4. PRIVILEGES FOR THE PRIVILEGED

Inequalities in social and economic spheres were maintained and reinforced in traditional India in many ways. The agrarian world was no exception to this. The economic privileges enjoyed by the privileged sections of the society in the form of Inam tenures, also perpetuated these inequalities and were in turn reinforced by the privileged in many ways. These privileges, although ostensibly mere economic concessions, also reinforced the social inequalities that were in existence. These practices which were common under the pre colonial regimes seemed to have continued uninterruptedly even under British rule.

Privilege in land holding pertains to advantages, that is the rights and immunities enjoyed by some, usually a minority. Though these usually originated from a grant from those in authority, they need not always necessarily be so. These advantages in the rural society were enjoyed by certain elite groups over others, making use of their power and status in the society.

Of the many privileges that existed in the region, the most common were the Inam holdings. These privileged tenures were of many kinds. They were given by the pre colonial ruling regimes to various groups for different purposes, and were mostly hereditary tenures. Whatever be the ostensible reason for granting these privileges they served the important socio political pur-
pose of incorporating rural elites into the State structure. The British by continuing these privileges and concessions were seeking also to create substantial bases of power beneath the authority of the new imperial system, by accommodating hereditary landed privilege with important tax free concessions to those individuals and institutions having highest claims to social and ritual status and influence.

In South India the term Inam was applied to the grants by the state of the permanent right in one case, to occupy land without paying rent to the state and in another case, to collect government assessment on land. The tenure though originally rent free came in many cases to be qualified by the reservation of a portion of the assessable revenue or by exaction of all proceeds exceeding the intended value of the original assignment.

R.D.Lushington, one of the Company officials in the Madras Presidency believed that the alienation of extensive tracts of land as Inam benefits was nothing more than an established mode of tax evasion, rather than a vital component of the pre colonial political process. Further he opined that a great amount of potentially taxable land was exempted unnecessarily. But though Inam tenures continued to exist under the Company, it was believed that a great amount of potentially taxable land was unnecessarily, though unavoidably, exempt.
The Inam tenures of the Madras Presidency were many and were classified in many ways. R.E Frykenberg has classified them under social, economic, political, and religious categories. There were certain features which distinguished the tax free tenures of the Madras Presidency from those of the other Presidencies. They were, the small size of the individual holdings; the general absence of grants from former Sovereigns of the country; and the close connection between the tax free and tax paying lands under the Ryotwari system. The Inams in the official records were divided into nine categories:

1. Those held for the support of religious institutions and for services connected there with.
2. Those held for purposes of public utility.
3. Those held for the support of works of irrigation yielding public revenue, locally known as Dasabhandam Inams.
4. Those held by Brahmins and other religious classes for their personal benefit known under various names like Agraharams and Shrotriums.
5. Those held by the families of poligars and those who filled hereditary offices of trust under former governments.
6. Those held by the Kinsmen, dependents and followers of former poligars and Zamindars.
7. Those connected with the former general police of the country.
8. Those held for ordinary village revenue and police services.
9. Those held by various descriptions of artisans for services due to village communities.
Under the above mentioned categories there were again several kinds of Inams listed, thus making the Inams numerous and a valuable way of giving a gift or buying favour. In the words of Nicholas Dirks, alienations of land were made to attain religious merit, to establish political alliances, to reward services, and to pay off debts. Alienations were made because, in spite of the changing nature of the political system, the traffic of the political process continued to be in gifts of land. While many of the reasons behind these new gifts were shifted in the changed and demilitarized nineteenth century, the "cultural logic" of the gift continued.

Before the term Inam was used to describe lands under all privileged holdings the term Manyam was commonly used. The term manyam referred to the lands held either at a low assessment or altogether free in consideration of services done to the state or the community as in the case of village servants.

The distinction between a Jagir grant and an Inam grant was that the former was a larger political grant with no condition of service. The word Inam was a generic term applicable to all government grants as a whole but in course of time when that word alone came to be used without any sort of qualification or restriction it came to denote a grant in perpetuity which could not be resumed. The grant of Inams was thus an alienation of the
sovereign right whether it be to the soil itself or merely to land revenue under the pre colonial governments. Such a right was exercised by the king or by officers authorized by him.

As long as the ruler was powerful, no alienation of this right was possible without his consent. But during the periods of anarchy which followed the end of the pre colonial regimes and the beginning of British rule, the power of granting beneficial tenures was assumed by many like the Petty Chiefs, Zamindars, Foujdars, Poligars and even by the Renters. Sometimes they were obtained by the beneficiaries through collusion of revenue officers.

Inams to the Religious Institutions:

A considerable portion of the Inam tenures in the Madras Presidency belonged to the religious institutions of the country, both Muslim and Hindu. They were held either directly for the support of the institutions or for various services to be rendered therein. The Inams of this description were by far the most numerous though the value of the each taken by itself was in most cases inconsiderable.

The valuable endowments attached to different 'mattams' or spiritual head ships of the three leading sects of Brahmana were also included under this head and these were found almost in
every district. The other minor religious institutions not presided over by Brahmins but which enjoyed Inams, belonged to Bairagis and Pandarams or religious mendicants and Jangams or priests of the Lingayat sect.

In the Pedanah Pargana, like elsewhere in the Northern Circars certain Inams were given to places of worship. In Pedanah five candies of grain was given to the temples for various temple activities. The dancing girls who were generally attached to the temples, an Inam of seven maunds and twenty seers of grain was given. In Nandigama and Bulliparru the temples received two candies and 10 maunds of grain and Oevapawada and Mangenapudi received twelve maunds and twenty seers and four maunds of grain respectively.

In contrast to these Hindu Institutions the Muslim Institutions were of a less varied character. They consisted chiefly of mosques or places of public worship, takiyas or residences of fakirs, and dargahs. However the Qazis enjoyed certain Inam grants in the district of Masulipatnam and evidence from the records suggests that they even bought Inam lands that were brought for sale.

Agraharams:

The gift of land was enjoined by the Hindu Shastras as the most meritorious of charities. So every king was therefore
ambitious of distinguishing his reign by the extent and value of the lands he alienated in Inam to the various religious groups. Under the pre colonial regimes these Inam grants were engraved on copper plates or slabs of stones and were declared to be irrevocable.

Agrahara generally meant a tax free village granted by the kings or their subordinates to Brahmins in pursuit of their knowledge. Etymologically the term agrahara was derived from the word agara or akara that is, tax and hara that is, a piece of land. The donees of the Agraharas were called Agraharikas. The Agraharas were granted either to a single person or several persons.

The Agraharas were self sufficient units. The endowments made to them were perpetual and could not be confiscated by the kings. They enjoyed the right to collect taxes that would meet the expenditure of the matthas and schools that were in agraharas.

Table : 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Names of Zamindari Estates</th>
<th>Amount MPs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Kaldindi</td>
<td>842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Chintalapudi</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Devarakota</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Mylavaram</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Report from Edward Saunders to the President, Committee of Circuit, SRMG, p.20, 32, 33.
### Table 4.2

**Inam Statistics in Nuzividu Zamindari:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Parganas</th>
<th>No. of villages</th>
<th>No. of inhabitants</th>
<th>Amount of land in cutties</th>
<th>Average of Agraharam</th>
<th>Amount of Inams</th>
<th>Average of payments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Gollapalli</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>11131</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>236</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Nunestalam</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>11314</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>972</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Chatrayi</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2635</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>107</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Vijjarayi</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3723</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Wuyyuru</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>8831</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>142</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Meduru</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>7723</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>554</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Amberpeta</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>8333</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>148</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Gundagolanu</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>11016</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Pentapadu</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>11895</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1033</td>
<td>557</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Nidadavolu</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>18735</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>667</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Baharjall</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>5233</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>598</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Report from Williams to Alexander Davidson, President Ft. St. George, Circuit Committee Report on the Zamindaris of Nuzividu and Charmahal, SRMG, p. 12.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Parganas</th>
<th>No. of villages</th>
<th>No. of inhabitants</th>
<th>Amount of land alienated under Agraharam</th>
<th>Inams</th>
<th>Agraharam payments to cirrar MPs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Gudiwada</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1062</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>1083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Vinukota</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>10153</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>10293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Kaldindi</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4147</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Bitturzalli</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2640</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Agraharam villages in Eluru circar were few, but there were numerous Inam lands. These Inams were of two kinds - Kattu-badi Inams, who pay a tax and Dumbala Inams which were rent free.

Inams held for Public Utility Purposes:

Inam lands were held for the support of choultries (called locally Chattrams). Inams were also held for the maintenance of various irrigation works which were major components for the sustenance of the agricultural economy. Inams held for the support of works of irrigation were generally termed as Oasabandham Inams.

Dasabandham Inams

Dasabandham Inams were granted as a recompense to private individuals who constructed tanks, wells and river channels by means of which the revenue of the state was augmented. The extent and value of Inams were in proportion to the capital expended on the works of Irrigation. These grants were of two descriptions Khanda Dasabhandam or Inams given in specific localities and Shamit at Dasabhandams or the allowance as Inam of a certain proportion of each year's cultivation under the work in question. In all ordinary cases Oasabhandamdars were under the obligation of maintaining works of irrigation in due repair.
During late eighteenth century Dasabandam Inams were not ubiquitous in the Northern Circars, as these Inams were confined to western portions such as Guntur and Nellore districts. In Masulipatnam district instead of the Dasabbandham grants the Dasabhagam allowances which were given for the maintenance or construction of Irrigation works were more common.

**Mukhasa Inams**

Mukhasa Inams were those held by the kinsmen, dependents and followers of former poligars and Zamindars. Similarly Deshpandes and Deshmukhs were permitted to enjoy certain lands free of all conditions of service to government. These Inams were considerable in number and played a distinct role in pre colonial land holding structure of the Northern Circars. For instance, the Bissoys and Dorathanams in the hill tracts of Ganjam and Visakhapatnam, the Mukhasas of Masulipatnam district, the Amarams of Northern Circars fall under this category.

By later half of the eighteenth century there were two hundred and eight Mukhasa villages in Masulipatnam district and there were in the hands of Zamindars relations, dependents or caste men and peons. The nature of duties and obligations which these three groups had to perform to a Zamindar in turn for the enjoyment of these land grants did reflect variations. While the
caste men attended the Zamindars on state occasions or accompanied them with their followers to the field, Zamindars relations held the villages for their subsistence. Moreover the services of the clansmen was occasional and honorary, while those of peons were more constantly in requisition.

In the Nuzividu estate the Mokasadars who were the dependents on the Zamindars were absolute masters over the labourers whom they often left with barely a subsistence. But the Agharams of the Nuzividu Zamindari were very poor and Brahmin's proportion of payment of rent was equally heavy with the Mokasadars.

The lands given by the Zamindars to the Mokasa peons continued even when the Zamindars were out of power. For instance, though the Zamindars of Charmahal were out of power, the Mokasa villages to their peons and dependents still continued.
Table 4.4

Average Revenue Collections in Mokasa villages of Zamindari Estates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estates</th>
<th>Amount in MPs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kaldindi Estate</td>
<td>11,582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chintalapudi</td>
<td>659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bezwada</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mylavaram</td>
<td>2,863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medurgutta</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jammulavayi</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 4.5

Mokasa Revenue Collections in Nuzividu Zamindari:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Taluks</th>
<th>Amount in MPs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Gollapalli</td>
<td>3057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Nunestalum</td>
<td>3857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Chatrayi</td>
<td>1145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Vijayarayi</td>
<td>912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Wuyuru</td>
<td>537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Meduru</td>
<td>1228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Amberpetta</td>
<td>2902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Gundagolanu</td>
<td>1022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Pentapadu</td>
<td>2987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Nidadavolu</td>
<td>5441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Baharzalli</td>
<td>5656</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Under colonial hegemony, though the institution of Mukhasa Inams continued as it was, it underwent minor ramifications. Under the Permanent Settlement the Zamindars having stripped off their military powers largely, used these Mukhasa peons essentially for the revenue collections.

Turrabadi Sanads and Dumbala maniams were two other important Inams that were discerned in Masulipatnam district during this period. Turrabadi lands were certain portions of arable lands of a village being held by certain groups of village community who were entitled to a portion of public tax collected from these lands. Dumbala lands were arable lands the public tax on which had been alienated to individuals either connected or unconnected with the village and held under special grants from the ruling power.

Kattubadi Inams:

This category comprised the Inams held by the Kattubadis, a group of peons who discharged police, military, and revenue duties. Generally in the Masulipatnam district a tax of one Madras Pagoda per candy was received on the Kattubadi Inams. However, the tax which these Kattubadi peons were entitled from various landholdings groups varied greatly depending on the crop that was cultivated as indicated below:
For Patcha Jonna:

Telagala Peons were taxed at 1/4 MP/cutty
Natives were taxed at 7/16 MP/cutty
Payakari ryots were taxed at 1/16 MP/cutty
Payakaris were taxed at 5/16 MP/cutty
Karanams were taxed at 1/4 MP/cutty

For Mokka Jonna:

Inhabitants were taxed at 5/8 MP/cutty
Karanams were taxed at 5/16 MP/cutty

For Konda Jonna:

Karanams were taxed at 1/4 MP/cutty
Payakaris were taxed at 5/16 MP/cutty
Payakaris were taxed at 6/16 MP/cutty
Muslims were taxed at 5/16 MP/cutty
New payakaris were taxed at 1/8 MP/cutty

For Tobacco:

Karanams were taxed at 1 MP/Cuntah
Kadims were taxed at 1/2 MP/Cuntah
Payakaris were taxed at 1/4 MP/Cuntah
Muslims were taxed at 5/4 MP/Cuntah

For Chillies:

Muslims pyrah kamatalu were taxed at 5/4 MP/Cuntah
Kadims jerayati kamatalu were taxed at 1/4 MP/Cuntah

For Nutchenyi:

Karanams were taxed at 1/4 MP/Cuntah
Kadims were taxed at 5/16 MP/Cuntah
Muslims were taxed at 5/16 MP/Cuntah

For Cotton:

Kadims new Cuntahs were taxed at 5/16 MP/Cuntah
Karanams were taxed at 1/4 MP/Cuntah
Muslims were taxed at 1/4 MP/Cuntah
Payakaris new kuntahs were taxed at 1/8 MP/Cuntah
Kadims old Cuntas were taxed at 1/8 MP/Cuntah.

During the initial stages of the rule of the East India Company the government for several practical purposes continued
these tenures. While there was no formal policy at all towards the Inams, the Collectors were given powers to take adhoc decisions as and when problems arose regarding the Inams in the region. For this reason, the policy of the Company towards the Inam tenures was termed as Silent Settlements. Through the accumulation of a series of such adhoc decisions the confirmation of Inams became what has been termed the "Silent Settlements". It was silent both because no formal policy on this was enunciated and also because it was essentially a secret settlement.

What was the role and responsibility of the government in Inam villages? Did the policies of government have any influence over Inam villages? Were the same rules and restrictions also applied to the Inamdar? In the absence of any formal settlement with the Inamdar and any official policy regarding Inams what was the role of the government and its views? Could the ryots in an alienated village claim to participate in all those benefits of reduced assessment which the ruling authority might extend as a general measure over the district in which the Inam villages were situated? Was the Inamdar compelled to regulate his assignment according to the rates established in the government lands of the district in which his Inam lands were situated? Was the Inamdar entitled to any concessions or compensations by the government?

The Inam lands under early Colonial rule were further classified into three categories:
1. Lands cultivated by the **Inamdars** themselves,

2. Lands cultivated by ryots paying rent to the Inamdars, but possessing no proprietary interest **in the soil**.

3. Lands cultivated by **mirasidars** and others possessing a proprietary interest **in the soil**, but paying revenue to the Inamdars.

In the lands cultivated by the ryots who pay rent to the Inamdars, but who had no proprietary right **in the soil**, the government believed that if the demands of the Inamdars were exorbitant, the cultivators having no tie to any particular village would quit the village and migrate to another place where the assessment was more moderate. So in this way the Inamdars were compelled by their own interests to keep their demands within moderate bounds.

But in those Inam lands where the mirasidars as cultivators had a proprietary right **in the soil** but paid revenue to the Inamdars, the right of the government consisted in its title to receive from the mirasidars a share of the produce of the land or more strictly a share of the surplus produce after payment of the expenses of cultivation. The practice of receiving revenue in kind, had been abolished in all government villages and rents were collected in money.
The Board opined that any interference of the government between the Inamdares and the cultivators should be entrusted solely to the Collectors within whose charge the lands might be situated. In case of any dispute arising between the Inamdar and the ryot as to the amount of such equivalent in money the ryot was at liberty to discharge his revenue in kind.

By Regulation 4 of 1851, later on extended by 31 of 1836 and 23 of 1838 all claims to personal hereditary grants, and by Regulations 6 of 1831 all claims to service Inams were removed from the jurisdiction of the Courts to that of the Collectors and Board of Revenue, with a final appeal to the government. In 1845 the continuance of Inams to the heirs of the deceased incumbents was prohibited without the authority of government. All Inams held on grant at the date of the Company's assumption of power in the region and held by the same family at the time of the passing of regulation 31 of 1802 were continued to the next heir on the same terms. As regards Inams held without grants, it was left to the judgment of the Collector whether the length of possession was sufficient to entitle the heir to succeed to the Inam.
Minor Economic Privileges

But apart from these Inam tenures there were certain other economic privileges enjoyed by the privileged sections of the rural society. Customary shares allowed to certain groups from the gross produce in the agrarian structure and allowances in the payment of land revenue demand to certain privileged groups were some of these economic privileges prevailing in the region. Other notable ones were those enjoyed by the village officials like the Karanams from the people. Though these privileges were not as important as the Inam grants, they still played a definite role in the rural society and reinforced the existing social inequalities. How did these economic privileges uphold the rural inequalities? What were the changes undergone by these concessions over a period of time? What were the Company's perceptions on these privileges and also the attitudes of the Company administration in this region?

The customary shares enjoyed by different cultivating groups were not uniform throughout the region. These customary shares enjoyed by cultivators like the Kadims, Ulcudis and the Paracudis show certain inequalities in the allotment of the shares. For instance, in Masulipatnam district the customary shares allowed to the resident, non resident, Brahmin, and other Rachewar cultivating groups were eight, twelve, and ten tooms per putty respectively. But in Guntur district the shares allotted to the
Kadim cultivators were more than the non resident groups. The three groups of the cultivators, belonged to the same caste of Vellalars. However, the privileges seemed to be not equal to all. In this particular instance, their rural power and position was perhaps more instrumental in determining their shares than their caste. These customary shares were determined generally depending on the local practices and were usually deducted from the gross produce before it was divided between the cultivators and the government.

There were certain other concessions which were given in the payment of land revenue demand. One such allowance which was in ancient usage and which was enjoyed by certain privileged sections of the society was the vundra allowance.

Vundra allowance was common in the Presidency of Madras and was known by different names in different regions. In the ceded districts it was known by the name of Tyasgary. This allowance was given by the state both in terms of money and land. In terms of land a certain quantity of cultivable land of the beneficiary yielding a specific amount of revenue was exempted from land revenue payment as a concession. But generally of the total land revenue demand one fourth of the amount was given as Vundra allowance.
The higher caste considered physical labour as degrading and some agricultural operations as forbidden and constantly sought to avoid personal participation in the production processes. This was a common practice in many parts of India. In this region too land owners belonging to the Brahmin castes making use of the traditional ritual sanctions against the use of plough benefited from the vundra allowance. They were given this concession as they had to employ extra labour in their agricultural operations.

Strangely, however, several groups other than Brahmins were also getting this allowance under the Company administration in Guntur district. The district Collector in his report stated that vundra allowance in the district of Guntur was enjoyed by nearly all the Brahmins, as well as most of the Razus, Velamas, few Karna- nams and occasionally also by the Komatis and Goldsmiths. The inclusion of several groups clearly indicates the changes that had taken place in the allotment of this allowance. Because, if it was started as a kind of remission to those who could not participate directly in agricultural operations, the allowances to several groups under the Company seemed to suggest that the allowance had assumed a class character from the caste dimensions, or was it a later day phenomenon under the Company government? However, the privilege clearly highlights the underlying idea of inequality. Vundra allowance though enjoyed by several groups was not without restrictions. The allowance could not be claimed by certain groups of Inamdars and those who were culti-
vating in partnership with others. This was certainly to prevent the economically weaker sections from getting this privilege though they belonged to the same caste.

Probably taking advantage of the chaotic political situation that preceded the Company's rule and also of the government's ignorance of the local situation, the politically and economically powerful groups manipulated to get the allowance as the concession was certainly economically handsome. Apart from this, it was also a matter of prestige as it heightened the social status of those who were getting the privilege in the rural structure. Generally large land owners could afford to abstain from manual labour but in many areas conceptions of status prevented even quite small land owners from engaging in the actual work of tillage.

The Company's own view substantiates this. In one of the minutes of consultation the Company's higher officials expressed the opinion that the advantages granted to certain privileged classes under the denomination of Vundra seemed to have extended much beyond its original bounds.

Another group which benefited from these economic concessions was that of the Karanams. This group was actively involved in the rural structure and played a key role in the village administration. In both Masulipatnam and Guntur districts the
Karanams were predominantly Brahmins. The office of the Karanams was hereditary and the main duties of Karanams were to write and keep the village accounts. The Karanams usually enjoyed various emoluments like Karanams mirasi, Karanams salegalu and Karanams badulu as shown in table 4.6 and A 15.

Table : 4.6
Karanams and their Rusums in Akulamannadu Pargana :

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Names of village</th>
<th>Names of Samprattis</th>
<th>No. of Sampratis</th>
<th>Allowances payable per each Candy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Akulamannadu Casbah</td>
<td>Kanakolanu Venkiah</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Arsepalli</td>
<td>Kanakolanu Venkatara ramudu</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Eddapalli</td>
<td>Kanakolanu Venkiah</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Polavaram village</td>
<td>Kanakolanu Narsamma</td>
<td>1 2</td>
<td>4 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Singarayapalam</td>
<td>Idnapudi Gavaraju</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Mulaparru</td>
<td>Nandigama Viyanna</td>
<td>Lakkapragada Ramanna</td>
<td>Lakkapragada Agastappa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source : Read, Collector Masulipatnam district to the BOR, 10.11.1800, MOR. V.2998, p.67.
It is interesting to note that sometimes one family held the office of Karanam in three or four villages. In some villages the office of Karanam was shared by two or more people. For instance, in Malparru village there were six Karanams. But irrespective of the number the customary fees they enjoyed was the same. That is in the village where there was only one Karanam the customary fee was 14 seers of grain per candy and where there were six Karanams, there also the amount was same. However though the shares were fixed the Karanams exploited the villagers in extracting as much as possible.

Apart from these, because of his position as an account officer at the village level the residents were obliged to perform several services for him. Besides, the ritual status which they had as they belonged to Brahmin caste added more power to the already powerful Karanams in the village. Apart from the government privileges the residents were made to pay several kinds of fees to the Karanams.

At the time of marriage or any other social function in the village, Karanams received money payments from the villagers as a token of respect. For instance, the Banias paid Rs. 2 to the Karanams whereas the other classes paid Rs. 3/4. In the agricultural operations also the cultivators were required to pay certain amount to Karanams. In Masulipatnam district especially in the Nuzividu Zamindari after the harvesting cultivators paid
three seers per putty each to the **Karanams**. Like **wise** even the artisans were to pay. Weavers had to pay Rs. 2 1/2 on account of their looms, Toddy drawers Rs. 4 and **Baniyas Rs. 1/2**.

However these fees were extremely fluctuating and there was no fixed rule about the payments. **This** depended much on the **size** of the village and the economic background of the parties involved. It was customary **mamool** in some villages to give a handful of grain to the Karanams from each heap after measuring it and in others a handful of straw when it was stacked. It was also usual to give half a pagoda to the Karanams when any new inhabitants established themselves in a village.

There seems to have been no centralized or official policy regarding these customary **practices.** Even the Company seemed to have followed the same policy. So **in** case of a dispute relating to these rights and privileges, the higher orders of those particular castes under the dispute or mostly the Brahmins were consulted. The Board left it to the Collectors to take ad hoc decisions in these matters viewing both the local situation and also the parties involved.

**Another** important privilege enjoyed by the dominant elements of the agrarian world was the special tributes they were allowed to receive. As mentioned earlier, **Zamindaris** were entitled to certain fees called **Rusums** on almost all the produce. For in-
stance, on each nutcheny cuntah 1/16 of Madras Pagoda was Zamindar's rusum. 1/8 MPs. per cuntah on Chay root. Chillies, Tobacco, Onions, Betel gardens. The Zamindars received 1/32 MPs. per cuntah on Hemp, Cotton and Potato, one MP per Chay root bed and 1/4 MP per Nutcheny bed. On grain the Zamindari rusums formed 5% of the value of Ambaram grain delivered by the Kadeem inhabitants. Besides these, on the Moturpha collected also the Zamindars received rusums at 1/4 MP. Nazzers or Nazarana was another fee collected by the Zamindars. Nazarana was a fee or a gift paid to the superiors on succession to estates or offices. The custom of levying Nazaranas did not exist in the district. But under this head 2 3/4 MPs. per village was collected by the Zamindars.

Another fee enjoyed by the Zamindars for their duties was Saverams which consisted of certain lands in each or in some of the villages rent free. The following table shows the saveram lands enjoyed by the Zamindar of Bezwada.
## Table 4.7

**Saveram Lands in Bezwaḍa Zamindari:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Name of villages</th>
<th>No. of villages</th>
<th>Extent of Saveram lands in cutties</th>
<th>Extent of Saveram lands in 1195F</th>
<th>Extent of Saveram lands in 1204F</th>
<th>Extent of Saveram lands in 1203F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Beawada</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ponanki</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kanuru</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kolaventoor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Padamata</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>yeyupuvollu</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Chunduru</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mogalpajapuram</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Gundala</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Gungoor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Kankipadu</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Gosanalabe</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Yanikapadu</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Nidanamuru</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Wuppaluru</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Velpuru</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Pasadampadu</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Maradumahal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Proddatur</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Grundalampadu</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Mutyalapadu</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Tennuru</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Konetipadu</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** R.J. Porter, Collector Masulipatnam district to the BOR, 2.10.1843, MDR, v. 6334, p. 355-56.
It is interesting to note that the Saveram lands of the Zamindars were not in a compact block, but scattered over the villages in his estate. In each village the Zamindars had certain cutties of land. Perhaps this scattered nature of the privileged land gave the Zamindar certain control over the villages in his Zamindari and also a close watch over the villages as their lands existed.

Thus customary practices and economic privileges still formed an important part in maintaining the rural power structures intact in the region. These privileges which served many purposes also maintained the social inequalities and were reinforced by the privileged sections from time to time. The Company for several strong reasons had to maintain these structures intact at least in the early days of its rule. In attempting to restructure its administration in the locality or to impose its authority upon it, the Company was compelled to adopt policies which would not depart too much from those of the pre colonial times and also which did not directly impinge on the powers and privileges of the rural structure.

The concepts mirasi and mirasidar seems to have different connotations. This led to lot of controversy as different scholars assumed these rights differently. Though the term miras was Persian, the original term used for such a right was known as Kaniyatchi. In the beginning Kaniyatchi was an exclusive right
pertaining only to the Tamil villages and in course of time it became a more wide spread term. so in order to have a clear idea as to what was a Mirasai and who was a Mirasidar it is necessary to know the origin of the right.

Though there is difference of opinion regarding its origin and scope of the rights involved, the popular account of the origin of the system was that when the ruler Tondaiman settled certain areas in Chingleput and Arcot in order to encourage settlers he gave them land on a favourable tenure. However some British officials like Munro held the view that the system originated in local circumstances, from the need to construct tanks and water works at public expense.

In Tamil villages the exclusive right to the hereditary possession of several descriptions of land situated within its boundaries was originally vested in the Vellalars and seemed to be a communal type of land holding.

Though originally this was an exclusive right of the Vellar community in course of time it became more widespread both community wise and geographically also. For instance in many villages Brahmins also found to have possessed this right by the term Swastium.
However, in course of time the original Kaniyatchi was replaced by the term mirasi under the immediate pro colonial rulers and with it the nature of the right also underwent certain transformation. Some early British officials viewed that the mirasi right was not common throughout the Madras presidency and was found only in certain districts. However, this idea was later proved wrong by other scholars. The existence of the term miras and mirasidars in the revenue records of Northern Circars and other scholars' view seemed to put the earlier view in doubt.

Apart from the hereditary rights in the soil, the mirasidars had rights to buy and sell the land and had right over the common waste lands of the village. The mirasidars were supposed to pay for the communal services in the villages and charities also. There were certain restrictions on the mirasidars. All the lands had to be cultivated either by the mirasidars themselves or by their tenants and if for any reason proprietors neglected to utilize the arable land the government had the right to substitute cultivators from outside and realize the revenue. Even in such cases the mirasidars had the right to claim the landlord's share or Swamibhogam from the cultivators. This practice seemed to be under criticism by some of the British revenue officials. But the nature of the mirasi right seemed to differ from place to place. For instance, in the Deccan, the mirasidars had to pay the stipulated amount of revenue irrespective of the amount of land cultivated.
An important question was whether the mirasidar was the actual cultivator or was he the landlord? According to Dharma Kumar this depended on the size of the holding of the mirasidars and also their caste. In case of large holdings, the cultivation was carried on by the Payakari cultivators also along with the mirasidars. But if the mirasidars were Brahmins then cultivation was carried on exclusively by the Payakaris.

The Inams or the silent settlement as Frykenberg had mentioned was like a lynch pin holding a many spoked wheel onto the axle of Company powers. The East India Company came to its position of supreme authority by using local traditional and indigenously acceptable implements and ingredients and by adapting to the internal customs and socio political conditions necessary for the accumulation of power. Eventually and ultimately such working within the structures of power required coming to grips with various forms of Inam holdings. Various piece meal encounters with such institutions without adequate or thorough knowledge of the profound intricacies and ramifications of the cultural context from where they sprang, might conceivably, have produced hopeless blundering and failure.

The Company in the early stages of stabilizing its rule was coming to terms with a political economy which was strange and complex. It needed a strong base and support of the rural power to stabilize its hegemony over the rural structures. Thus the Company was compelled, it would seem, to continue the existing practices without much change.
NOTES ANO REFERENCES


(4). Ibid, p. 37


(11). Report by H.T. Blair, `On the entire operations of the Inam

(13). For a list of the Inam holdings enjoyed by both the Muslims and Hindus and also for the details of the sale of the Inam lands see, Tables A 15, A16, and A 17.


(16). For a discussion on the indigenous irrigation institutions in Masulipatnam district see chapter 8.


(18). Ibid.


(24). Secretary, Government of India to the Secretary, BOR, 27.3.1844, Dispatches from England, v. 24, p.37.

(25). Ibid.

(27). Secretary, Government of India to the Secretary, BOR, 27.5.1844. Dispatches from England, v. 24, p. 37.


(29). For further reference on different categories of cultivators see, Sarada Raju, Economic Conditions in the Madras Presidency 1800-1850, Madras, 1941, pp. 31-40.


(32). Collector Masulipatnam to BOR. 11.11.1788 MDR. v. 2894/c, pp. 900-901; For a detailed account of the Vellalars see Edgar Thurston, Caste and Tribes of South India, 7, Delhi, 1975, pp. 361-389.

(33). For a detailed account of these customary shares of different cultivating groups in Masulipatnam district see Collector to BOR. 10.11.1800 MDR, v. 2991, pp. 83-101.

(34). Vundra was a gratuitous deduction of sist to the cultivators by the Zamindars, Collector to BOR, GuDR 3982, p. 242. It also means land granted at an easy rate of assessment to privileged castes or families of a village, for reference see, R.E. Frykenberg, Guntur District 1788-1845: A History of Local influence and Central authority in South India Oxford, 1965. p. 277.

(35). Collector Bellary to the BOR. 51.5.1848 Preceding of the Board of Revenue, v. 2142, p. 9436


(37). Collector Guntur to the BOR, 26 June 1848, PBOR, v. 2142, p. 9439.

(38). Ibid., p. 9436; For a detailed account of Razu, Velama and Komati communities, see Edgar Thurston Caste and Tribes of South India. 1-7, Delhi, 1975.


(45) Circuit Committee Report to BOR 'On the Zamindaris of Nuzividu and Charmahal', 9.2.1786, Selections from the records of the Madras Government. Seer was a measure of weight, approximately 40 Seers being equal to one maund. Putti was a measure of capacity, equal to 20 Tooms.


(47) Ibid., p.13

(48) Secretary, BOR to Collector Guntur district, 51.5.1848. *PBOR* v.2142, p.9437.

(49) Read, Collector, Masulipatnam to the BOR. 10.11.1800, *MOR*, v.2998, p.125.


(51) Cawnyatchi is a Tamil word which meant free hereditary property right in the land. The person who held this right was know as Cawnyatchikar. This seems to be an equivalent to later day miras and mirasidar.


(59). Ellis to the BOR, PBOR, Miscellaneous, v.231, P.2.


(61). Ibid.
