Agriculture is the primary sector in an economy. Majority of the population in India (Nearly 70%) depends upon it, even today for earning their livelihood. In 19th century Kamataka, agriculture was a very important segment of the economy. It is therefore essential to study the repercussions of the decline of handicrafts on this crucial sector of the economy.

Some of the important changes that were widely discussed includes commercialization of agriculture and increased pressure of population on land, which was vividly described by Bentinck in the following words; “The bones of the cotton weavers, were bleaching the plains of India”. Other changes like fragmentation of land holdings, disguised unemployment in agriculture, extension of arable land area, increased rural indebtedness, transfer of land from actual cultivators to non-cultivators like money lenders zamindars & sowcars, decline in the cultivation of food grains, increase in the value of land, famines, decline of Jajmani system, decline of rural handicrafts, increased agricultural exports, favorable balance of trade and maintenance of favorable rupee sterling ratio are also widely debated.

Agriculture was thus the backbone of the country which underwent several structural changes in Kamataka during the 19th century.
Agriculture in the Initial Decades of 19th Century

Mysore Province:

In order to understand the changes witnessed by this sector it is very important to understand how it was in the beginning of the 19th century. Many works produced in the beginning of the 19th century reports about the backwardness in this sector. It was very common to condemn Indian cultivation as primitive and imperfect during that period. Even early accounts of travellers like Buchanan team with reference to the want of skill in every branch of this occupation on the part of the ryot. From his remarks we gather that near Srirangapattana agrestic slavery was universal. Buchanan tells:“Ameliorating succession of crops is utterly unknown. Scarcely any attention is paid to the improvement of the breed of laboring cattle and still less to providing them with sufficient nourishment.”

Buchanan tells that wages for agricultural labor was extremely low, which amounted to about 6 fanams for a man and 5 fanams for woman, to do one month of work. Striking a melancholy note about the economic condition of the farmers he writes:“Many farmers in every part of the country are so poor that they cannot stock a farm of one plough; and for

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this purpose, two or even three are some times obliged to unite their capitals. A man who keeps three or four ploughs is a wealthy person.\footnote{326}{C. Hayavadana Rao, “Mysore Gazetteer” – Compiled for Government, Bangalore (1927-30), Page 410.}

He (Buchanan) also speaks about the existence of the \textit{Jajamani} system in which the cultivator paid the rural artisans in kind, for the services rendered, after harvesting his crop. At the village of Agara, at a distance of two cosses from Bangalore, he observed this system. The \textit{ryots} in this village frequently received advances from the merchants of Bangalore to pay their rents and were afterwards contented to take one half of the crop for the advance and interest, at the time of harvest. Their advances were sometimes made six months before the crop was reaped.

The manner of dividing the crop, with an average heap size of twenty \textit{candacas} was described by him. In this division \textit{Cumbhara} (pot maker) and \textit{Vasaradava} (carpenter cum blacksmith) were given 2 seers each, in return for the services rendered by them to the village community.\footnote{327}{Francis Buchanan “A journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore, Canara, & Malabar”, Vol.1, - London, 1807, p.265.}

Besides Buchanan tells that the farmer cultivating dry field should pay in addition to the rent, the following dues:

- To the barber, 30 seers for every heap of grain.
- To the pot maker for pots, from 20 to 30 seers.
- To the iron smith, 20 seers for every plough.\footnote{328}{Francis Buchanan “A journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore, Canara, & Malabar”, Vol.1, - London, 1807, p.267.}
Thus, it becomes clear that jajmani system was prevalent in the villages of Mysore, in the beginning of 19th century.

During this period, the mode of estimating the extent of land in Mysore was not by actual measurement but by quantity of seed grain required to sow the land. The term ‘kandy’ a dry measure, was that which was universally applied in describing a portion of land and a ‘kandy’ of land signified that extent of land in which a kandy of seed grain was sown. As however any given extent of wet land required about four times the quantity of seed that could be sown with advantage in the same extent of dry land, a kandy of dry land was four times as large as a kandy of wet land. According to Colonel Wilks the share of the Government in the gross produce of land was about 40 percent, while 60 percent remained to the cultivator to reward him for his labors and to recoup his cost. He had also the profits arising out of livestock.\(^\text{329}\)

Dewan Pumaiah took energetic steps to improve the agricultural situation of Mysore. During his administration between 1800 and 1810, restoration of tanks, which were the main sources of minor irrigation, was taken up on a large scale. The public records of that period show that annually a sum of about 1.5 lakhs of rupees on the average was utilized for this purpose.\(^\text{330}\) Besides, an attempt was made to construct dams across Kaveri and Lakshmanatirtha rivers. Pumaiah rightly realized that


irrigation was sine-qua-non for agriculture. As a result of these measures, Mysore agriculture was in a very good condition during the first decade of the 19th century. Though the demand of land revenue was as high as 40% of the total produce, the situation remained under control. Therefore Mysore province did not witness famines during this period, though there were occasional scarcities. Thus when the rest of India faced scarcity of food grains in 1804, Mysore produced plenty of grains, not only sufficient to feed its own population, but also for the neighbouring inhabitants who had taken shelter in Mysore to protect themselves from famine. Mysore merchant's exported food grains to Bombay Karnataka and ceded districts during the famine of 1804.

The prosperity of Mysore province can be understood by the letter written by Purnaiah to the Governor General of Bengal in 1810; which reads as follows; “The rain in this country has been equal to our wishes, and under your lordship’s auspices, the districts are flourishing, and the grain is cheap and abundant, the people are happy and contented and the favor of the almighty attends them.”

**Bombay Karnataka:**

This area falls in the rain shadow region of the Western Ghats and received scanty rainfall. Besides, there were only limited options of providing irrigation. This area was under the rule of Peshwa’s in the initial

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331 Mod Pol. Pro. 3rd July 1804 1179-1180 Governor Fort St. George to Poornaiah, (undated)
332 Ben. Pol. Cons. 20th Feb. 1810 (No.9) 1011-12, Poornaiah to Governor General, dated 17th Sept 1809.
decades of the 19th century. As noted earlier this area suffered severely from the famine of 1804 and imported food grains from Mysore. Besides many people immigrated to the Mysore province in search of food and fodder.

But the rates of land revenue here were lighter. This can be attested by the fact that, when the British later introduced *ryotwari* settlements in Bombay Deccan and Madras provinces, the rates were lighter in Bombay Deccan than in Madras. This was because in Bombay Deccan the survey officer made the settlement on the basis of actual rates prevailed in the previous thirty or more years and did not attempted to estimate gross or net produce, as he did in Madras.  

In addition to the government villages liable to the regular revenue, cesses and forced labour, there were also wholly ‘*inam* villages’ liable to only a nominal quit rent or entirely exempt from the land tax. These *inam* villages seem to have formed a fair proportion of the total in the Peshwa period. Thus in 1822, 13 percent of villages in Dharwar were *inam* villages.

After the initial hiccups, this region started showing signs of improvement, as the land revenue rates were not high. Considering the broad trend of agricultural prices in the period as whole, it can be said that after 1808, and especially after about 1820, the prices of agricultural

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produce started to fall considerably throughout Western India. In the
Dharwar market also agricultural prices had started falling after 1808.\textsuperscript{335}

Thus it was stated that during this period the ordinary peasant in
Bombay Deccan was almost as well off as his contemporary in
England.\textsuperscript{336}

\textbf{Bellary:}

When Bellary was transferred to the East India company in 1800
as a part of ceded districts by Nizam in lieu of subsidiary alliance, the
whole tract was placed in charge of Sir Thomas Munro. His first step was
to do away with the interference of 80 or more Poligars who were
scattered over them and to introduce direct settlement with every
cultivator. In conjunction with this, he instituted a survey, which
ascertained not only the extent of the fields, but also the quality of the
different kinds of soil.\textsuperscript{337} But Munro was not allowed to introduce the
scientific Ryotwari settlement, and a triennial settlement was forced on
Bellary in 1808. This was replaced by a decennial settlement in 1812.
Both these settlements caused a lot of hardship to the actual cultivator,
since the middleman employed to collect the rent were incompetent and
merciless. Thus bad revenue policies reduced the peasant to a state of
severe poverty during this period. Besides most of the Bellary district lies
in the famine zone and any failure in the scanty rainfall that it received

\textsuperscript{335} Dharmakumar, "The Cambridge Economic History of India", Vol.II (1757-1970) – Orient
Longman Cambridge University Press, p.344.
\textsuperscript{336} D.R.Gadgil- The Industrial evolution of India, in recent times (1860-1939).
caused scarcity of food grains and famines. Bellary district faced severe famines in the first decade of the 19th century and there took place a large-scale immigration of people to neighboring provinces. Mysore merchants brought food grains and sold here during distress period.

Kanara:

In South Kanara, British annexation of the region had destroyed certain old political, social and economic elements, which figured in the agrarian system of the pre annexation period. The old political elites like the Raja of Nileshwar, Kumbla and Vittal were put down by the British in their pacification campaign and were reduced to the position of zamindars. Persons who held the title of a headman by local custom controlled village affairs. Earlier these village headmen used to play a crucial role in the field of revenue collection and used to act as arbitrators in settling the village disputes. Such local headmen and their role in the society became less important with the introduction of the British revenue administration and appointment of village officials. In the field of revenue administration, there was a remarkable change with the introduction of the Ryotwari system of Sir Thomas Munro in 1799-1800. The British recognized the institution of private property and each ryot was given a patta. But all the ryots of South Kanara were not ryots in the real sense of the term. They included Zamindars, rich peasants, poor peasants and landless labourers. Though the system of revenue administration was ryotwari, it failed to safeguard, the economic interests of the ryots. The
rate of land revenue assessment, the largest source of income for the state was very high and it went on increasing during the early decades of 19th century. Besides the newly appointed officials showed great zeal in the exaction of land revenue. As the Board of Revenue was to state in 1812:“Collectors newly appointed to newly acquired territory, unfettered by judicial regulations, at a distance from control (were) excited by the hope of increasing the public revenue and establishing their own official reputation.”

Thus in the initial decades of 19th century, Karnataka peasant was under the control of different political setup. Therefore the land revenue administration varied accordingly. Mysore and Bombay Karnataka were ruled by Wodeyars and Marathas respectively but South Canara and Bellary were under direct British rule. The condition of peasant in Mysore and Bombay Karnataka was considerably better when compared to their counterparts in Bellary and South Kanara.

Land Tenures

There were different kinds of land tenures prevalent in the 19th century Karnataka. The most important among them were discussed below:

**Batayee or cropsharing:**

This was based on the principle of the division of crop. The batayee system was most commonly referred to as *Waram* system. In this crop sharing tenure the cultivating *ryots* whether belonging to the same village or different villages were practically hired laborers and received for their labor a share of the produce. However the people of the village in which these lands existed had preference over others, in crop sharing arrangements. They could not be refused work, if they had tilled the land for a number of years, provided they still chose to cultivate the same.

**Shraya lands:**

Shraya lands were those held by persons who engaged themselves to pay a progressive rent for a fixed number of years and after the expiry of that period to pay the full assessment.

**Kayamgutta tenure:**

*Kayamgutta* lands were those held on a fixed and invariable assessment or rent without specification of any period. In most cases *Kayamguttadors* held the entire villages. This tenure had its origin at the time of Purnaiah and became extensive during the period of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III to favour certain individuals. The *Kayamgutta* villages were
granted mostly between 1810 and 1831 on Shraya tenure, the gutta being
allowed to its maximum in the course of three or five years. *Kayamgutta*
villages or lands were rarely sold. When they were sold the purchase was
usually made after taking into consideration the value added due to
construction of tank and other improvements.  

**Inam lands:**

In addition to the Government villages liable to the regular revenue,
cesses and forced labour, there were also wholly *Inam* villages’ liable only
to a nominal quit rent or entirely exempt from the land tax. These villages
were granted to Deshmukhs and other important hereditary officials, large
temples (Deva Daya Inams) and noted saints and priests. There were
also *Survamanyam Inam* lands or lands absolutely free of all tax. These
*inams* at times constituted even whole villages.

**Jodee lands:**

They were held under a favorable rent and liable to a certain fixed
diminished rate of assessment.

**Kodige lands:**

There were lands called *Kodige* on which an invariable rent was
fixed. It was not liable to any change on account of the seasons or
otherwise. These lands were also saleable and could be disposed off at
the will of the holders. These lands were granted to those who did
construction, repair and maintenance of tanks.

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Shist:

This was found in some villages of Nagar. Shivappa Nayaka introduced this system. In the interval, during twelve successive years, he caused one field of each description of land in every village to be cultivated on his own account and an accurate record kept of the seed sown, the expense of cultivation, and the quantity and value of produce. He then struck averages of the produce and prices and taking the value of one Kandhaga at one fanam and the sircar share as one third of the gross produce, fixed the rates of land of which there were five (Uttamum, Madhyam, Kanista, Adamam, Adamadam) with two rates (highest and lowest).

Amani:

In certain places there were tanks called Amanee Talowe, not belonging to any particular village. The lands under these reservoirs were cultivated by ryots drawn from several villages in their neighbourhood. They received their due share of produce, under the superintendence of the public servants.

Gaddebutta:

In the taluks of Ikkeri, Sagar, Mandagadde, Koppa and Kavaledurga there were some lands on which what was known as Gadi or fixed rent in kind was paid.\(^{340}\)

Not only the tenure but the mode of payment of land revenue was also important. The payment in Mysore was of two types viz. the Candaim or Kandayam (or the revenue which is paid in money) and the Wahrum (or that which is paid in kind). The Wahrum taluks afforded great opportunities for the Amildars to embezzle the government revenue. As the crops & yield fluctuated according to the season, the Amildars placed in charge of receiving and disposing Government share of crop has great opportunities for speculation if not vigilantly watched. Col. Mark Cubbon, was responsible to introduce an administrative, system run by Shanbogue, Sheikdar, Amildar and Superintendent. He had also modified the system of revenue payment in kind to that of cash and regulated the zamindari system. These steps were intended to develop land commercialization and monetary system, which were restricted under the administration of the Raja. These reforms had gradually augmented the capitalist mode of production particularly in the field of plantations of coffee, tea, cotton, silk worms, areca and tobacco.\textsuperscript{341}

The mode of collection of revenue was different during different times of 19\textsuperscript{th} century. In princely state of Mysore, the “Shurtee” or contract system prevailed during the tenure of Pumaiah. The Shurtee system had prevailed partially under Pumaiah but became general under the Maharaja, Krishna Raja Wodeyar III. The system became, extensive after 1810-11. It was a kind of revenue farming under a written contract. During

\textsuperscript{341} Siddalingaswamy, “Agrarian relations in Mysore” (1799-1881) –Bangalore, Jan 1997 p.VIII.
Purniah's reign this system was only partially followed and government machinery was rigorously used to collect, most of the revenue. The Shurtee muchalika, which was a written contract, had as its main principal an agreement with the Amildars. The agreement with the Amildar was that he would realize for the state a certain amount of revenue, generally larger than that of the previous year. If his collections fell short of the agreed amount, he was held responsible for that deficiency. If it exceeded the surplus, the same was a accrued to the state. The Shurtee system was introduced with the aim of enabling the contractors (Amildars) to increase the collection of customary revenue and to encourage Warum cultivation (tenure of land, the half of the produce of which is given to the landlord in lieu of rent). But this system failed to fulfill the expectations of either introducing stability into the annual revenue or help towards its increase. In the early years however the Shurtee system proved advantageous to the government in controlling the fluctuations of revenue, but later, heavy arrears, began to accumulate and the system virtually transformed itself into an auction of land revenue to the highest bidder for one or two years at a time. Though the Amildars promised to the government in muchalika, that they would not harass the peasantry they failed to do so in practice. The Amildars were appointed after paying bribes to officers in Dewan's Cuctherry and to the Raja. This made them rapacious in their working. The Raja himself stated to the appointed

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officers that they were at liberty to reimburse themselves the money they paid during appointment.

After the introduction of Commissioner's rule, they adopted the *ryotwari* system for revenue collection. Under the *ryotwari* system an agreement was made directly between the government and the *ryots*. It was held that the *ryotwari* system eliminated intermediaries between the government and the peasants. But all the *ryots* were not peasants in the real sense of the term. They included *zamindars*, rich peasants, poor peasants and landless labourers. But the government entered into contract mainly with the village leaders and landlords and not with the lowly labouring cultivators. These landlords who cultivated *Kandayam* lands entered into a written agreement with their tenants. Although it was held that the *ryotwari* system eliminated intermediaries between the government and the cultivator, it did not do so practically. There developed a chain of intermediaries between the government and cultivator, in *ryotwari* system, as in the case of the *zamindari* system.

In the process landlords became converted into rent receivers, and often sublet their lands. The *ryots* paid their rent to the government, not directly but through the means of a renter. Generally a single individual rented out the whole village and became responsible for the payment of revenue of the whole village. Sometimes the Patel was himself the renter
of the village. He collected the revenue from the people without the interference of the government servants.  

The *ryotwari* land revenue system as introduced by Cubbon conferred the right of ownership to private landowners and hence feudalized upper stratum. Confirmed by the British in their rights as private owners of their land, the members of the feudalized upper stratum became *ryot* landlords. At the same time a good part of the peasant *ryots* crushed by the weight of colonial exploitation lost their lands, which gradually became concentrated in the hands of non-agriculturists that included landlords, moneylenders, traders and public servants.

The conditions were no better in South Kanara, Bellary and Bombay Kamataka, where the *ryotwari* system operated. As in the case of Mysore, there was periodic assessment once in 30 years and the rates fixed thereafter operated for another 30 years. The *ryots* suffered from over assessments and most of them were reduced to the status of tenants at will who had no security of tenure. Lust for expanded revenue by the Government was met by this system. This high exaction of land revenue gave rise to several ill effects. It led to land revenue arrears, rise of money lenders, confiscation of property by the government, transfer of property from the hands of the poor to the rich and in brief impoverishment of agriculture. This impoverishment of agriculture affected the village industries, which depended heavily upon it for their survival. Most of the

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343 Dr. Siddalingaswamy, “Agrarian relations in Mysore” (1799-1881) –Bangalore, Jan 1997p.91.
village artisans produced products that were required by the cultivators. The blacksmith, potter and the carpenter, produced agricultural and domestic implements used in the daily life of farmer. Even the village weavers and spinners catered to the subsistence of farmer. But when agriculture becomes impoverished due to heavy land revenue demand, it has a cascading effect on all the village industries and consequently they underwent progressive decline in the 19th century.
There were *inam* lands in Karnataka during 19th century on which the land revenue was either very low or it was non-existent. An inam was a grant by government for the personal benefit of individuals or for religious and charitable purposes or for services rendered to the state and village community. Lands so granted were held free of assessment or subject to a *jodee* (light assessment) or quit rent. *Inam* lands were generally held by temples, village servants and artisans (the village watchman, sweeper, water drawer, cobbler and so on). They were also held by village officials. *Inam* lands were attached to a hereditary office (*Watan*) such as that of headman and both the office and the land could be sold, though it was not clear whether they could be sold separately or not. The *Inamdar* himself would cultivate small *inam* lands. But there were also large *inams* from 45 to 180 acres, held by hereditary district officials, village headmen, distinguished servants of the state and so on and these were generally let out.\(^{344}\)

According to the Mysore land revenue code the term “*Inam*” or “alienation of Land” meant the assignment in favour of an individual or individuals or of a religious or charitable institution, wholly or partially of the right of the Government to levy land revenue.\(^{345}\)


\(^{345}\) Dr. Siddalingaswamy, “Agrarian relations in Mysore” (1799-1881) – Bangalore, Jan 1997 p.22.
In addition to the government villages liable to the regular land revenue, cesses and forced labour, there were also wholly ‘Inam villages’ liable only to a nominal quit rent or entirely exempt from the land tax. These villages were usually granted to Deshmukhs and other important hereditary officials, large temples and noted saints and priests.

Inam lands and villages formed fairly good proportion of total cultivated land in the first half of the 19th century in Karnataka. After the restoration of Mysore to the Maharaja in 1799, the British Commissioners advised Dewan Purniaiah against alienation of land without the Resident’s consent. But Purniaiah showed much enthusiasm in this respect and restored many inams. He conducted the survey known as ‘Akshaya Paimayish’ in this regard. When Krishnaraja Wodeyar II assumed power, he alienated lands by granting inams, besides confirming others on Kayamgutta or Permanent tenure. The system of administration then in vogue afforded his subordinate officers opportunities for alienating land without proper authority. Thus in Mysore there were extensive inam lands. In North Karnataka also Inam villages (where the entire arable land of the village was given to inamdar) formed a fair proportion of the total and 13% of villages in Dharwar in 1822 were inam villages.

There were various tenures of inams in Mysore in the first part of the 19th century. In some instances of inam grants there were Sunnads, in

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others there were none; in some a hereditary title without restriction as to
the heirs and powers of alienating the land were distinctly added, in others
no mention was made of such privileges. There were a large number of
cases in which land had been surreptitiously occupied under the disguise
of inam lands for a long period. Thus we can say that a large proportion of
land in Karnataka was under inam grant in the first half of the 19th
century.

This naturally created problems on the agricultural lands subjected
to regular assessments. As a result of it heavy land revenue is exacted
from the Kandayam (or the revenue which is paid in money) and the
Wahrum  lands (or the revenue which is paid in kind). Land revenue
ranged from $\frac{1}{3}$rd on dry lands to $\frac{1}{2}$ of total produce on wet or irrigated
lands. This was one of the reasons for Nagar revolt, which broke out in
1831, where the main grievance was against exaction of heavy land
revenue from ryots. Besides granting of inams has led to the process of
sub-infeudation and feudalisation of the rural economy. Under the rytwari
system introduced by British during the Commissioners rule, in Mysore all
Inamdars, Kayamguttadars and the landlords who cultivated Kandayam
lands entered into a written agreement with their tenants. As mentioned
earlier, larger inams were never cultivated personally by the inamdars,
but by tenants at will, who had entered into written agreement with the
inamdars. Although it was held that the rytwari system eliminated
intermediaries between the Government and the ryots, it was soon found that practically it did not do so.

Thus the *inam* system caused a lot of hardships to the ordinary cultivators, tenants at will and those paying land revenue under either Wahrum or Kandayam system. The only saving feature of this system during the first half of the 19th century was that, it protected the village artisans. A particular feature of the village economic relations was that the artisans (except perhaps the weaver) had generally possessed the status of the servants of the village community which assigned them a part of the village land (*inam*) and a portion of the annual agricultural produce (under *Jajmani* system). This practice of granting small portion of village land, the *Jajmani* system, the selfsufficient nature of the village economy and lack of communications enabled village artisan to survive in the first half of 19\textsuperscript{th} century.

Under Dewan Purnaiah, a survey ‘Akshaya Paimayish’, so termed, because the survey was instituted in the Hindu year “Akshaya” was made of all *inam* lands. The survey was neither accurate nor perfect. Further it was not a survey in terms of ‘acres’ or ‘guntas’ but of ‘beejavari’ (quantity of seeds required to sow a particular area). Therefore the British Government had long contemplated an investigation into the *inam* tenure of the state. As L.B. Bowring said, “a survey in the province was more needed to protect the interest of Government than to show consideration

for the ryots”. As mentioned previously the granting of *inam* was subjected to many abuses and many people were holding lands under *inam* tenure without the sanction of the appropriate authority. Therefore the British were keen to undertake the survey of all the *inam* lands, to verify the genuineness of the claim of *inam* lands. Since land revenue was the main source of income to the state in the 19th century, the British, wanted to augment it by careful survey. Subsequently in January 1863, skeleton *inam* rules were submitted to Government of India and in 1866 the *inam* commission was appointed.\(^{349}\)

The date of *sunnads* which came within the scope of the *inam* commission ranged from 15th to the 19th century, the grants having been made by the Anegundi Raja’s, the Keladi and Nagar Chiefs, and Haidar Ali, Tipu sultan, Dewan Purnaiah and Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III.

The following were the principles on which the settlement of *inam* lands was conducted.

a) *Sunnads* granted by Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III or by his predecessors conveying full power of alienation and being hereditary was treated as hereditary and alienable property.

b) When *Sunnads* as above granted were not hereditary, and did not convey full powers of alienation, the *inams* were regularized by payment of a quit rent equal to one eighth of

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the assessment. *Inams* granted for the performance of religious, charitable, village or other services still requiring to be rendered were exceptions

\[c\] *Sunnads* granted by incompetent persons and when they were less than fifty years old, a compulsory quit rent to one half of the assessment was imposed.

Thus quit rent was imposed for granting an extension of rights to the *inamdar*. In 1875 *Kodige inam* (*Inam* granted free or on light assessment in consideration of construction or upkeep of tanks) was abolished. In 1876-77, the Chief Commissioner of Mysore with the approval of the Government of India promulgated certain rules for the regularization of the *inam*’s. The operations of the *inam* department were brought to close in 1881. The total number of land inams regularized was 57,726. Besides 11,302 *inam*’s were resumed for invalidity of tenure and in 4658 cases the land could neither be identified nor was it in enjoyment and therefore struck off from the list.\(^{350}\) The *inam* settlement has resulted in the higher incidence of land revenue on the regularized *inams*, which were subjected to no or lighter revenue demand previously. In the *Malnad* region, the original *inam* was not a grant of land as a rule, but the remission of a certain amount of revenue due to Government on land.

Special rules were passed in 1872-74 for the settlement of this class of inams.

Thus by 1880's the British resumed most of the inam lands, to augment the land revenue. Besides improved communications brought the Indian villages into contact with the outside world. The self-sufficient nature of the Indian village economy was no longer prevalent. Most of the village artisans lost their inam lands. Besides the improved transportation network brought the machine made products to villages. The artisan has to face this unequal competition, because their productivity and quality was low. This competition has also ruined the age-old Jajmani system in the villages. The impoverished agriculture preferred the low cost machine made goods to the village handicrafts. As a result of it we see increased number of rural artisans, abandoning their trade & joining the class of agricultural laborers from 1880 onwards.
Reforms of Mark Cubbon

We had already seen how the ryots suffered in the first half of the 19th century due to excessive collection of land revenue. Particularly during Krishna-Devaraya Wodeyar III's period the Amildars, who were engaged in revenue farming under the Shurtee system exploited the ryots excessively. Thus A.H. Cole reported in 1814 as follows:

"The great and leading error in the present revenue administration, in this country is the degraded state of the amildaree."

The Rajah stopped filling the vacancies of Amildars by promoting 'Sheristadars' employed in the revenue line and who had experience of the duties to be discharged. Ability and experience were no longer considered qualifications for appointment. On the other hand those who bribed the corrupt officials obtained employment as Amildars. For instance, on an appointment, the Amildar has to procure the favorable consideration by bribing several officers in the Dewan's Cutcherry. The total amount of these bribes, which is generally by no means inconsiderable, was recovered by the newly appointed Amildar by money extorted from the ryots over and above their just quota of rent and taxes due to the Government.

Thus Cole tells: "Oppression, extortion and injustice seldom fail, therefore to accompany, a newly appointed Amildar to his seat of authority."

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351 A.H. Cole Resident, to the Chief Secretary Fort St. George, on 10th Feb. 1814, Sl. No. 56
The Rajah himself participated in this corruption by frequently receiving nazars or gifts on new appointments taking place, at the same time candidly stating to the appointed officers that they were at liberty to reimburse themselves.

A considerable loss was sustained by the Government in Kandayam (land revenue paid in cash) taluks, where many people were shown in records as ‘dead or deserted’ or ‘incapable’. But many of them were actually alive, residing at their proper villages and fully capable of paying their share of land revenue. The loss thus sustained by the Government is a gain to the Amildar, the amount being collected became a part of his private treasury. The ryots who were in distress on account of various revenue reforms wrote to resident:

“...when Tippu sultan was the sovereign of the country, they all lived in peace and prosperity. But the oppressions and cruelties unceasingly practiced by the officers of the Raja’s Government were such that they had become unable to endure them any longer. The exactions of the officers had been so excessive as to have obliged them in many cases to sell their children’.

All these harassment found expression in the Nagar revolt in 1831. The result was Mysore came under the rule of British Commissioners. When Mark Cubbon took over the reins of administration, there were

352 A. H. Cole Resident, to the Chief Secretary Fort St. George, on 10th Feb. 1814, Sl. No. 63.
353 A. H. Cole Resident, to the Chief Secretary Fort St. George, on 10th Feb. 1814, Sl. No. 73.
many practical questions to be settled, both administrative and technical. Water was the most important of all, the tanks and channels required immediate repair, the high rates of interest charged by the rural money lenders, official extortions and successive failure of rains had reduced the peasentry’s financial resources and worse still placed him under the control of the Suttigedar (money lender). The absence of roads and lack of general security left the producer unable to choose his market, while the practice of the Government in dividing the crop, destroyed all stimulus to work and tended to keep cultivation at a minimum. The “Kumrī” cultivation in the Manjarabad district destroyed the forests for the sake of a meagre harvest of Ragi; this was neither good for the state nor for the peasent.\(^{355}\) Besides the condition of the livestock was deplorable. The cattle suffered from want of pasture, as all the good pastures were reserved for the Amrut Mahal cattle of the Honourable company and Mysore state. This deprived the poorer classes from the best pasture.

Even in 1844 the proportion of the dry to the wet crops was \(4 \frac{1}{2} : 1.1\). The methods and implements used in agriculture were still primitive. The plough, manure, draught animals and sowing has been practically the same, leaving little margin for fresh ingenuity.

It was Cubbon’s duty to meet these difficulties. He restored the old tanks and channels and maintained them in good condition. Green the Chief Engineer, paid special attention to the fair distribution and economic

utilization of the water in every reservoir and canal. Loans of money and
grain were granted to the indigent ryots and recovered by installments.  

Cubbon favoured the *ryotwari* system, which engaged the
Government and the farmer directly. As the system of revenue farming
practiced by the Government of the *Rajah*, through the agency of
*Amildars* created lot of problems, *ryotwari* system came into vogue during
his period on an extensive scale. Though the *ryotwari* system failed to
meet the expectations of the *ryots*, nevertheless it was an attempt to solve
their problems at least to a limited extent. Cubbon introduced the system
of issuing *pattas* with the intention of checking any fraudulent entries or
alterations by the *Shanbhogs* in the account of lands. It was strongly felt
that this *patta* system would check oppression and was regarded as the
chief advantage of *ryotwari* system.

Cubbon was liberal, in remitting the land revenue in cases of flood,
fire or depredation and in order to increase the net earnings of the *ryot*, he
abolished a system of vexatious taxes known as the *Chillerbab* (meaning
the miscellaneous). He had also modified the system of revenue payment
in kind to that of cash. These steps were intended to develop land
commercialization and monetary system which were restricted under the
administration of the *Raja*. These reforms had gradually augmented the
capitalist mode of production, particularly in the field of coffee, cotton, silk,
areca and tobacco.

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356 K.N. Venkatasubbasastri, “The Administration of Mysore Under Sir Mark Cubbon” (1834-
It was Cubbon who initiated the process of commercialization in agriculture, to increase the profits accrued by it. As we had seen earlier, the Karnataka agriculture was mainly of subsistence type in the first half of the 19th century. Cubbon tried to introduce cultivation of cotton of longer staple in Mysore province. He also stimulated the production of coffee in Malnad districts. Though his efforts in this direction were not completely successful, nevertheless a beginning was made in this direction.

The land revenue reforms in Mysore greatly accelerated the undermining of the previously existing economic ties in the province, fostered the disintegration of communities, created favourable conditions for making Mysore the market for British's industrial goods and the supplier of the raw material for its industry. Consequently the significance of these reforms went far beyond their purely tax or agrarian meaning.\footnote{Dr. Siddalingaswamy, “Agrarian relations in Mysore” (1799-1881) – Bangalore Jan. 1997, p.IX.}
Commercialization of Agriculture

The system of letting & subletting out land for cultivation became crucial in forming the agrarian system and relation of people in the 19th century. Another important change introduced by the British, as we had already seen, was the collection of land revenue only in cash and not in kind. Besides these changes, what was more significant and affected the agrarian system and relations was the high exaction of revenue from land. This led to land revenue arrears, rise of money lenders, confiscation of property by the Government, transfer of property from actual cultivators to money lenders and in brief the impoverishment of agriculture. This has led to the decline of village industries and handicrafts, which mainly depended on catering to the needs of the farmers. However in assessing the British impact, care must be taken to distinguish between the mature British agrarian system of the late 19th century and the early variant of that system in the initial decades of the 19th century.\footnote{N. Shyam Bhat, “South Kanara (1799-880)- A Study in Colonial Administration & regional response” mittal puliccation, New Delhi, page 200} For example the commercialization of agriculture was not a characteristic phenomena, during the first half of 19th century, though commercial crops like areca nut and cardamom were cultivated in Malnad and coastal Karnataka. We had already referred to the attempts made by Cubbon to popularize the cultivation of commercial crops like coffee and cotton at the close of the first half of the 19th century. This process picked up the pace in the
second half of the 19th century. Let us examine the process regarding different crops:

Cotton:

Cubbon tried to introduce cotton in several districts of Mysore, but the results were not encouraging. The governmental efforts to introduce exotic varieties of cotton failed miserably everywhere in Karnataka, except in the district of Dharwar where the climate was almost similar to that of the cotton growing regions of America. Particularly in South Karnataka, the crop did not flourish. Cubbon confessed that: “Cotton which requires a much richer soil than is usually found in Mysore is not yet produced in sufficient quantities for home manufactures.”

The British wanted to introduce the exotic long staple variety cotton cultivation in India, which would have met the needs of their industries at Manchester and Lancashire. Since every single ounce of cotton required by the British cotton textile industry has to be imported, it mainly depended on America for its needs, where long staple cotton was cultivated in plenty in the cotton belt. But Indian cotton was of short staple and did not suit the requirements of England. As a part of their colonial policy, they tried to cultivate exotic long staple variety cotton in India, including Karnataka. Besides agro-climatic conditions, technical problems like ginning & spinning also contributed to the failure, in the introduction of the exotic varieties. The native gin was ascertained to be unequal to the

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task of clearing the exotic varieties of New Orleans and Bourbon cotton and the Indian spinning wheel was found unsuitable to the American Varieties.

Regarding agro climatic conditions in Mysore province, Dr. Royale added that: "The climate is in general windy and dry and therefore unsuited to the culture of cotton. Mysore is therefore supplied with what cotton it requires for home consumption from Bellary and other districts."^360

Bellary and Bombay Karnataka districts have better agro climatic conditions for cotton cultivation. They possessed black cotton soil, which was highly suitable for its cultivation. On the other hand most of the Mysore province had red soil. Gradually it was realized that importing cotton into Mysore from Bellary and Southern Marattah districts (Dharwar, Gadag, Ranibennur & Bijapur) was cheaper than cultivating it locally. Even then Chitradurga, Shimoga and Kadur showed some success in cultivating cotton. The success of Dharwar in cultivating exotic long staple variety between 1840-60 was crucial from Britain's economic point of view. When the American civil war broke out in 1860-65, there was a large demand for Dharwar cotton in Britain. This led to the cotton boom during this period. Not only Dharwar cotton, but short staple cotton grown in other parts of Karnataka was also exported during this period. The demand from Lancashire, high it was between 1860-65, proved only

temporary and with the resumption of exports from America after the civil war fell off considerably.

However India was able to keep up its own exports, largely due to the growth of textile industry on European continent, where the mills were not only looking for the cheapest supplies of raw cotton, but their machinery was more suitable for working with Indian cotton. As the reviewer of India’s external trade pointed out in 1883, of the Indian cotton exported to England more than half was reshipped to continent and there was also a considerable direct trade in cotton between Bombay and Austria, France, Italy, Belgium, Germany and Spain.

Besides improvement in communication and the spreading of the railroad network after the 1880’s, gave great impetus to the cultivation of cotton. It was told that the railway station near every village practically became a mandi for selling cotton. Thus in 1877-78, cotton occupied 15,000 acres in Mysore province and this was increased to 20,893 acres in 1881-82.

Coffee:

It was widely believed that coffee was brought to Karnataka by the sufi saint Baba Budan in the medieval period. But only after 1860’s its cultivation became extensive. Grants of land by public auction for coffee and cardamom cultivation were made out of the Government jungles in the Western Ghats.
The compiler of the Mysore Gazetteer in reviewing the growth of the industry in Kadur district remarks:

“Since 1860, estates have sprung up between these points with such rapidity, that European planters are, settled in almost a continuous chain of estates from the south west of Shimoga to the southern most limits of Manjarabad, not to mention Coorg and Wynad beyond. During the first decade after 1860 alone the exports of coffee increased nearly tenfold and the same rate of increase continued till 1879. From 1860 to 1879 was a period of continuous and uninterrupted progress and prosperity for the coffee industry…”

But the borer disease created havoc and checked severely the growth of this industry in 1879. But by this time the crop has acquired the extent of more than 1,00,000 acres. By 1881-82 the industry recovered from the doldrums and started growing again. The following table shows the extent of coffee cultivation in Mysore.\textsuperscript{362}

\textsuperscript{361} D.R. Gadgil, “Industrial Evolution of India in Recent Times” (1860-1939) –oxford University press, 1933. p.52.
\textsuperscript{362} Dr. Siddalingaswamy, “Agrarian relations in Mysore” (1799-1881) p. 84.
Table 3.1: Area under cultivation of Coffee from 1862-92

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>European</th>
<th>Native</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>25,244</td>
<td>38,439</td>
<td>63,723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863-64</td>
<td>26,010</td>
<td>40,534</td>
<td>66,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864-65</td>
<td>29,117</td>
<td>54,968</td>
<td>84,085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865-66</td>
<td>29,930</td>
<td>60,826</td>
<td>90,756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867-68</td>
<td>31,468</td>
<td>67,758</td>
<td>99,226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868-69</td>
<td>32,042</td>
<td>75,929</td>
<td>1,07,971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869-70</td>
<td>32,533</td>
<td>78,460</td>
<td>1,10,993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872-73</td>
<td>34,310</td>
<td>76,690</td>
<td>1,11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873-74</td>
<td>33,175</td>
<td>78,423</td>
<td>1,11,598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874-75</td>
<td>32,631</td>
<td>78,499</td>
<td>1,11,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875-76</td>
<td>32,638</td>
<td>80,487</td>
<td>1,13,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878-79</td>
<td>37,366</td>
<td>90,324</td>
<td>1,27,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879-80</td>
<td>40,143</td>
<td>87,357</td>
<td>1,27,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-81</td>
<td>40,262</td>
<td>85,189</td>
<td>1,25,451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881-82</td>
<td>45,366</td>
<td>94,991</td>
<td>1,40,351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891-92</td>
<td>54,172</td>
<td>96,663</td>
<td>1,48,835</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hassan District was also one of the leading producers of coffee, and in the last quarter of the 19th century its total produce was estimated...
Labour for working these plantations was imported from the neighboring districts. A good deal of this labour was temporary and consisted of agriculturists who came in from the adjacent Maidan districts, when the agricultural operations for the season were over. Here also there was an act giving the planters, control over their labour, but it was not very stringent. The labour force in this industry was not far removed from its home, nor were the districts in which the industry was conducted unhealthy and therefore the condition of labour was much better than that obtaining in the tea industry.  

Areca nut:

Areca was most extensively grown in the Malnad or western part of Karnataka. In the year 1881-82 arecanut worth 8266 tons valued at Rs.11,24,040 was exported from Mysore. But the middlemen made a lot of money in the process and the actual cultivator did not benefit much from the flourishing export trade, in this commodity.

Silk:

Tipu in Mysore introduced sericulture. British developed this industry and exported large quantity of raw silk to Europe.

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development of this commodity and its status in the later half of the 19th century was extensively dealt in a separate chapter.

**Tobacco:**

Tobacco cultivation was done in several patches throughout the state. Its cultivation was quite popular in Coorg and South Kanara before the arrival of British. In Coorg the cultivators were required to pay only small tax called ‘Kuruk’ on it and were free to sell their produce.\(^{366}\) Tobacco cultivation flourished during the native rule in Coorg and other parts. But the British put restrictions on the free trade in tobacco. As a result of it they became the sole purchasers of the entire tobacco produced in South Kanara. They also imposed restriction on the area under tobacco cultivation. All these acts restricted the profits that were accrued to the cultivator under native rule.

The commercialization of agriculture has reduced the area under food crops in general and millets in particular. As we had seen, the commercial crops like cotton, silk, coffee, areca nut and tobacco had become dominant in Karnataka in the second half of the 19th century. So much so that, it became the largest producer of silk and coffee in the entire country. North Karnataka has become the cotton garden of Hindustan. This has led to the decrease in the production of food grains. Hence Karnataka witnessed severe famines particularly in the last quarter of the 19\(^{th}\) century, whenever the rains failed. Because of the

\(^{366}\) Dr. Sebastian Josep (Ed.), Karnataka Charithre (1800-1900) Vol 6, Hampi Kannada University, p. 69
improvement in communications people stopped the practice of traditional storing of grains and sold their surplus produce. Hence they were not able to feel back upon the reserve stock during scarcity.

Besides, commercialization of agriculture demanded large-scale capital investment in agriculture. In the first half of the 19th century agriculture was mainly subsistence in character and needed very less capital investment. Land for cultivation was readily available and has almost practically without value. Besides the rural artisans, supplied only the primitive implements. Sometimes 3 to 4 farmers used the same implements on a sharing basis. But commercialization of agriculture has increased the value of land and demanded capital investment to carry on agriculture.

Therefore the Mysore land revenue code (section 194) Regulation No. IV of 1888 made provision for providing loans to agriculturists. Loans were available under the said code to purchase agricultural machinery, agricultural implements including carts, building sheds in newly cultivated lands, erection of double mhotes or other contrivances for raising water, erection of sugarcane mills and indigo vats, manure, fodder, livestock, seeds etc.\textsuperscript{367}

Commercialization of agriculture has also demanded improved irrigation facilities. Crops like sugarcane and rice required supply of abundant water. To meet these objectives a separate irrigation

\textsuperscript{367} Section 194 of the Mysore Land Revenue code (Regulation No.IV of 1888)
department was started in Mysore in 1872. Besides rules were framed for
granting loans for the construction of Sagavali Kattes or Vaddus (dams) in
black cotton soil and other lands. Commercialization also stimulated the
development of communication network. Everyone knows that the
construction of railways was accelerated in the last two decades of the
19th century. This was mainly due to the necessity of transporting the
commercial crops to different places. But the sad story of
commercialization of agriculture was that it did not benefit the cultivator
greatly. On the other hand middlemen reaped most of the profits. This
impoverished the farmer.

Agricultural banks were started in the last quarter of the 19th
century for reorganizing rural credit and providing the poor agriculturist
with cheap capital, which was the main requisite for the improvement of
his condition. But the working of these banks was not satisfactory.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁸ Proceedings of the Govt. of His Higness, the Maharaja of Mysore, financial (Banking), dated
11th Nov. 1908.
Increase in the Value of Land

Land has no value in the beginning of the 19th century. As early as 1795 Munro stated that, it was extremely simple and easy to set up as ryot. A man has only to furnish himself with a couple of bullocks and a plough hardly costing about six pence. Land was to be had for the asking and was indeed forced on the ryots, who were therefore more concerned with the right to relinquish land, than to acquire it. At the opening of the 19th century, land had no sale value, not only in South Kanara, but in other districts as well. Sarada Raju in his book “Economic conditions in Madras presidency (1800-1850)” opines that during the course of 19th century, increased security, as well as the growing demand for land owing to the pressure of the population conferred some value upon it, especially after the decline of handicrafts.

The pressure of population on land not only increased it’s value, but also led to its fragmentation. According to Dr. Mann, “in the Pre-British days and in the early days of the British rule, the holdings were usually of a fair size, frequently more than 9-10 acres, while individual holdings of less than 2 acres were hardly known.”

But the increase in population in the 19th century Karnataka, as we had already seen, and the decline of handicrafts mounted the pressure on land leading to its subdivision and fragmentation. As a result holdings became small.

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The increase of pressure on land not only led to fragmentation, but also to the enhancement of total arable land. New land was brought under the plough, to meet the growing demand for land. Thus in Mysore in 1865 the total land under cultivation was about 3.14 million acres. This became 5.68 million acres in 1891-92, so that cultivable land increased by 80% in a span of 27 years. Only during the great famine of 1876-78, there was a decrease in cultivation. Barring this event, the extent of agricultural land expanded in the second half of the 19th century.

The increase in value of land in Mysore was due to people turning to agriculture despite of its low profitability. In his survey of the first decade of native rule in Mysore Shama Rao reports a considerable increase in agricultural population in the following words: “Ever since foreign goods were allowed duty free to enter local markets, the home made goods are being gradually displaced by them and a tendency has set in where by the agricultural population shows a considerable increase gained at the expense of the industrial population. The industrial workman finding the bread taken out of his mouth by unknown persons and unable to resist their competition prefers collecting his small capital and employing it in agricultural pursuits.”

The above testimony clearly indicates the choice made by the handicraftsmen, when their trade was endangered. Despite the heavy land revenue exaction, inadequate irrigation facilities, lack of capital and

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exploitation of the middlemen, agriculture still remained almost the single alternative for the people to survive during the onslaught of colonial economy. This conferred value upon land and brought about the extension of cultivation by cleaning the forest area. As a matter of fact the firm establishment of British rule by 1850, meant the end of wars and disturbances, which were very frequent in the dark era of the 18th century which affected the agricultural operations and crops from the ravages committed by the battling armies. Though these things ended with the establishment of British rule over entire Karnataka by 1850, the crushing revenue assessment under *ryotwari* system made the condition of the people one of hopeless poverty. Nevertheless there was extension in the arable area because of inevitable reasons.
Fig 3.1: Lift irrigation practiced at Bangalore as seen by Buchanan

Length of the iron lever AB 14 feet 6 inches
Height of fulcrum BC 9 feet 6 inches
Length of the rod CD 8 feet
Depth of the well from the surface of the ground E
Height of the end of the channel for receiving the water G 3 feet
Water raised in all to the height of 6 feet 6 inches
Quantity of water raised in each pot 3½ acres of paddy
Time elapsed from raising one pot to raising another 15 seconds
The weight loaded on the bend end of the lever A must be equal to balance the pot D when well or water.

The bucket on measure contains only 3½ cubic inches of water:
with grain it is heaped.