 'Pathakums'. Each 'Pathakum' consisted of one or more villages. A village that had suffered in the war was included in a Pathakum with another village which had a lesser impact of the wars, by means of transferring cattle, husbandry and resources, in the hope of gaining mutual relief. The Pathakums were controlled by principal land-holders, who were selected by the inhabitants and approved by the Sircār. Subsequently, the principal land-holders became intermediary agents between the Government and the inhabitants. The Sircār also received an assurance from the people who promised to cultivate such portion of the land as might have been previously agreed upon. Between A.D. 1782 and 1800, these revenue-farmers used the situation to promote their self-interests. They amassed wealth and the British Company accepted them as "Monopoly Mirāsīs"

57. Ibid. p.3.
In the beginning, this system records success, Bāva left to the full charge of the principal land-owners the entire management of the villages in the Pathakums. The Commissioner’s Report records "This salutary arrangement had the desired effect.... confidence, a sport of industry revived and the produce was also raised from its eighteen to sixty lakhs of kālamś.58 Impressed by the initial success, Bāva wanted to continue the system for four or five years and then revert to the village system.59 In the mean time, Bāva was succeeded by Shiva-Row. To Shiva-Row, the system appeared to be ideal. He extended it throughout the Delta by creating many Pathakums.

With the efflux of time, the Pathakdārs too fell into the rut and soon lost their integrity. They seized the opportunity to promote self-interests. They turned merciless and oppressive. Setting aside the old procedure for appointment of Pathakdārs, Shiva-Row directly recruited land-owners who proved to be cunning and corrupt. The office was sold to the highest bidder.60 Some of the Pathakdārs were hereditarily affluent land-owners, "Vadapāthi māngalam Mudaliar, Valivalam Dēśikar,

58. Ibid. p.5.
59. Ibid. p.5.
Kapistalam Mooppanār, and Poonḍi Vāndayars could be cited as examples. Sowkars (money-lenders) also became Pathakdārs. There are also cases of powerful Kāvalgars appointed as Pathakdārs.

Such Pathakdārs usurped wealth of the poor and timid by unfair means. The Marātha policy of entrusting revenue administration under their care gave them the opportunity. With a view to enable the Pathakdārs to exercise full authority, Shiva-Row abolished all Government offices and dismissed the officials. He invested the Pathakdārs with the authority delegated to different Sircār services. At one sweep Government (Royal) authority was transferred to the Pathakdārs. They were armed with 'Over-riding powers'. The Report of the Commissioners of 1799, reads: "They found an overgrown and inordinate power in the character of Pathakdārs and further the suppression of many active and useful officers of Government made them to act independently without any control of superior powers." The Committee Report of 1807 reads: "In theory, they were not to be equalled with Zāmīndārs. In practice, they appear to have acted in the character


64. Commissioners Report: (1799) Pp.3-5.
of zamindary farmers. The Pathakdārs armed with such powers and authority oppressed the poor ryots. By A.D. 1800, there were about two-hundred and fifteen Pathakdārs of this type and the number of villages included in the rent of a Pathakdār varied from one-hundred and twenty-eight to one.

In oppressing the poor ryots, the Pathakdārs made use of Kāvalgārs. This alliance with a common objective was beneficial to both. The institution of Kāvalgārs (Rural police) degenerated into a band of oppressive robbers. Belonging to a class of warriors, the Kāvalgārs had gained experience of using Pikes, and Matchlocks continuously. At the end of the eighteenth century, there were many Kāvalgārs belonging to the communities of Kallar and Padyāṭchi. The weakness of the central power, emboldened them and they defied its authority. They began to make demands on the properties, they were employed


to protect. After Hyders' raids, their power had increased enormously in the Tanjore country. In conjunction with the kāvalgārs, the Pathakdārs plundered the ryots and forced them to disperse, if the ryots resisted them. Under the guise of "Extra charges", the Pathakdārs levied and collected a fine of ten to fifteen paṇams on every hundred kalum of the gross nanja produce. The properties of the cultivators who failed to pay the arrears of revenue were confiscated by the Pathakdārs. Some of the Pathakdārs were, Mirāsādārs and Kāvalgārs rolled into one and this helped them to threaten the ryots and appropriate their properties.

The cultivators had no other alternative but to appeal to the Sircār for redress. The Sircār also maintained a military force called "Sibbandey". But they were powerless and the aggrieved civil-servants paid scant attention to such appeals. If at all the Sircār came forward to pull-up an erring Kāvalgār severely, the Kavalgār could easily escape to the neighbouring warrior-

70. Tanjore Commissioners' Report (1799) : Op.Cit.p.4
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid. p.4.
pollam like Ariyalūr or by crossing the Coleron, they could escape into the woods of Tondaimandalam.\textsuperscript{73}

In their Pathukams, the Pathakdārs always kept the most fertile lands to their personal enjoyment. Such lands always yielded more than "Pooramore", sometimes double the Governments' share.\textsuperscript{74} This is supported by the Report of Harris, the first collector of Tanjore, who confesses that he received many complaints from many cultivators that they had been allotted land of low fertility.\textsuperscript{75}

The Pathakdārs manipulated things cleverly that the people and the Government had no chance of knowing the productive capacity of land under their custody. Harris reports that since the reign of Pratēp-Singh "the advantageous position of the soil had been felt neither by the Government nor by the lower and most useful and numerous class of the people".\textsuperscript{76} They usurped the most

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., p.7.

\textsuperscript{74} Proceedings of the Board of Revenue dated 7\textsuperscript{th} August 1800. Letters from Harris, the collector at Mannargudy (Vol. 259) p.6962 (T.N.A).

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., p.6962

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., p.6963
advantageous lands. Since the Maratha Government itself was not keeping proper accounts of the revenues, it was easy for the Pathakdārs to cheat the Government. The Maratha Rājas were indifferent to the loss of revenue caused by the fraudulent behaviour of the Pathakdārs.

The Pathakdārs, in addition, monopolised the paddy-market of the District. It was easy for them since they had control over the release of the produce and the money-power. They were free to sell the accumulated stock during the interval of the close of the Fašli and the time of reaping the 'Kār' crop. This was the most appropriate time to maximise returns from sales, and actually the Pathakdārs could fix the price at their will. If the Kār harvest could be delayed, they were more happy. They had plenty of opportunities to drain the market of paddy and create scarcity.

The extensive grant of lands of "Maneums",

77. Ibid., p.6962
78. Ibid., p.6964
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid., p.7100
during this time in the Tanjore area is unprecedented. 81
The Māneum grants were revenue-free. 82 "Māneums" have
been a marked feature of Marātha rule. This is substan-
tiated by Harris, the first Collector. He wrote "The
custom peculiar to Native-Government of conferring private
favour by alienation of public-revenue seems to have
largely prevailed in Tanjore and during the reign of
Amārsingh have been at its height . . . . . . The
extensive grants of lands in Māneums during this time
was unprecedented". 83 The Commissioners' Report reaffirms
the statement by declaring that "Amārsingh had spent a lot
by means of lavish award of Māneums, Ināms, etc". 84
Venkasami Row refers to doubts expressed in some quarters
about non-traceability of Māneum grants during the Pallava
and Chōla rules that preceded. 85 He concludes, that, it
is probable that such grants of those dynasties as existed
were resumed by the Marāthas and converted into grants of

81. Ibid., p. 6958
82. Eric Strokes: "The Peasant Raj" (Delhi 1978) p. 46.
83. Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Vol. 259)
their own. It is said that in pre-Marātha days, "Māneums" were 'Pre-bandal estates' granted to officials.86

The 'Māneums' granted by Marātha-rulers consisted of endowments to religious and charitable institutions and grants to benefit individuals, chiefly brahmans. There were also 'Māneums' meant for remuneration of service to the State or to the village communities or for maintenance of tanks and irrigation.87

Among them, the most important are the grants of several villages for the upkeep of many 'chathrams' endowed by the Marātha rulers and their consorts. Between A.D. 1743 and 1843, the Tanjore country was filled with many 'Chathrams' for accommodation of travellers on the main road to Rāmeswaram.88 Endowments made to Chathrams, consisted of entire villages, detached pieces of lands and gardens which were all under "Sarvamāniurns".89

86. Ibid., p.675.
87. Ibid.
Since these grants were made by Rajas and members of the royal family, they were called "Paravaangi". The earliest grant traceable is dated A.D. 1730. But most of them were made during the later half of the Eighteenth-century and of these, the bulk by Raja Pratapsingh and Raja Tuljaji. Some of the villages were purchased and endowed in favour of 'Chathrams'.

Such endowments were treated as the properties of the 'Chathrams'. Temples, Dispensaries, and Sanskrit schools were attached to the Chathrams and the maintenance expenses of all these were met from Chathram endowments. No sanads were issued for the purpose. These lands always remained 'Paravaangi'. The endowments of Raja Chathrams comprising nineteen charitable institutions inclusive of endowments made by Shivaji in the later period consisted of seventy-six villages, ten strtiem villages, thirty-five scattered tracts of lands

90. Paravaangi: Charitable Grants made by queens for which sanad was granted by the Raja.


93. Tanjore records Vol.3202 dt.20th January 1801 Translation of a letter from His Excellency Serfoji Raja to Benjamin Torin, Para.I. (T.N.A.)
besides temples and gardens. The total extent of cultivable wet and dry lands in the endowed villages was 39,864 acres, equivalent to sixty-three square-miles scattered over mainly in the taluks of Kumbakonam, Tanjore, Mannarkudi and Puttukottai.  

'Maneums' granted to individuals was for different purposes. Civil and Military officials in Government service received such Maneums. Small "Inams" were gifted to families of soldiers who died in battle. 'Sinecure grants' were also made to individuals who were religious scholars, priests, dancers, musicians and other varieties of artistes. The beneficiaries were mostly from the brahmin community. "Village-service Inams" were usually in the form of small plots of land measuring one Kani (1.33 acres).

Examples could be cited. In A.D. 1777 four villages were granted as Maneums to an official, Dabir-Panditah by Raja Tuljaji.  

94. Strotiem villages: Lands here were charged low rent.  

95. The villages are Mukaasu, Sokkachu, Thalayanur and Nanni-mahalgalam.  
officer was granted thousand - three hundred and fifty Kuli in the village Pandaravada of Thiruvaliyaru Taluk. In A.D.1778, about four villages were granted to public-works, like a Market at Rajakumarpuram. Another record speaks of a 'Water - Pandal' in a brahmin settlement, during the reign of Raja Paratapsingh.

In A.D.1745, several villages were granted to brahmans at Kuttalam and Samudra Agraharam. In A.D.1786, lands were gifted (Buddan) to some brahmans in a village called Baravanasi. A record dated A.D.1786 refers to Maneums granted to musicians of Bhagavatha Mela, belonging to brahmin community at Mannargudi.


100. Ibid., p.29.

same year, lands were granted to brahmin-scholars in the villages of Tiruppūnthuruthi and Perumūr as 'Sārvamānium'. Maratha brahmins were also beneficiaries of such grants. Rāja Shāji made endowments to hospitals.

Such distributions inevitably brought a fresh stream of land-owners, and inescapable changes in the nature of obligations to the Sīrcār. The effects could to briefly stated as: (1) Creation of a complex socio-economic structure (2) Perpetuation of agrestic servitude, emphasising attachment of slaves to lands. (3) Increase in the importance of the 'Pyçāries' in tenancy system. Large-scale diffusion of lands and the consequent diversification of land-ownership incorporating more communities to the class of 'owners' was a patent result. A significant development is the


inclusion of some muslims. Proprietary right is not to be seen among untouchables.

It should also be noted that only a section of the immigrants became proprietors. Even among the communities who became proprietors, many remained landless. They continued as tenants and labourers. This makes us infer that "proprietorship" was gained by
(a) Traditional aristocratic communities of brahmins and vellālas
(b) Telugu Naidus - former soldiers and government servants
(c) Kāḷḷar chieftains
(d) Marātha immigrants
(e) Padayātchies, Mooppanārs, Kōḷārs
(f) Communities like Pāḷḷar and Paraiyar continued to be agricultural labourers and were landless. The formation of the socio-economic hierarchy may be illustrated by a chart:


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades under Social Structure</th>
<th>Revenue paying village</th>
<th>Tax-free lands</th>
<th>Lands under Kallar chieftains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LAND OWNERS</strong></td>
<td>Brahmins, Vellālers, a section belonging to various 'Sudra' communities</td>
<td>(a) Temples and Chathrams under the supervision of Brahmin, Vellāla land-owners besides Government officials.</td>
<td>Kallar chieftains as intermediary land-owners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Lands allotted to Government officials.</td>
<td>Others owning land at the pleasure of the chieftains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(c) Service communities owning pieces of lands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TENANTS</th>
<th>Sudras</th>
<th>Sudras</th>
<th>Sudras</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGRICULTURAL SLAVES</td>
<td>Pallars, Parāyas and few Sudras</td>
<td>Pallars and Parāyas</td>
<td>Pallars and Parāyas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even after the shuffling, the prominent community of proprietors are the brahmins. This is due to the patronage extended to the brahmins by the various rulers of the Tanjore country. Even when the economy reached the lowest ebb, the rulers did not fail to
patronise the brahmins. The interest evinced by the Marātha ruler in protecting the brahmin community is patently brought out in the Nāgore settlement.\textsuperscript{107} Clause II speaks of the protection to the extended to 'Brahmin Chéries'. Clause III prohibits building construction near brahmin properties and buildings. Pearson writes "under a frame of Government so wretched... the Children of brahmins are better educated. Besides, thousands attached to the temples from the land and hold offices under the king.... They possess best land and give away nothing".\textsuperscript{108} We have to admit that the pattern of land-ownership of this period had acquired a much more dynamic and complex character with brahmin influence patently noticeable.

"pycāri Cultivation" (Tenancy - cultivation) received better encouragement.\textsuperscript{109} Affluent land-owners of the period found it difficult to cultivate lands


because of shortage of agricultural labourers. This shortage was due to large-scale migration of agricultural communities from Tanjore-country to other areas during and after Hyder's invasions. Many, who remained at Tanjore died of starvation. A few were employed as sepoys by the British. The land-owners, prior to Haider's raids, largely depended on the labour of Pañaya slaves. Each Mirāsdār maintained thirty to forty slaves. Now, each Mirāsdār had hardly one or two. The Mirasdārs formed a distinct order between the masses and the Government and by virtue of this status, they could not afford to damage the social esteem they enjoyed. They considered it below their dignity and station in life to undertake agricultural-operations themselves. The 'status phobia' influenced the less affluent land-owners too. By the end of the Eighteenth-century, sizable majority of land-owners had become "Absentee". Brahmin's and Vellālas were bound by ritual

110. Ibid.
111. Ibid., p.23.
112. Mirāsi Papers: "Memo of Blackburne............"
injunctions and conventions, and they abstained from manual work.

Governments' action of affording asylums to immigrant labour acted as a catalyst for the promotion of "Absenteeism". Immigrants from other areas were acknowledged as "Pycāries". Those who had remained at Tanjore facing vissicitudes of fortune were known as "Ulkudis" - that is 'resident tenants'. With the introduction of 'Pycāri Tenancy', there arose two branches namely "Residential" and "Non-Residential". The former were identified as "Ulkudis" and the latter as "Purakudis". The "Ulkudis" were regarded as the permanent tenants of the Mirāsdars who held ancestral lands in the locality. Though they could not acquire permanent proprietary rights over land, their tenure was better guarded than the Purakudis, who were treated as "Tenants at Will". Some of the Ulkudi tenants who had served masters over generations, in course of


114. Tanjore Records Vol. 3216 Letter of Wallace sent to the Board of Revenue dated 1.5.1805 p. 12 (T.N.A.)

115. Ibid.
time, acquired quasi-proprietary rights over the lands they tilled. "They appear to have had a sort of life-estate in the Mirāśi land they had cultivated". 116

The Puṇakudis (Non-residents) were "tenants at will" employed to cultivate a portion of the Mirāśdārs' land for a year on terms of agreement specified. They were free to shift their allegiance from landlord to land-lord and free to move from village to village. At the expiry of the term of agreement, they were liable for eviction. Another branch of 'Puṇakudi' was the "Sukanthai". 117 Their services being of a temporary character, they received a higher Vāram or sharē of the produce than the resident Pycāris. 118 Under the rule of the Marāthas, the Pycāris received from the Mirāśdārs more or less 20% of the gross-produce. This amounts to half of the Kudivāram allowed to Mirāśdārs that is 40%. 119

Attachment of slaves with land, as pointed

116. Ibid., p. 16.

117. Ibid., p. 17.

118. He received 5% more than the Resident Pycāris, Mirāśi Papers : Op.Cit., p. 10.

out earlier, had been a continuous feature. Their importance grew now because of circumstances. Mostly, they were drawn from the castes of Pallars and Pāraiyyars. Agrestic slave was "Adimai". Identical practices, have also been designated as "Pannayāl system" and "Padiyāl system". 120 "Communal ownership" formula was still in vogue though with less vigour, slaves were held jointly by the whole village. Their sale, independent of land-transactions was prohibited. Among the privileges attached to the Mīrās was a "Share in the labour of people". The slaves worked for Mīrāsdaśars in rotation according to a share which each had in villages". 121 This was a different form of agrestic servitude, than which existed in Malabar or Canara, where land was held exclusively as private property—the labourer was the personal slave of his proprietor who sold or mortgaged


121. Mīrāsi Papers. p.29.