Chapter - III

AGRARIAN REFORMS

In Travancore the complicated relationship between the landlord and the tenant highlighted the need for the introduction of radical agrarian reforms. It was customary in those days to subject the tenants to arbitrary eviction. Though most of them had been in *de facto* possession of the lands for considerably long periods, they did not have the proprietary right over them. They became impoverished due to a variety of composite factors and were forced to live a hand-to-mouth subsistence. The solution seemed to be in abolishing tenancy at will and conferring ownership rights on them.¹ Hence a series of land reforms aimed at redressing the grievances of the tenants were introduced in all the areas of Travancore from the nineteenth century. These reforms had as their immediate objectives prevention of arbitrary evictions, proper fixation of tenure, conferment of proprietary rights on certain classes of tenants, fixation of fair rent, payment of compensation for improvements etc. Among the Indian States, Travancore forged ahead of others in land reforms largely influenced by the political climate. It was also subsequently induced by spiritual factor. In 1801, British Residency was established in Travancore and in 1805 the first Protestant Church was founded at Mylaudy by Rev. Ringletaube. The articulation between political and religious forces created a favourable trend for agrarian and social reforms. No doubt, the missionary initiative and induce for some of these reforms were motivated for conversion. Utilitarian philosophy also touched fringe of

the problem. It was claimed that unless the State provided adequate protection to the cultivator, there was no security to the ryots and can cause untold miseries to the country.\(^2\) Under this situation, Munroe with the approval of the Rani Parvathi Bai issued a bunch of Proclamations granting rights and concessions to the cultivators and commoners.\(^3\) With it, the reform movement in Travancore caught on.

**Land Reform Regulations Enacted Prior to 1865**

The areas of wet lands recorded in the *Ayacut* Permanent Settlement Record of 978 M.E. 1803 A.D were not the result of actual measurements, but an estimate deduced in a rough way from the assumed quantity of seed required to sow each field.\(^4\) The subsequent *Ayacut* of 1012 M.E/1837 A.D was likewise defective, in that correct areas of gardens were not ascertained and recorded though the gardens themselves were in a manner measured.\(^5\) The aforesaid *Ayacuts* were partial and incomplete as embracing cultivated land only, excluding wastes of all descriptions, it was resolved by the Government to carry out a complete Survey and Re-assessment of the entire State.

An accurate measurement, demarcation mapping and valuation of properties of every description and a registration of titles are the basis of sound Revenue Administration. Accordingly the new survey and Settlement accounts were recorded in terms of acres and cents, the equivalent in *Paras* and *Edangalis*.\(^6\) In the Settlement

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5. Ibid.
6. Travancore Administrative Report, 1886 A.D. Para-6. *Edagnali* means "Standard measure of capacity equivalent to 80 cubic inches and also a land measure representing the area required for sowing an *edangali* of grain".

of 1012 M.E/1837 A.D. all productive coconut trees in the Taluks north of Chirayinkil were divided into four classes, and each class was charged with a distinctive rate of assessment.⁷ In the same way, jack trees were rated at four chuckrams ⁸ per bearing tree, and the areca at half a chuckram. On the other hand, in the Taluks south of Quilon. Not only the coconut, jack and areca, but also the palmyra, punnai, tamarind, mango and ilupai were assessed to the revenue; and the assessment, instead of being a single rate for each class or kind of tree, was based on no uniform principle and consisted of numerous and varying rates for each kind of tree in each taluk. In fact, the State of things found existing in this part of the country at the time of Settlement appeared to have been left untouched.⁹

The distribution of coconut trees into four classes in North Travancore appeared to have been made with reference to their productive capacity as indicated by the number of bunches of nuts and the number of madals or fronds seen on each productive tree. This in practice proved a most difficult process and could not be expected to yield correct results. It was impossible for any agency to look up at each tree in a garden, from a correct valuation of its productive power and place it in one or other of any prescribed number of classes, with any pretensions to accuracy. The scope, too, for fraud and oppression with such a procedure must necessarily afford to subordinate officials whose operations it must be impossible for superior officers, in such circumstances, to check and control, must be very great.

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8. Chakram means "The earliest and the smallest silver coin that was current in Travancore, now substituted by copper coin of the small denomination."
In the Settlement prior to 1012/1837 A.D the coconut tree was assessed at one single rate only.\textsuperscript{10} This course had the undoubted advantage of being simple and of shutting the door on the abuses inseparable from all classifications, but then a uniform rate must be very low if it was to be paid with ease. Such a low rate would not only be unequal in its incidence, but it involved an unnecessary sacrifice of the public revenue.

Therefore a uniform rate of assessment was introduced at the Settlement which immediately preceded that of 1012 M.E/1837 A.D being expedient in the interests of the agricultural population.\textsuperscript{11} Accordingly, it was decided by the Government that the gardens throughout the State should be divided into blocks with reference to their situation, soil and productiveness, Each garden was charged with a distinctive rate carefully determined with reference, to the existing average assessment-such rate not to exceed four \textit{chuckrams} or fall short of one \textit{chuckram} for each productive tree in the garden.

The jack and areca were taxed at a uniform rate in North Travancore, while in the southern taluks, they and other kinds of trees subject to taxation were taxed at varying rates.\textsuperscript{12} As it was desirable both in the interests of the taxpayer and for the simplification of the revenue accounts, that each kind of tree should be assessed at one uniform rate.\textsuperscript{13}

The \textit{ilupai} was taxed in only four taluks and the revenue derived from it was so small. Therefore it was resolved by the command that the tax upon it to be abandoned

\textsuperscript{10} S.F.R., p. 137.
\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{13} The Royal Proclamation, dated 21\textsuperscript{st} June 1865.
at the ensuing Settlement.\textsuperscript{14} In some cases the palmyra was taxed at the last Settlement in the Trivandrum taluk, but as the trees, so taxed were few and if yielded little or no return, they were exempted from assessment. This exemption was extended to other localities in which this kind of tree was similarly circumstanced.

It was the practice at the previous Settlement to allow a remission called \textit{Nadavukur}.\textsuperscript{15} from the assessment on \textit{pattom} and other gardens. But this practice was far from uniform.\textsuperscript{16} It was given at various rates and was granted in the case of some gardens and withheld in those of others. The remission was deducted sometimes from the pattom assessment fixed at the time of the Settlement, or at the assessment determined at one or other of the previous Settlements. In short, there is nothing to show what properties were at that moment entitled to this deduction and what rate or rates the deduction should be made and on what principle-the accounts were so confused and unreliable.

In these circumstances the oppression in the hands of the \textit{Pillamars} would continue to prevent complicate the accounts with an counter balancing advantage.\textsuperscript{17}

It was applicable chiefly only to \textit{Sirkar Pattom} lands. These lands were originally the absolute property of Government, and the tenants were mere tenants-at-will. But by the Royal proclamation,\textsuperscript{18} the Government generously waived all right to these lands and declared them to be the private, heritable, saleable property of the holders. When

\textsuperscript{14} S.F.R., p. 137.

\textsuperscript{15} The term \textit{Nadavukur} means "A special feature of the older settlement in regard to garden lands by which the owners of the garden lands especially those falling under \textit{Sirkar Pattom} tenure were given an allowance for the labour and money spent by them in rearing new plants of the taxable species."

\textsuperscript{16} S.F.R., p. 137.

\textsuperscript{17} The Royal Proclamation, dated 21\textsuperscript{st} June 1865.

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Ibid}. 
this was done, the right to the Nadavukur remission emphatically ceased. On that occasion, it is true that the Government reserved to themselves the right of charging a fee of 2 per cent on every transfer of the class of the enfranchised properties. But even this fee, which for 20 years had continued to yield between forty and fifty thousand rupees a year to the Government treasury, was relinquished only two years ago, entirely in the interests of the agricultural population. Superadded to all this is the fact that the rates of garden assessment to be adopted at the ensuing Settlement would be the same as those fixed 50 years ago.

One these considerations, the Government resolved to abolish the Nadavukur at the ensuing Settlement as a means both of simplifying the accounts and relieving the ryots from the hardships to which the continuance of a remission governed by no definite or uniform principles was likely to subject them.

The Rajabhogam levied on Devaswam, Brahmaswam and other favourably assessed gardens was not uniform but varied from $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{2}{5}$ ths. The more prevalent rates, however were only two, namely, 1/6 and $\frac{1}{8}$ the others were exceptional. As it was desirable that this tax would be levied at one single uniform rate throughout the State, and the Government commanded that the lowest of the existing rates-namely $\frac{1}{8}$ - would be adopted at the ensuing Settlement.

The Kadama levied on rice lands held as Devaswam, Brahmaswam, etc, was unlike the Rajabhogam on similar tenures in garden land, levied at so much per Parai without reference to the quality or productiveness of the land. Therefore it was
suggested to assess the Kadama at one-eighth of the pattom or full assessment of the land as in the case of gardens.\textsuperscript{19}

Like the former Settlements, the practice, in the case of Pandaravaga Otti and other tenures such as Rajabhogam, Vitharai, and Mupparai was to deduct from the pattom assessment and to take the resulting amount as the demand against the properties. It was further a condition in many parts of the country that these tenures, on the transfer of any property by sale, was subjected to a process called Ottivilakkam\textsuperscript{20} by which the mortgage amount was reduced by one-fourth and the Government demand was enhanced by the amount of the interest on the sum reduced.\textsuperscript{21} This process was repeated at every succeeding transfer and the result was the ultimate extinction of the debt and the raising of the Government demand to the full pattom.\textsuperscript{22}

But, as always happens in such cases, the re-adjustment of the public demand entailed by the process described was almost invariably evaded in practice by transfers never being reported, i.e., the ryots did not come forward to seek the registration of the transfer, as it involved an extinction of a portion of the debt on which they were entitled to interest and a corresponding addition to their payments to the Sirkar. In few cases, which occasionally did come before Government, the

\textsuperscript{19} T L R M, vol.I,p.70.
\textsuperscript{20} The term Ottivilakkam means “A special feature of the old Settlements in dealing with Otti lands. The holders of such lands were in the position of mortgagees from whom the state had in fact or in theory borrowed specific sums, the interest on which was deducted from the standard assessment and the balance treated as the Sirkar demand. The moment the land passed into the hands of an aliens, the mortgage amount was \textit{ipsa facto} reduced by one forth and the Sirkar demand was enhanced to the extend of the interest on the sum reduced.” (T L R M, vol. IV, p.886).
\textsuperscript{21} The Acts and Proclamations of Travancore, Trivandrum, vol.I,p.73.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
calculations involved were tedious and the preparation of the annual accounts embracing the changes was often delayed; and, after all, the Sirkar gained little by the existing arrangements. It was therefore, to relieve the ryots from the hardships imposed by this Ottivilakkam, to remove the obstacles which it interposed to the free and unrestricted transfer of property, and, at the same time to simplify the accounts by entirely abolishing the Otti tenure.²³

The Inams were of two classes viz., service Inams, and personal Inams. The service Inams were inalienable and were left in the undisturbed possession of the holders so long as the prescribed service was duly rendered. When the holder died heirless, the lands were conferred on somebody else on the same terms. In the event of non-performance of service, the lands were liable to resumption by Government. The personal Inams consisted of those that were by custom inalienable and which became subject to the process known as Ottivilakkam on alienation and those that were transferable without risk of the original tenure or tax being interfered with. The Inam lands were liable to the payment of Rajabhogam, and in some cases a michavaram or quit-rent was leviable in addition. Rajabhogam was levied at numerous varying rates from \( \frac{1}{8} \) to \( \frac{2}{5} \) of the assessment and michavaram also varied according to local usage from \( \frac{1}{40} \) to \( \frac{1}{2} \) of the assessment.²⁴ Some of the personal Inams were, however, rent-free. Distributed with reference to the tax payable, the Inams were of three classes: (a) those that were liable to only a Rajabhogam; (b) those

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²³ H C V R, Thirattu, dated 1799 A.D.
²⁴ S F R, p.22.
that were liable to Rajabhogam plus michavaram; and (c) those that were absolutely tax-free.  

All favourably assessed lands (excepting Devaswam, Brahmaswam, Madambimar and Erayali properties) such as Adima, Anubhogam, Tiruvilam, Thiruvadayalam were classed under the head of Inams. These were of two classes, viz., Inams granted for the support of individuals or families, or personal Inams, and Inams granted for the performance of specified services, or Service Inams. The recognized practice as regards these tenures was to abstain from all interference with service grants, so long as the service for which they were granted continues to be maintained. As to Personal grants, the right of the original grantee and his descendants to enjoy the Inam was fully admitted, but, when it was alienated by sale or otherwise, the Sirkar steps in and subjects the property to the process of Ottivilakkam which was repeated at every subsequent alienation. All Inams were charged only with Rajabhogam which, generally speaking was the only payment made to Government on these tenures.

It was commanded that all Ottivilakkam should be abolished in the case of Otti tenures on account of its objectionable features. It was desirable that this should be done in the case of Inams also. This important class of properties, which was extensive, should be placed on a satisfactory footing advantageous alike to the holders and the Government. And this will be best attained by freeing them altogether from Sirkar interference of any kind, and leaving the holders at perfect liberty to deal with

25. Ibid.
them as they like. Accordingly, the following rules were laid down for the Settlement of *Inams*, and they were given effect by the officers at the ensuing Settlement.\(^\text{27}\)

(1) All *Inams* granted for service of any description shall be left to be enjoyed without interference, So long as the service continues to be fulfilled, subject to the payment of one-eighth of the *pattom* as *Rajabhogam* and any *michavaram* which may be payable. When, from any cause, the service has ceased or shall cease to be performed, the *Inam* shall be resumed and assessed with *pattom*.

(2) All personal *Inams*, found at the time of the Settlement to be in the enjoyment of the family of the original grantee shall be exempt from all interference and continue to be so held, on payment of one-eighth of the *pattom* as *Rajabhogam* plus any *michavaram* with which they are already charged.

(3) All Personal *Inams*, found at the Settlement to be in the enjoyment of individuals or families other than the original grantee or his descendants, shall be charged with the payment of one-half of the *pattom* assessment to Government, any *michavaram* with which it is already charged in favour of any private individuals or institutions being payable as usual.

(4) No *Inam* to be subject to *Ottivilakkam* here-after.

(5) A title deed to be granted to each holder at the time of Settlement, specifying the character of the *Inam*, whether Service of Personal, it extends and description, whether wet or garden, and particulars of the quit-rent with which it is chargeable under the above rules.

(6) After the Settlement of the *Inams* under the foregoing rules, the holders shall be at liberty to mortgage, sell or transfer them in any manner at their will and discretion, subject only to the payment of the quit-rent fixed.

(7) There shall be no further interference on the part of Government with these free-holds except such as might be necessary for the punctual realization of the quit-rent payable.

Of these extra cesses, many were abolished in former years, but many more still remain encumbering the accounts and serving as a source of annoyance to the payers and probably of gain to the lower Revenue Officials. Most of the cesses were petty, small in amount and falling on a few individuals. On the other hand, there were some which it would be a needless sacrifice of revenue to relinquish, when it was considered how little some sections of the community contribute towards the expenses of the State. For instance *Rekshabhogam, Ubhayampalisa, Chumattupanam, and Kada Pattom.* As it was considered desirable to clear the Settlement officials of all petty taxes as much as possible, the officials commanded that.\(^{28}\)

1. All cesses which were of a personal character should be abolished.

2. Also, all cesses which fell upon any particular professions.

3. Likewise, all cesses falling on ryots were already paying the *pattom* assessment the cesses falling, on the other hand, on lands paying less than the full *pattom* being retained and incorporated with the Government demand.

4. The item of *Ubhayampalisa* was dealt with under the terms of the Proclamation of 23rd *Mithunam* 1056.

5. *Kada-Pattom* was retained in all cases.

Acting on the foregoing principles, the Settlement Officers made full investigation into the various cesses and laid the result before the *Dewan* who finally decided what should be retained and what abolished. ²⁹

The lands under this head comprise of:

(1) The *Palliport Farm*.

(2) A tract called *Pulienthruthu* in the Alengad Taluk.

(3) A small tract of rice land and some gardens in the Shertallai Taluk.

(4) And various small pieces of land scattered throughout the State belonging to the *Sirkar* and forming building-sites and compounds of Palaces, *Cutcherries* and other public buildings, which were leased out from time to time.

The proprietary right to the properties in the case of tracts (1) and (2) vested in the hands of Government, and accordingly, the resident tenants were held to be mere tenants-at-will, without even the right of occupation. The rates of assessment paid were also higher than in the case of *Pandara Pattom* lands. ³⁰ Although, in these circumstances, the *Sirkar* would be justified in selling these properties and recouping themselves for the money invested in their purchase, the Settlement Official deem it more important to encourage private industry and enterprise and impart to the industrious tenants already on the estate a sense of security, have resolved to confirm

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²⁹ *S F R*, p.19.
³⁰ *H C V R, Thirattu*, dated 994 M.E.
to them the garden lands now in their possession and confer upon them dull property rights in regard to them, subject only to the payment of the present assessment (all payments being abolished)\textsuperscript{31} This assessment was higher than that of Pandara Pattom lands, but this was unavoidable being an incident of the original tenure of the properties. It would be open, however, to the holders to purchase exemption from the high assessment, and have the gardens placed on the same footing as other pattom lands, by paying down once for all 20 times the difference between the normal and the exceptional assessment. This would be allowed either at the time of the Settlement or subsequently according to the convenience of the holders. All the gardens in question would of course be demarcated, surveyed and assessed in the first instance.\textsuperscript{32}

The rice lands comprised in the above properties and the whole of number (3) were entirely at the disposal of Government and led no resident tenants with any rights. They would therefore, after being also demarcated, surveyed and assessed, be sold by auction to the highest bidder, to be held like other pattom lands subject to the payment of the Pattom or assessment fixed at the ensuing Settlement.

The building sites leased on Kuthagai Pattom would continue to be so without change. The Kadukaval lands were not any longer be retained under the head of Kuthagai Pattom.\textsuperscript{33}

The Kandukrishi lands were what may be termed the Crown-lands or the home-farms of the Sovereign. They were granted on simple leases recoverable at pleasure, and the ryots had neither proprietary rights, nor even transferable rights of occupancy.

\textsuperscript{31} Proclamation of His Highness of Maha Raja of Travancore issued under dated, 24th February 1886.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{33} Government Order No.12892/L.R & F, dated 1st December 1912.
The rent was generally fixed and payable all in grain. Though the tenants were, strictly speaking, no more than mere tenants-at-will, the Sirkar as a rule, never interfered with their occupancy so long as the rent was regularly paid.\(^\text{34}\)

These lands were called the Home Farms or the private property of the Sovereign and were cultivated by tenants who were entitled only to the cultivator’s share and had no rights of any kind in them. Formerly, the Proprietor used to supply to the cultivating tenant the seed and cattle required for the cultivation, and in return received payment, in addition to the Melvaram or Government share, of what was called Kolulabham or the proprietor’s share. But as this custom was now ceased and the labourer was left to find his own seed, cattle and implements, the Settlement Official commanded that this Kolulabham should be no longer levied, but that the lands, after being demarcated and surveyed and assessed on the same principles as other lands, be allowed to be enjoyed on the existing terms, subject only to the payment of the pattom in kind as at present. All extra payments outside this pattom would be abolished.\(^\text{35}\)

**The Nair Viruthi System**

The Nair Viruthi system, owing to failure to adapt it from time to time to altered economic conditions was known to have become far less efficient for its purpose than when it was originally established. To entail hardship in its practical working on those subject to its operation; and whereas it was necessary to check the abuses which in process of time have unavoidably grown around the system, and to improve the condition of the viruthicars by the application of remedial measures which past

\(^{34}\) H C V R, Neetu, dated, 17th Kanni, 1985 A.D.
\(^{35}\) S F R, p.19.
experience has shown to be called for, it has been resolved by the Government to take
the opportunity afforded by the Revenue Settlement, now in progress, to cause a
searching inquiry to be made into the condition of the holders of the Viruthi tenures
and to afford them such relief as may be found necessary.36

Abolition of Viruthi System

1. The services at present rendered by the Viruthicars, whether in the shape of
finding supplies of vegetables, or of providing labour and building materials on stated
occasions would carefully scrutinized and revised.

2. The further requisitions for such provisions and labour, and the occasions on
which, and the quantities in which, they should be made, would be reduced and
restricted as far as practicable in the course of such revision.

3. A new schedule was then be framed of such requisitions showing for each
Village, definitely and clearly, the supplies of provisions and labour and materials of
every description which would be demanded hereafter; the institutions or purposes for
which and the occasion on which they would require and the number and names of
the Viruthicars who had to render the services.

4. A through revision was made of the prices paid for the provisions and materials
supplied; as those prices were considerably below the current ruling prices. This
revision would be based on the returns of the prices of late years, so that the payments
made by Government in future might represent, as near as might be what the
Viruthicars would realize if they carried their goods into the open market.

5. The table of rates prepared as above indicated, would be afterwards revised, when necessary, with reference to any material rise or fall in the prices running in the open market.

6. While the *Viruthicars* were thus paid for their provisions and materials, at the prevailing market rates, they would need to be remunerated for the expenditure of time and labour involved in their fulfilling this obligation and for performing such personal services as they might undertake to do; and for this purpose, a grant of land, at so much per head, to be determined by the Settlement *Peishkar* in communication with the *Dewan* would be made out of the present *Viruthi* holdings. And such land was subject to the payment of *Rajabhogam* only and be exempt from all other demand.

7. No addition would be made to the services fixed under para 3 of this Proclamation at the time of Settlement as those to be rendered by the *Viruthicars* thereafter.

8. No *Viruthicar* was at liberty to alienate, by sale, gift, mortgage or otherwise, the *Inam* given to him for the *Viruthi* Service. All such alienation should be null and void, and the Government had the power of resuming any such alienated *Viruthi Inam* and restoring it to the holder or otherwise disposing of it as to them might seem fit. No action should lie respecting any such land in any Court of Law.

9. All transfer of *Viruthi Inams* lands were from the date of this Proclamation, be exempted from the payment of any *Arialum, Adiara* or other fees.

10. All surplus land, if any, out of the present *Viruthi* holdings would remain after allotting fresh *Inams* under para 6 of this Proclamation, should remain at the disposal of the *Sirkar*, They would either be assessed with full *pattom* and confirmed to the
present holders if they so wished it, or otherwise disposed of according to circumstances.

11. Any Viruthicar who might be unwilling to continue the Viruthi service even under the terms of this Proclamation should be at liberty to relinquish the same.

12. If such Viruthicar had no land assigned to him for the service, but had only Muthalelpu, whether in paddy or money, to make good, he would be relieved of the Viruthi on his paying down the Muthalelpu; or, failing that, on his agreement to pay, till the debt was discharged, interest on such Muthalelpu at 3 per cent per annum charged.

But if the Viruthicar who sought to withdraw from the service if possessed both of Viruthi lands and Muthalelpu, he would be relieved of the Viruthi on his surrendering to the Sirkar such lands, whether rice land or Puraidam or both, and on his also paying down the Muthalelpu, or, failing this last on his undertaking to pay interest thereon at the rate of 3 per cent per annum till the debt was repaid. The viruthi lands surrendered would be allowed to be held by the outgoing Viruthicar on Sanjaya Pattom, to be ultimately disposed of as the Government might think fit. The Pattom, fixed would be that determined under the new Settlement.37

Such were the principles and procedure the Settlement officials approved, sanctioned and commanded to be carried out at the new Settlement Their paramount aim and object in laying down these principles would be to avoid those periodical revisions of the garden assessment, once in 12 years which though not strictly carried out in practice formed an essential condition of the last Settlement and which a system

37. H C V R, Circular No.8045, dated 17th Karkadgam, 1039 M.E.
of assessment of trees by sale necessarily entailed. Such revision meant the employment of a large body of *Pillamars* throughout the country to court the trees, to make out accounts of those entitled to remission for trees, lost, and of those who had become liable to it for trees newly planted. And the employment of a large staff of such low-paid agency meant petty extraction and oppression on one side, and fraud on the other. Such a process, repeated once in 12 years, must have the effect of destroying the confidence of the ryots in the permanency of the assessment, impairing industry and checking the free employment of labour and capital. To obviate these evils and to secure to the land-holders the utmost freedom of action in improving their properties and turning them to the best advantage according to their means and inclination, the Settlement Officials resolved to declare the new Settlement permanent for a term of thirty years.

In Travancore, as in other parts of India, the land tax imposed by the rapacious government had traditionally absorbed the entire economic rent and hence cultivators were left high and dry. So the tenant classes were pushed into the bottom of the social ladder, while the chief tenant cum landowner classes enjoyed preponderant power and authority in the socio-economic life of the people. Through the processes of arbitrary assessments, oppressive collections, the parasite classes lived a life of ease and splendor. They had nothing to lose but only to gain. Even if they were affected, they could compensate the losses from the feudal levies and obligations they extracted from the tenants. Every evil act of the revenue administration favoured their interest either directly or indirectly. Moreover their control over the agencies of administration and articulation with the judiciary safeguarded their interests.
As far as the regulations against eviction were concerned, the State interest and spirit of the reform could not be sustained permanently. The proprietors of estates who desired to evict their tenants obtained support from the officers of the revenue department who interpreted the established customs according to their own convenience. The judiciary acted with partisan spirit, since the members who constituted that organ were drawn from among the landed aristocracy. They were very much indifferent to implementing the reforms as they could not surrender their privileged status in the society. This status consciousness of the landed gentry, made them obstruct every effort taken by the State to ameliorate the peasantry from the evils of arbitrary eviction. When pressed by circumstances, they acted indifferently and unitedly to put a stiff resistance to which even the rulers were afraid of. Further when there was no alternative for a tenant he could be easily prevented from appealing to the protection of the court.

Considering the Royal Proclamation of 1865, which conferred ownership rights on the tenants of sirkar lands, nothing substantial was achieved. By this Act protection was afforded to the sirkarr land tenants who were mostly Nairs and Vellalas, who found themselves higher in social scale. No protection was given to the sub-tenants or actual cultivators of the soil. This is quite in accordance with the general observations of Myrdal in the Asian situation. The new proprietors of sirkar lands could squeeze their sub-tenants in a way commonly employed by Brahmin janmies. Since land was the only source of living in those days and land right in any form was considered as prestigious, there was a rat race for land. This abnormal situation strengthened the

21. Ibid., p.1038.
hold of the chief tenants of sirkar lands over their subordinates and encouraged them in their desire for spontaneous exploitation.

Similar was the case of revenue reforms carried out in Travancore since the days of Col. Munroe. The earnest efforts taken by the State for the amelioration of the cultivators failed to reach them. Reduction in assessment of tax was occasionally done for the benefit of the ryots. However, it resulted in extending the chain of parasitic rent receivers who acted as intermediaries between the State and cultivators. The same was also true of various assistance schemes launched with a view to promoting agricultural prosperity and progress of the peasantry. The social security measures designed to benefit the farmers and agrestic workers never touched even the fringe of their problem. These measures initiated by the State were poorly implemented if at all they were executed.

The small holders and average tenants could not get better results out of the revenue reforms because of their limited control over the agencies of production. A large number of tenants led a hand to mouth living because of the operation of human and natural forces. Man-made shortages of irrigation supply, oppressive assessments, arbitrary collection of revenue, official rapacity and seasonal failures – all combined together to work against their interests. Status consideration which served as a barrier between tenants and landlords obstructed proper execution of the tenancy legislation. The most serious byproducts of the status differential was manifested in handling disputes between landlords and tenants by the administrative and judicial procedures.

authorities. Due to the working of these composite factors, the government announced reliefs and concessions did not reach the actual cultivators.\textsuperscript{26}

The same was the case with the economic support offered by government agencies. Due to some obvious reasons the peasants always found themselves immersed in chronic debt. Every ryot, nine out of ten invariably had some debts standing against him owing to a variety of reasons.\textsuperscript{27} This justifies the Tamil Proverb, “\textit{moa[k;g]l g[spa[k; For]R}” meaning that the cultivator when he looks into his accounts will find not even one tenth of a measure of paddy left to his credit. Under such conditions, they were forced to hang on moneylenders, who exacted exorbitant interests, often crossing fifty per cent of the capital.\textsuperscript{28} With no government assistance by way of credit in the vicinity, they were left with no other option except to offer themselves at the tender mercy of the creditors. The influence of the moneylenders even penetrated into the royal courts and hence the possibility of regulating private money lending appeared bleak.

II

\textbf{Land Reform Regulations Enacted after 1867 to 1883}

Sir. T. Madava Rao’s administration and closed with the issue of the Settlement Proclamation. The latter constituted a distinct land mark in the Land Revenue History of South Travancore, as it formed the basis of the recent Settlement and was as such, of permanent value until the next settlement. During this period, the land revenue administration was improved and re-modelled in several respects by four

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{26} Report of the Indian Famine Commission, 1901, Calcutta, 1901, p.105.
  \item \textsuperscript{27} Nagam Aiya, V., \textit{op. cit.}, Vol. III, p. 133.
  \item \textsuperscript{28} Velu Pillai, T.K., \textit{op.cit.}, Vol. III, p.74.
\end{itemize}
Dewans – Sir. T.Madava Row, Messrs. Seshia Sastri, Nanoo Pillay and Ramiengar – though all substantial improvements in the land revenue system were naturally deferred to the Settlement. Each Dewan made some attempt to start the new Settlement, as mentioned in the previous chapter, was already long over due. But the definite action taken in this important direction belonged to the regime of Dewan Ramiengar, with whose name the recent Settlement would always be associated with. Among the other important reforms bearing on the land revenue system and administration of this period, might be mentioned in the Pattom Proclamation of 1040 M.E. (1865 A.D), the constitution of the Registration department, Rules for the assumption of lands for public purposes, organisation and abolition of the Pokkuvaravu department, abolition of pattom fees, and reorganization of the Revenue department. These and many other measures of varying degrees of importance introduced during this period are dealt with in the following paras in chronological order.

In the year 1041 M.E (1866 A.D) the Sirkar gave up the right of cutting down timber trees from private property and appropriating them according to its requirements on payment of price according to a fixed scale. Thus, the last remaining source of occasional hardship and oppression to possessors of garden lands had been abolished. 29 Some special rules were also laid down regarding the registry of lands for building houses etc., in the towns of Kottar, Trivandrum Quilon and Alleppy. 30 The main points in the new rules were as follows

29. HCVR, Proclamation No.60, dated 9th Maharam 1041 M.E.
30. Ibid, Notification No.3100, dated 16th Makaram 1041 M.E.
(a) Lands with in town limits were to be disposed off only by auction, and the usual assessment was to be levied on them.

(b) Applicants for such land were to apply to the Taluk or Division cutcherry, with a rough sketch of the locality and a written statement showing the value they were prepared to pay for the land and agreeing to pay the tax that might be imposed thereon by the sirkar.

(c) An enquiry was then to be made as to whether there was any objection to the registry of the land, and if there was no objection, the land was to be notified for auction on a particular day, and the land granted as pattom to the highest bidder, with Huzur sanction.

(d) If the land was unoccupied and unplanted, the usual Payattu Pattom and Tharai Pattom, according to local usage, would be levied. If trees were to be subsequently planted, they would also be brought under assessment.

(e) The purchaser at the auction was to deposit more than 15 per cent of the purchased money and the balance within 15 days from the receipt of Huzur sanction.

(f) After the amount was fully paid, the land would be registered and a Pidipadu given.

(g) If the land was by the side of a public road, the purchaser would have to put up a Pucka Padippura (entrance gate) in front of it.

(h) If any default was made in the payment of the deposit amount or the balance of the purchase money, the land would be re-auctioned by the Sirkar and the original bidder was to be held liable for any loss on this account. He was not eligible to get any benefit by the second sale fetching higher prices.
(i) If any portion of the land auction was found necessary for a public road or other public purpose, or if the bid was not in opinion of the Sirkar, adequate, it would be opened to the Sirkar to refuse registry of the land in whole or in part. In such cases, the deposit amount was to be returned to the bidder.

In 1042 M.E. (1867 A.D) a set of rules were passed regarding the assumption of lands for public purposes. This was an important measure intended to facilitate the execution of public works which were at the time taken up in earnest and continued to receive particular attention in the subsequent years. These rules were issued on 10\textsuperscript{th} Vrischigam 1042 M.E. (1867 A.D)

The main points laid down in the rules were the following: 31

(a) Whenever any land was required to be taken at the public expense for a public purpose, a declaration was issued under the signature of the Dewan, with an accurate description of the land to be taken, as possible.

(b) The declaration was published together with a notice calling on all persons interested in the land to appear at a time and place fixed, not less than 15 days from the publication of the notice, and preferred their claims for compensation.

(c) At the time and place fixed, the Tahsildar or other officer specially appointed for the purpose was to ascertain the amount of compensation in conjunction with a number of assessors not exceeding six. The decision of such officer was appealable to the Dewan but not to any Civil Court.

(d) When the Tahsildar or other officer specially appointed had fixed the amount for compensation by an order in writing, he was authorized to take immediate possession

of the land, which was thenceforth to be the absolute and exclusive property of the 
Sirkar.

(e) As soon as possible after taking possession, the compensation was to be paid by 
the Sirkar. If the payment was not made within two months from the date of taking 
possession, interest would be allowed at 5 per cent per annum.

(f) After the publication of the original declaration, it was competent to the 
Engineer, Tahsildar or other officer under his orders, to enter upon the land for the 
purpose of making a survey thereof and set out the intended line of a road and canal. 
But no house or building was to be so entered upon without the written consent of the 
occupier and without giving him 24 hours written notice.

(g) These rules were not applicable to the temporary occupation of any land for 
taking earth or materials for making roads, depositing earth etc. In all such cases, 
compensation was to be paid to and among all persons having any interest in the land.

(h) The term ‘Land’ was defined as extending to tenements and hereditaments of 
any tenure, and all houses, buildings, trees or apartment thereupon as well as land.

By a notification No. 8250, dated 25th Karkadagam 1042 M.E. (1867 A.D), the 
Viruthicars who had muthalelpu loans contracted in the past, for which they were 
rendering Oozhiam service to the Sirkar, were allowed the option of re-paying such 
loans and get themselves relived from the service. This rule was to apply only to mere 
money loans by way of muthalelpu and not to cases in which such muthalelpu loans 
were coupled with viruthi holdings.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid, dated 30th Karkadagam, p.502.
By a notification No. 3965, dated 14th Kumbham 1044 M.E. (1869 A.D), some minor taxes, were not borne on land, which used to be recovered from hill-men in the Provinces of Karikod and Karimannur in Thodupuzhai taluk, were abolished, together with the arrears due under those items. The specific items mentioned in this notification were, *Kudiyaru, Thalakudiyaru, Thalayara Kalcha, Puthari Kalcha, Parambha Kalcha* and *Atyantharam.*

By a proclamation dated 21st Edavam 1044 M.E. (1869 A.D), a proportion of the tax payable in paddy for the wet lands in Thovalai and Agastiswaram taluks was reduced from 5/8 to ½. The commutation rate of 6 chuckrams per *parai* introduced in 1038 M.E. (1863 A.D), in the 25 taluks from Trivandrum northward was also extended to Nanjilnad by this Proclamation. This measure was referred to and explained in the Administration Report of Travancore that “in the Taluks of Nanjilnad, it had been arranged, that from the current year, a portion of the land tax, which used to be paid in kind, should be paid in money. In consequence of this, the payments in kind would diminish; while the monetary payments will increase. The sacrifice made by the *Sirkar* in this measure, in favour of the ryots, was equal to the market value of the grain given up minus its value at the commutation rate, which was much below the market rate. The surrender of revenue thus involved, amounts to about 16,000 rupees. The ryots of Nanjilnad were very glad of this relief, which, in effect, diminished the pressure of the tax, and also enabled them to keep more grain for themselves”.

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35. T A R,1014 M.E, p.82.
By a proclamation dated 20\textsuperscript{th} Mithunam 1044 M.E. (1869 A.D), the adiyara fee known as \textit{Pandal Stanam} levied on occasions of marriage in the case of Sudras and others and \textit{Kottupatru Stanam} in the case of Ezhavas was abolished for the benefit of the ryots.\textsuperscript{36}

By a proclamation, issued in \textit{Karkadagam} 1044 M.E. (1869 A.D), the rule fixing ten-fold of the seed as the maximum rate of assessment for wet lands, introduced in Nanjilnad in 1040 M.E. (1865 A.D), was extended to the taluks of Eraniel, Kalkulam, Vilavancode, Neyyattinkarai, Nedumangad, Chirayinkil, Thiruvella, Shenkottai and Neendakarai.\textsuperscript{37}

By a proclamation dated 25\textsuperscript{th} Minam 1045 M.E. (1870 A.D), some new rules were promulgated to regulate hill cultivation. It was laid down that lands containing Royal trees or other trees of above 10 \textit{vannams} in girth should not be taken up for such cultivation. Persons desirous of resorting to such cultivation were to apply to the \textit{Proverticars}, undertaking to cultivate the land for not more than 3 years and to pay the assessment fixed. The \textit{Proverticar} was to enquire into the matter and, if satisfied that the land could be granted for temporary cultivation, to consult the Forest department through the \textit{Aminadar}. If the conservator considered it unobjectionable, he was to communicate his opinion to the Tahsildar. The Tahsildar was then to give a \textit{Natapuchittu} specifying the limits and approximate area of the land and authorising cultivation therein for not more than 3 years. The revenue from this cultivation (\textit{malavaram}) was payable to the \textit{Proverti}, to be credited to the head of \textit{sanchayam}.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{36} T G G, dated 24th Mithunam 1044 M.E, p.423.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid, dated 27th Karkadagam 1044 M.E, p.489.
\end{flushleft}
If hill tracts of cherikals belonging to Jenmis were to be taken up for malavaram cultivation, the ryots were to take care not to cause any damage to the Royal trees standing thereon. They were to satisfy the conservator that such lands belonged to the Jenmis and not to the Sirkar. The new rules were not to apply to registry of Puthuvals in such tracts, for which the ordinary Puthuval rules were to apply.38

What few lands now remained under this head were the purchases from the Dutch (Paliport), from the Jenmi (Pooliendurti) and the jungle lands called Kadukaval forming the frontier defences towards Cape Comorin. The bulk of such tenures had been sold in previous years and converted into Ven Pattom. The above were rented out to the highest bidder, who levies full rent and made some profit to himself. This system of farming out for short periods, which led to oppression of the tenants, was now discouraged altogether, and the sanction of His Highness the Maha Raja to a just adjustment of the remaining lands under this head had been received some time since.39

Down in the South or Nanjilnad, where there river irrigation, and it sometimes deficient, remissions allowed for blighted or withered crop though never for waste lands. Where the water supply was dependent on the falling rains and not on rivers, both waste land and withered crop were allowed for. A deduction was also allowed when dry crops were cultivated on paddy lands.40

The lands falling under this head (Ven Pattom) were formerly unalienable by the occupant ryots, the proprietary right being theoretically vested in the State. In 1040

38. T G G, dated 1st Medam 1015 M.E, p.244.
40. Ibid.
(1865 A.D), by a proclamation, rights of full property were conferred on them without payment for the same, but subject to a fine or free of 2 per cent. On the money consideration indicated in the conveyances, this fee yielded an annual sum of rupees 30,000 representing a value of transactions in this description of land (before unsaleable and unmarketable) of rupees 15,00,000.41

_Ozhiam_, or _Viruthi_ tenures constituted service _Inams_. They were held either for services actually performed at the present time, or for quantum services; in the latter case, they had become almost _Inams_ held for personal benefit. As a general rule, the former were in alienable, the latter, when alienated, become liable to fines (_Ottivilakam_).42

But even in regard to the former, a succession (_Adukuvathu_) duty was levied on every change of incumbency, calculated at 50 per cent of a year’s rental (_Pattom_) for gardens and 2½ _fanams_ per _parai_ of paddy land. If the holder’s family becomes extinct, the tenure was either transferred on payment of a high fine or premium (_Adiyara_), or sold to the highest bidder at a public auction, when sometimes very high prices were realized.43

The bulk of these tenures were the Nair _Vritis_, the holders of which were bound to supply, at certain fixed prices, vegetables and provisions for _Pagodas, Oottupuras_ (or Charity feeding houses) and for the Royal birth-day, to raise sheds, to thatch public buildings, to watch them in some places and to do peon’s duties occasionally.

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41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
They received advances from the public funds always and settle accounts on by and by producing vouchers for the due delivery of provisions or for work done.\textsuperscript{44}

The Nair \textit{Vritti} were held free of all assessment or \textit{Pattom}, but they were liable to the payment of the \textit{Rajabogam} quit-rents at 1/8, &c., as already alluded to, plus a fee called “Load tax” (\textit{Chumadupanam}) which was about 2 \textit{fanams} payable on the \textit{Vritti} in the lump. This was supposed to represent the commuted value of a load of vegetables, &c., which each \textit{Vritti} holder was bound by the tenure to bring and deliver personally without payment, the rest being all paid for.\textsuperscript{45}

The lands of Sri Padmanabha Swamy extended over all Southern Travancore from Chirayinkil to Thovalai, and were for purposes of account, divided into 3 divisions namely, \textit{Madapad}, \textit{Neendakarai Sanketham} and Kolathur – \textit{Melanganam}. The tenure which was pure \textit{Jenmdates} from very remote antiquity, and the lands formed the private property of the temple, long before the whole State of Travancore was solemnly given over in gift to the same temple by two former Rajas, the greater part in the year 933 M.E. (1757 A.D), a small part in 973 M.E. (1797 A.D). The annual rental of these lands were about rupees 73,000 derived from 21,517 gardens and 92,960 paras of paddy lands, the former yield about rupees 14,000, the latter rupees 59,000.\textsuperscript{46} These were the funds which supported the venerated temple. They were separately collected and accounted for, but the state had a general control; a surplus was credited to the State and deficits when they occurred were made good per \textit{contra}.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{44.} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{45.} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{46.} \textit{Ibid.}
\end{flushright}
The relations between land-lord and tenant had never run smoothly in any country in the world and Travancore had been no exception in this respect. The proud Nambudari Brahmin land-lord who traced his ancestry and his tenure through several thousands of years, his anxiety was to preserve the dignity of the family indicated by the strict law of entail by which the dis-integration of his property was prevented. Yet, a victim of indebtedness, caused chiefly by the ruinously expensive character of the marriage of his daughters and by his unbounded charity and hospitality. His normal condition was therefore, one of indebtedness. The usual mode of raising money was the mortgage of his lands, and in this way much of them had passed into the possession of strangers who then became permanent residents laying out much capital and industry and building and making improvements thereon, generation after generation.47

‘Kanam’ was a usufructuary mortgage renewable, according to the custom of the country. Once in twelve years, on payment to the land-lord by the Kanam holder, a fine or premium of 20 per cent of the amount or consideration involved in the transaction. Thus, once in sixty years, the fines alone liquidated the consideration over and over again. A margin, however small, was always left in the shape of a residual rent known as the Jenmi’s Michavaram which continued to be paid every year to the land-lord. This state of things appeared to have continued from time immemorial and to have become stereo-typed on the face of the country.

At very distant intervals, periodical attempts appeared to have been made through the Agency of the established Courts or otherwise, to oust the Kanam holders

47. T L R M, Vol. IV, p.120.
by redeeming the mortgages. But every time, apparently, without much success but creating an amount of ill-feeling and uneasiness which was detrimental to the peace and prosperity of the commonwealth. A Proclamation was therefore, issued to affirm the status quo, generally and to remove certain admitted grievances of the system. Kanam holders were imposed to pay the residual rents punctually to the Jenmis and to renew the tenures periodically on payment of the usual fines. If they failed to do so for twelve years, the Jenmi had the right to sue and oust him. If, on the other hands, the Jenmi refused to receive payment and renew the tenure, was at liberty to pay the rent into the Courts and compel renewal of tenure.\textsuperscript{48}

By a Royal Proclamation, dated 28\textsuperscript{th} Medam 1050 M.E. 9\textsuperscript{th} May (1875 A.D), the export duty of 5 per cent on coffee was abolished with effect from 1\textsuperscript{st} Edavam 1050 M.E. (1875 A.D).\textsuperscript{49} This was intended as an encouragement to the cultivation of coffee and was the outcome of a representation made to the Sirkar that, in consequence of the duty with which the coffee exported from the country was charged, it was unable to compete in the market on equal terms with the produce of other places.\textsuperscript{50}

Regarding this measure, Dewan Seshia Sastri observed that “That export duty on coffee was abolished from the last quarter of the year 1050 (1875 A.D). According to this rule, the land assessment on the Estates became thenceforward liable to augmentation. But His Highness” Government had not given it immediate operation, though the increasing expenditure in connection with the Coffee Districts must sooner

\begin{flushright}
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
\end{flushright}
or later make it inevitable.\textsuperscript{51} “It is however doubtful whether a moderate assessment combined with a reduced export duty, the incidence of which would have fallen on the crop, would not have been preferable to the entire abolition of duty and the raising of the land assessment to rupees 2 or 3 per acre, which must fall on all the lands whatever the condition or crop of the estate”.\textsuperscript{52}

By a notification No.2910, dated 15\textsuperscript{th} Makaram 1051 M.E. (1876 A.D), a special concession was made in favour of the ryots in the six southern taluks from Thovalai to Neyyattinkarai by relaxing the remission rules so as to extend the grant of remission for lands under manipidi (bare existence of corn in the paddy plants) if the ryots were prepared to give up the harvest and allow cattle to graze in the lands. This concession was made in view of the exceptional drought in 1051 M.E. (1876 A.D).\textsuperscript{53}

By a notification No. 3108, dated 1\textsuperscript{st} Kumbham 1051 M.E. (1876 A.D), some special restrictions were imposed in regard to malavaram cultivation in the hills of the Thovalai taluk. It was laid down that no land should be taken up for hill cultivation in this tract without obtaining the permission of the Sirkar, If there were any blocks already cultivated as malavaram in previous years and the ryots who liked to take up such blocks for fresh cultivation, had to apply to the Tashildar. If the Tahsildar was satisfied on local inspection that cultivation could be permitted therein, he was to grant a Pidipadu authorising such cultivation for a period of one year. The ryots cultivating such tracts with the permission of the Sirkar were not to interfere with the forest trees standing on the land. The cultivation was to be confined to such products as could be harvested within one year.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{52} T A R, 1050 M.E, p. 85.
\textsuperscript{53} T G G, dated 12th Karkadakam 1051 M.E, p.102.
If, after the expiry of one year, the same lands were to be applied for, it was open to the Sirkar to grant or reject such application. By cultivating any land as *malavaram*, the ryots could not acquire any right over the land and such right would never be recognized by the Sirkar. Any violation of the above rules was to be considered with criminal punishment.\(^{54}\)

In 1051 M.E. (1876 A.D), the paddy tax on *Ayan* lands in Shenkottai taluk i.e., lands transferred from the British territory to Travancore was made payable at the commutation rate prevailing in Shenkottai, instead of the market price in Thenkasi, which was being levied till then. This was referred to as follows in the Travancore Administration Report 1051 M.E. (1876 A.D). “A long standing grievance of the holders of *Ainzufti* lands, i.e., lands transferred from the British territory in exchange, was redressed in the course of the year. They remained on the old Tinnevelly tenure and were liable to the payment of *Ayacut* grain rent ‘commuted at the Thenkasi market price. The payment of the entire rent in kind, commuted at the price of a distant market, caused great hardship, which was removed by placing the lands on the same footing as the more favourably assessed surrounding lands of Shenkottai proper”.\(^{55}\)

By a *Huzur Sadhanam* No.2487, dated 16\(^{th}\) *Dhanu* 1052 M.E. (1877 A.D), addressed to the division *Peishkars*, and the rules passed on the same date, some definite instructions were issued in regard to the disposal of escheat lands held on *Pandara Pattom* tenure, The main points laid down were:\(^{56}\)

(a) Lands for which transfer of registry had been effected before the issue of *Huzur*
Circular No. 8040, dated 21st Mithunam 1034 M.E. (1859 A.D), were to be registered without payment of vilayartham.

(b) Lands in the possession of alienees, who had been paying tax from a period prior to the Circular Order of 1034 M.E. (1859 A.E), were also to be registered without payment of Vilayartham.

(c) Lands in the possession of persons who had been paying tax, though without pokkuvaravu, for a period of 50 years up to the date of enquiry, were also to be registered without payment of vilayartham.

(d) In cases of the above description, if the period of possession was less than 50 years, vilayartham was to be levied.

(e) Lands held by mortgagees, for which pokkuvaravu had been effected before the issue of Huzur Circular of 1034 M.E. (1859 A.D), and those for which the pokkuvaravu registry was found to have been fraudulent, were to be registered on payment of vilayartham.

(f) Lands in the possession of alienees, whose documents or pidipadus were found to have been fraudulent, were also to be charged with vilayartham.

(g) The sanction of the Huzur was always to be obtained for charging the lands with or exempting them from vilayartham.

By a Huzur Sadhanam No. 7766, dated 7th Karkadagam 1052 M.E. (1872 A.D), addressed to the division Peishkars, a new rule was introduced under Royal sanction, by which the ryots were permitted to relinquish lands which they were unable to
cultivate for ten years. The tax as well as arrears on such lands was to be written off and the land was to be treated as *Nirthal*.\(^{57}\)

An elaborate system of *pokkuvaravu* or transfer of registry was introduced by the Rules dated 30\(^{th}\) Karkadagam 1054 M.E. (1879 A.D), issued under the Sign Manual. The object and scope of this measure were explained as follows in the preamble of the Rules.

“Whereas, it is reported to us that, for several years past, the land holders in the country have not, for the greater part, registered in the several *Proverties* and other offices, the changes that have from time to time taken place in their holdings and that, in consequence, the existing land-revenue-registered are not, as they ought to be, true and correct rolls of the actual payers of such revenue, and whereas it is also reported to us, that owing to the want of such correct rolls, great difficulty is experienced by the officers of our Government in tracing out and proceeding against defaulters whenever our revenue is in arrears and that there is some hardship in wrong persons being called upon to answer for the conduct of real defaulters, the following rules are enacted for registering in the Government accounts the transfers of property that have already taken place and those that might take place hereafter”\(^{58}\).

In the meantime, the attention of the Government was directed towards relieving the difficulties of tax-collection due to the want of an accurate rent-roll, and pending the revision of the land revenue founded on a general revenue survey and Settlement, a new, temporary department, called the *Pokkuvaravu* department, was organized at

\(^{57}\) H C V R, *Hazur Sadhanam* No.7766, dated 7th Karkadagam 1052 M.E.  
\(^{58}\) T G G, dated 15th Chingam 1055 M.E, p.360.
the beginning of 1055 M.E. (1880 A.D) for registering all transfers of property and for issuing Pokkuvaravu pattayams.\textsuperscript{59}

The year 1056 M.E. (1081 A.D), marked the commencement of Dewan Ramiengar’s administration, which stood out by itself and deserved separate treatment on account of the many important measures introduced by him in the land revenue system and procedure, culminating in the inauguration of the Revenue Survey and Settlement of all lands in the State.\textsuperscript{60} One of the first acts of Dewan Ramiengar’s administration was to introduce a measure of decentralization by investing the Division Peishkars with greater powers than they had in the past and delegating to them some items of revenue work which were attended to in the Huzur. This was done by the “Rules, for the guidance of Peishkars sanctioned in Sadhanam No.525, dated 8\textsuperscript{th} Vrischigam 1056 (1881 A.D).\textsuperscript{61}

By a notification dated 24\textsuperscript{th} Dhanu 1056 M.E. (1881 A.D), some special taxes levied on fishermen in Colachel and other places were abolished. These were known as Challi Pattom and Kaval Pattom. This measure was referred to as follows in Travancore Administration Report 1056 M.E. “A tax of the nature of Mohturpha levied from poor fishermen for the privilege pf collecting shells at a certain sea-port has been given up”\textsuperscript{62}

Another direction in which relief was granted during the year was in connection with the supply of fire-wood to a large religious institution at Vaikam. A considerable number of poor people of the Ezhava caste had long been bound by custom to supply

\textsuperscript{60} V. Nagam Aiya., The Travancore State Manual, Trivandrum, vol, 1.1906, p.594.
\textsuperscript{61} T G G, dated 29th Dhanu 1056 M.E, p.347.
\textsuperscript{62} T A R, 1056 M.E, p.102.
a large quantity of fire-wood annually, at a low price fixed. The elaborate system of *Pokkuvaravu* introduced by those rules and the special establishment kept up for the purpose attracted the attention of *Dewan* Ramiengar. He went into the history and practical working of the scheme and in a Memorandum, dated 24th January 1881, condemned it as “a most ill-considered, ill-judged and mischievous price of legislation”. He recommended the abolition of the ‘*Pokkuvaravu* Department’ and the introduction of a few simple rules for effecting transfers of registry, as a help to the collection of revenue.

By a *Huzur Sadhanam* No. 4042, dated 28th *Kumbham* 1056 M.E. (1881 A.D), addressed to the division *Peishkars*, the latter were instructed to examine the *Thandaper* accounts kept by the *Proverticars* during their circuits and satisfy themselves that the new *Pokkuvaravu* Rules were strictly followed and that *pattas* were duly distributed in the months of *Ani* and *Audi*. They were also to see that the *Kykanakus* referred to in para 6 of the notification, dated 22nd *Dhanu* 1056 M.E., were granted to the ryots by the *Proverticars* without causing any hardship to the ryots concerned.

By a Proclamation No. 4167, dated 6th *Minam* 1056 M.E. (1881 A.D), some further instructions were issued in regard to the regulation of hill cultivation (*malavaram*) by way of supplementing the rules contained in the Proclamation, dated
25th Minam 1045 M.E (1870 A.D). The main points laid down in the supplemental rules were the following. 66

(a) Forests, marshy grounds and jungle tracts within a radius of 4 miles from inhabited places were allowed to be taken up for hill cultivation.

(b) Royal trees and anjili and other marketable trees were not to be felled in such tracts but were to be preserved.

(c) Elevated hills which would catch the clouds, densely wooded forests and tracts watered by streams, were not to be taken up for such cultivation.

(d) Any violation of these rules was to be visited with punishment, besides entailing forfeiture of the produce grown on the land.

On 25th Minam 1056 M.E. (1881 A.D) some relief was granted to the Viruthikars of Trivandrum, Nedumangad and Neyyattinkarai taluks in respect of provisions supplied by them for Eswaraseva. In consideration of the heavy burden imposed on the Viruthikars of these taluks, who had to supply provisions not only for the important festivals in the capital like the Viruthikars of other taluks but also for various other items falling under Tingal, it was ordered that a higher value as per new scale fixed should be given them for the provisions supplied on account of Easwaraseva. 67

By a Royal Proclamation was issued on 2nd Mithunam 1056 M.E. 14th June (1881 A.D). In it was notified that “all rights in metals and minerals throughout the State, by whomsoever and under whatever tenure, the lands might be held”, were “Royalties belonging to the Crown” and “could not be enjoyed, sold, leased, or

otherwise appropriated” except with the permission of the Government and subject to such regulations or rules as had been or might thereafter be enacted by the Government. The object of this Proclamation was, as stated in the preamble, to correct any misapprehension that may exist in respect of mining rights in lands belonging to Devaswams, Brahmins and other Jenmis, or proprietors or lessees holding directly from Government.\(^68\)

On 3\(^{rd}\) Mithunam 1056 M.E. (1881 A.D), a concession was granted to the ryots who were paying the cess known as Ubhayampalisa to the Sirkar on account of loans contracted by them in former times with the Government or with the Devaswams, by allowing them to pay up to the amount of the loan in money or paddy, calculated at the commutation rate of 6 chuckrams per parai or ten years interest in cases in which there were no accounts to show the amount of the principal debt. This was a modification of the notification of 1036 M.E. (1861 A.D) which required the ryots to pay up 20 years’ accumulated interest in order to get exemption from the payment of the cess. That rule was found to work unequally in practice, and in many cases the capitalization of the interest for 20 years often exceeded the principal amount. In view to relieve the large number of ryots who had these debts kept hanging over them, and from whom interest had been exacted for a long series of years, this new rule was introduced.\(^69\)

It is seen from a Huzur Sadhanam that benefit of the 2/10 and 3/10 reduction of assessment introduced by Colonel Munro in lieu of seasonal remissions was extended to lands which had lapsed to Government by escheat, pokuthi or nirthal and

\(^{68}\) T L R M, vol. I, p. 29.  
\(^{69}\) T G G, dated 19th Karkadagam 1056, p.783.
subsequently registered on full assessment. Lands of the latter description were, in practice, denied the benefit of the 2/10 and 3/10 reduction, which was a source of hardship to the ryots, besides being inconsistent with the policy underlying the original concession granted by Colonel Munro. This anomaly was removed for the benefit of the ryots.\textsuperscript{20}

In the months of July and August last, the Dewan made an official tour through the southern taluks. He then took the opportunity of inspecting the irrigation works in the Nanchilnad. He found that the Pandian Dam which is the key to the Irrigation system was leaking badly. The channel taken from it i.e., the Pandian canal was also small and narrow. The Puthen Dam likewise was passing a good deal of water into the river by leakage. The channels were winding and tortuous in their course with no head works, and no regular banks. The thick vegetation, the foliage of trees on either side the silt and fallen trees obstructed the flow of water. He was particularly struck with the unsatisfactory State of the Padmanabhapuram Putena which is 20 miles in length and had nearly 30,000 rupees of revenue dependent upon it. Every year, agricultural operations commenced under this channel as usual, and cultivation progressed rapidly and appeared promising, but owing to the failure of water in it, the crops completely failed and the fields along the course of the channel on both sides presented a burnt up appearance very unusual with lands under the influence of river irrigation. The attention of the Chief Engineer was at once called to this State of things and he was requested to take most active steps to bring about an improvement.

\textsuperscript{70} H C V R, Huzur Sadhanam No. 7358, dated 31st Mithunam 1056 M.E.
Two other special and important projects for improving the irrigation of South Travancore had long been under consideration. One of them assumed a definite shape and was strongly recommended by the Chief Engineer for execution two years ago, and during the late administration a sum of two lakhs of rupees was set apart for prosecuting the work. Since then, however, it was thought advisable, having regard to the nature of the projects, to have it thoroughly investigated and reported upon by a competent Hydraulic Engineer. Application was accordingly made to the Madras Government, and they had obligingly placed the services of Major Mead of their Public Works Department at the disposal of this Government.

A personal visit by the Dewan accompanied by the Assistant Engineer found serious defects in the principal head works and canals of the Irrigation system and hence measures had been undertaken for the improvement and conservancy of these important works on a systematic plan. With this view, the Senior Assistant Engineer had been relieved of all other work and left free to give his time and attention exclusively to irrigation. Before entering on these exclusive duties, it was arranged that he should visit the important irrigation works in the Tanjore and Godavari districts.\(^1\)

It is recorded in a Huzur Sadhanam addressed to the Division Peishkars, it was ordered that pattom fees need not be recovered in respect of lands granted on Pidipadus or Sunnads as the result of revenue auction sales, as such cases were outside the scope of the rules dated 27\(^{th}\) Karkadagam 1040 M.E. (1865 A.D)\(^2\)

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It was ordered on 1\textsuperscript{st} Kanni 1057 M.E (1882 A.D.) that \textit{Thandaper} accounts should be carefully prepared and \textit{pattas} issued in accordance with \textit{Pokkuvaravu} decisions. In cases in which the tax was paid by other persons than the \textit{pattadars}, in the name of the latter, it was laid down that separate \textit{Kykanakus} should be issued in addition to the \textit{pattas}. It was further laid down that, in cases of default, only the \textit{pattadar} and the property on which the tax was due were liable for the tax and not the property of the person who was paying the tax in the name of the \textit{pattadar}.

By the proceedings of Government, dated 25\textsuperscript{th} September 1882 11\textsuperscript{th} Kanni (1057 M.E), a separate department of Tanks and Irrigation was created for South Travancore and placed under a special officer styled ‘Assistant Engineer’ who was directly responsible to Government. This was an important measure of reform, intended for the benefit of South Travancore, in which the repair of tanks and the distribution of water for irrigation required special attention, in the interests alike of the ryots and the \textit{Sirkar}.

It was ordered on 30\textsuperscript{th} Kanni 1057 M.E. (1882 A.D), that, in the acquisition of lands for public purposes, the value of the entire area acquired should be paid, irrespective of the question whether or not there was any excess over the registered area. If the remaining area, after deducting the area acquired, was equal to the registered area, there was to be no reduction of assessment. This was a modification of the Rules dated 10\textsuperscript{th} Vrischigam 1042 M.E. (1867 A.D). This measure was referred to and explained as follows, “Under the Rules for taking up lands required for public purposes, it had hitherto been the practice not to allow any compensation for land

\begin{footnotesize}
73. H C V R, \textit{Huzur Sadhanam, No. 622}, dated 1st Kanni 1057 M.E.
\end{footnotesize}
found in excess of the registered extent. Supposing a field in the occupation of a ryot is one acre according to the public accounts, but contains $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres as per actual measurement, and supposing half an acre to be taken up for a road, he used to get no compensation whatever for the half acre, for he still has one acre left in his possession and a half acre assumed is an excess over the registered holding for which he pays no assessment. As, however, the fact of there being an excess is due to our defective surveys and is no fault of the ryot, and as it is land which has been in his occupation for years and on which he has expended labour and capital, the rule had been modified in the interests of the land-holders, so as to admit of their obtaining compensation for the extent taken up, irrespective of whether the actual extent was above or below the registered area”.

When a land was abandoned by the owner from inability to pay the assessment, it became *ipso facto*, the property of Government. Such land, if applied for subsequently by another, was generally sold by auction, and to register in the name of the highest bidder. But it often happened that the land after its relinquishment was taken up and cultivated by another without permission. In such cases, the assessment was levied from him from year to year. If he wished to have it registered in his name, he would be required to pay for it a price (varying from 20 to 40 years’ purchase of the assessment) to be fixed by arbitration. If he consented to this, the land was registered in the public accounts in his name, and he thence-forward became the proprietor, but if he declined the terms offered, the land would be put up to auction and sold to the highest bidder. Thus the actual cultivator was very often deprived of the land after he had cultivated it for several not un-frequently many years. These

75. T A R, 1057 M.E, p. 108.
rules operated to prevent lands once given up being again freely occupied and brought under cultivation. To remedy the evil, the sale of such lands by auction had been prohibited, and it was now left open to any ryot to take them up and had them registered in his name on payment of a nominal fixed price.\textsuperscript{76}

On all transfers of \textit{pattom} lands by sale or mortgage with possession, a fee of two per cent on the value was levied. The \textit{modus operandi}, heretofore, had been for the transferee to produce the document after registration to the village \textit{Adhikari} who was then to fix and collect the amount of \textit{pattom} fee due. To enable the \textit{Adhikari} to call for the document and realize the fee, if it was not voluntarily produced, each registering officer was required to send to the Tahsildar concerned, from time to time, lists of all instruments registered in his office on which \textit{pattom} fee was due. Each transferee was also liable to pay a fine of double or treble the fee if the document was not produced within two or three months. These evils had now been removed by requiring the \textit{pattom} fee to be paid into the registry office at the time the document was registered. This was a great relief to those who were formerly required to go before the village \textit{Adhikari} and saddled with heavy penalties for default.\textsuperscript{77}

By a Royal Proclamation, dated 3\textsuperscript{rd} \textit{Medam} 1057 M.E. (1882 A.D), some modifications were made in the provisions relating to the levy of \textit{pattom} fees on alienations of \textit{Sirkar Pattom} lands contained in the proclamation dated 21\textsuperscript{st} \textit{Edavam} 1040 M.E. (1865 A.D). The \textit{pattom} fees had been made payable to the Sub-Registrars instead of to the \textit{Proverticars}. As a consequence of this arrangements, the time limit fixed for the payment of the \textit{pattom} fees and the penalties for default were cancelled.

\textsuperscript{76} T G G, dated 5th \textit{Maharam} 1057 M.E, p.40.  
\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Ibid}, dated 23rd \textit{Minam} 1057 M.E, pp.271-272.
Some supplementary provisions were also introduced to ensure the proper recovery of the fees due under this head and for the prevention of frauds to evade payment of the fee.\textsuperscript{78}

Prior to the Malabar year 1042 M.E (1867 A.D), rice lands in different parts of Travancore, but chiefly in the south, were known to be suffering from the effects of over-assessment. In many cases, they were assessed at 18, 20 and 21 times the estimated quantity of seed required to sow them. Thus, one kottai of land was assessed at 18, 20 and 21 kottas of paddy and similarly, one parai of land at 18, 20 and 21 paras. In 1042, matters appear to have reached a crisis. Some immediate relief was considered urgently called for, and as a rough and ready method, all rates of assessment exceeding 10 kottas were reduced to that rate and orders were accordingly issued and given effect to. But apparently from a misapprehension of the instructions given, the benevolent intentions of the administration of the day, when Raja Sir. T. Madava Rao was Dewan, had been marred in a certain class of cases. When lands assessed at less than 10 kottas – say at 5, 6 or 7 kottas or less – came to be abandoned and subsequently applied for or taken up by another, he was saddled not with the 5, 6 or 7 kottas of assessment which they bore at the time they were relinquished, but at 10 kottas – the rate at which all assessment above 10 kottas had been brought down.\textsuperscript{79}

On the 1\textsuperscript{st} Chingam 1058 M.E. (1883 A.D), the holders of garden lands throughout the State were called upon to furnish information in a tabular form regarding the nature of their holdings, and the number and description of taxable trees in their gardens including young plants, bearing trees and trees past bearing. Such

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid, dated 14th Medam 1057 M.E, p. 382.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid, p. 397.
statements were to be collected by the Munnilakars and sent up direct to the Huzur. All the statements were to be sent up before the 30th Thulam 1058 M.E (1883 A.D). This information was called for in connection with a scheme of revenue settlement then under the consideration of the Government.  

In South Travancore, it was found that there was a good deal of land included in the ryots holdings left waste, in consequence of its having been rendered unfit for cultivation by the breaching of tank and the excavation of earth for public works and other causes. The ryot was not at liberty to give up such land. It stood entering against him in the accounts and the practice had always been to demand from him, if he ever reclaimed any such land and brought it again under cultivation, all accumulated arrears of assessment thereon. Such a demand would prove practically repressive of all attempts to reclaim the land and a discouragement to industry. During the past year, this rule was abrogated and the ryots were informed by a notification that they were free to expand capital and labour on such lands and that they would not be held liable to pay anything beyond the fixed assessment from the time the land was again brought under cultivation.  

By a Royal proclamation, dated 9th Edavam 1058 M.E. (1883 A.D), the prohibition to the felling of Palmyra, jack and other assessed trees from registered lands, imposed by the Proclamation dated 8th Kumbham 1033 M.E. (1858 A.D) was removed. This measure was referred to as follows in Travancore Administration Report 1058 M.E. “Under an old Royal Proclamation, the owners of jack, Palmyra, and other trees assessed to the revenue were prohibited from felling them even for

80. Ibid, dated 8th Chingam 1058 M.E, p. 746.  
81. Ibid, dated 12 Kanni 1058 M.E, pp. 891-892.  
then own use without the sanction of Government previously obtained. This led to much oppression on the part of the subordinate revenue servants and was felt as an unwarranted interference with private rights. The prohibition was withdrawn during the year by a fresh Royal Proclamation which was welcomed as a great boon”.

On 14th Edavam 1058 M.E, 26th May (1883 A.D.), it was announced by a Royal Proclamation that the Government had resolved to undertake a Revenue Survey and Settlement and the ryots were called upon to co-operate with and render every assistance to the officers of Government in carrying out the important measures. The people were further prepared for what was to follow by a Royal Proclamation issued on the 26th of May following, “in which the intention to introduce a revenue survey and assessment was formally announced, and all proprietors and occupants of land were called upon (I) to produce before the Settlement officers all documents, accounts and muniments of title to show their right to the properties owned or occupied by them in order to admit of their titles and the tenures on which they held their property being properly investigated and recorded; (2) to clear and mark at their own expense and accurately point out when called upon to do so, the boundaries of their holdings and (3) to be present in the field with the Settlement Officers to afford them every help and information necessary to facilitate their work.”

The Proclamation enjoined at the same time the most cordial co-operation and harmony of action between the survey and Settlement Officers and revenue servants of all gardens, and the willing assistance and loyal obedience of all proprietors and

83. TAR, 1058 M.E, p. 110.
84. Ibid.
occupants of land whose interests it was sought to promote by the proposed measure.\textsuperscript{85}

The government was quite aware of the pressing problem of the peasantry. It was the need of the hour that the State should act as the chief lender to the peasants at nominal interest rates. By a regulation in 1891 the government provided facilities for agricultural loan ranging from Rs.250/- to Rs.3000.\textsuperscript{86} This concession was extended for improvements on land, construction of water courses, drainage, reclamation and other permanent improvements. But it failed to produce any tangible results because the hard and fast rules laid down for borrowing was much more repressive than those laid by moneylenders. Moreover the agency which implemented the regulation was loaded with the evils of corruption and nepotism. As a result, it satisfied the needs of the rich cultivators and influential landlords, who were least in need of them.\textsuperscript{87} The risk factor in the loan scheme deterred the subordinate officials from granting loans to the poor cultivators.

The failure of the agrarian reforms in Travancore in the nineteenth century was contributed by composite forces under complex situations. There were no militant and spontaneous peasant movements because of the non-democratic political system which prevailed there.\textsuperscript{88} The State acted as a benevolent dictator and hence the legislations were passed not in response to the needs of the peasant classes. In general, the tenants failed to oppose landlords due to illiteracy, ignorance and lack of awareness. Even when they became aware, their sustained economic interest

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{85} Ibid.
\bibitem{88} Oomen, T.K., \emph{op.cit.}, p.205.
\end{thebibliography}
weakened their resistance because they had to depend heavily on the landlords, for their subsistence.\textsuperscript{89} Moreover, there was no administrative support to counteract the problems arising out of the socio-economic weakness of the tenants.

Other than sporadic and occasional outbreaks, there were no concerted mass movements which might indicate the existence of an articulate peasantry conscious of its class interests. This lack of class sentiment among the peasant cultivators reflected in part either the lack of means or the motivation to conceive them as a separate group.\textsuperscript{90} The traditional ties were far stronger than the sentiments of class antagonism. They were preoccupied with a struggle for existence, their lack of solution to present a formidable resistance made them accept a subordinate position. There were also no leaders sufficiently educated and interested in protecting the fate of the peasants. Moreover traditional and parochial loyalties could not peasants. Moreover traditional and parochial loyalties could not be so quickly and easily overcome.\textsuperscript{91} Above all the organised resistance and class interests of the landlords; and the weakness of the State in executing the reforms shaped the destiny of the reform movement in Travancore.

\section*{III}

\textbf{Land Reform Regulations Enacted After 1907}

The Settlement operations started in 1058 M.E. (1883 A.D) came to a close in \textit{Makaram} 1085 M.E. (1910 A.D.) throughout the State. This constitutes, therefore a distinct landmark in the history of the land reforms of the State. The period subsequent to Settlement, of which 5 years have elapsed, deserves separate treatment,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{89} Myrdal, \textit{op. cit.}, p.1331.
\item \textsuperscript{90} Eric Frykenberg, ed., Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History, Wisconsin, 1969, p.146.
\item \textsuperscript{91} Ibid., p.156.
\end{itemize}
which is the purpose of this chapter. Out of the 5 years covered by this chapter, four years (1086 – 1089) (1911 – 1914) belong to the regime of Dewan Rajagopalachari and the fifth comprises the first year of the Dewan Krishnan Nair’s administration. The improvements and amendments in the system of land reforms and procedure introduced during this period are explained below.

On 29th January 1910 A.D. 16th Makaram (1085 M.E), some specific instructions were issued regarding the preparation of the Kodayar water-cess account. It was laid down that the old cess on the lands should be remitted only from the date on which the collection of the new cess would begin and not from the time the new cess was formally imposed, and that the collection of the old cess should continue till then.92

On 1st Kumbham 1085 M.E. (1910 A.D.), the Government sanctioned the assignment of a tank poramboke under Erayili tenure in the name of the Arachar in lieu of a piece of old Erayili land registered in his name which had been acquired in connection with the Alampara – Chenkulam Kal under the Kodayar Project. It was laid down that the income to the Arachar from the new land to be registered as Inam should be equal to the income which he was getting from the old Inam land and that the extend of the new land need not necessarily be equal to the extent of the old land.93

It is seen from Government Order that instructions were issued in detail regarding the Settlement of the land in the Quilon Cantonment, comprised within the

92. Government Order Number 473 / Land Revenue, (Here-in-after referred to as G.O.No. / LR), dated January 1910 A.D.
93. Huzur Sadhanam, No.822, dated 1st Kumbham 1085 M.E.
pakuthis of Quilon, Eravipuram and Vadakkevila in the Quilon taluk. The following points were dealt with in the Government Order.

(a) That all unregistered lands, whether within or outside the revised cantonment limits, whether held by the occupants under grants made by the British Military Department or on Kuthagai Pattam leases sanctioned by the Settlement or Revenue Department, should be registered in the names of such occupants on Pandara Pattom, on recovery of a vilayartham amounting of 25 times the pattom assessment.

(b) That all unoccupied lands, other than porambokes, whether within or without the revised cantonment limits, which were not required for any Sirkar or for communal purposes should be sold by public auction, in convenient lots and registered on Pandara Pattom in the names of the purchasers subject to the payment of the assessment imposed.

(c) That the following rates of assessment should be adopted for the land and trees in this area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Type</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dry lands</td>
<td>15 panams per acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coconut</td>
<td>4 panams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arecanut</td>
<td>8 panams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>4 panams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(d) That arrears of assessment should be levied. In recovering such arrears, allowance was to be made for the Kuthagai Pattom or thanathuchitta tax already paid by the occupants.

94. G.O.No.1150/L.R. dated 19th February 1910 A.D.
95. G.O.No.719/L. dated 30th April 1909 A.D.
On 18\textsuperscript{th} March 1916 (5\textsuperscript{th} Minam 1085 M.E.,) the tariff rates were re-imposed, for the valuation of reserved trees on puthuvals, in respect of trees of 10 panams and above in the taluks of Quilon, Kottarakarai, Pathanapuram, Shenkottai, Kunnattur, Moovattupuzhai, Kuttanad, Alengad, Oarur, Vaikam and Shertalai.\textsuperscript{96}

At a meeting held on 29\textsuperscript{th} March 1910 the Government resolved upon a re-survey of the Nedumangad talluk and called upon the Survey Superintendent to submit detailed proposals regarding the lines on which the re-survey work should proceed and the staff required for the purpose. It was observed that the large extension of cultivation which had taken place in the taluk during the previous 10 to 15 years, coming as it did, on the top of a defective survey and a consequently defective Settlement, had produced a state of affairs in the land records which required a re-survey. The question whether the evils might not be remedied by a temporary maintenance staff, as in other taluks, had been considered and after considerable discussion, the conclusion was arrived at, that, in view of the magnitude of the new survey puthuvals that had to be undertaken, the large amount of revision required in the old records for harmonizing the new work with the old, and the large number of missing stones to be re-fixed, the work of bringing the land records of the taluk up-to-date, by any method short of a re-survey, would be impracticable.\textsuperscript{97} However, the Sirkar agency at Kombay was abolished and the work done by the agent transferred to the Devikulam Taluk Office, for which purpose an additional staff was sanctioned.\textsuperscript{98}

The prohibition to the entertainment of applications for the registry of poramboke and puthuval lands, affected by the Kodayar Project, laid down by the

\textsuperscript{96} T C G dated 23\textsuperscript{rd} Minam 1085 M.E.p.427
\textsuperscript{97} G O No.2744 / L R, dated 29th March 1910 A.D.
\textsuperscript{98} G O No.3692 / L R, dated 30th April 1910 A.D.
notification dated 3rd December 1898, was cancelled. 99 It was laid down that, in registering *puthuval* wet lands, the assessment calculated on a paddy basis should be converted into money at all *chuckrams* per *parai* for the whole of the paddy assessment.100

On 17th May 1910 A.D. 4th *Edavam* (1085 M.E.), it was directed that open belts of land round the cultivated holdings within reserved forests should be thrown open for the use only of the ryots and according to the actual requirements of each case. It was added that such lands should not be allowed to be cultivated by the adjacent landowners nor *pattas* issued for the same. The rights of access, already enjoyed by the ryots, to their cultivated lands within the reserves were recognized by Government.101 It was laid down that, in the registry of *nirthal* lands, the same procedure should be followed as in the case of *puthuval* lands. The minimum rate of Rs.25 per acre fixed as *Tharavilai* for reclamations from backwaters was extended also to reclamations from canals and rivers.102

The holders of *Kuthagai Pattam* gardents in the Palliport Farm were given the option of converting their *Kuthagai Pattom* gardens into *Pandara Pattom* tenure by paying a *vilayartham* amounting to 10 times the *Pandara Pattom* assessment in 20 yearly instalments commencing from 1086 M.E. (1911 A.D.). It was added that, in case of default of payment of the yearly instalment due on any garden, the *Kuthagai Pattom* assessment would be re-imposed and that the concession granted by the proclamation would not apply to those gardens which had been converted into

100. Ibid.
101. G O No.2836, dated 17th May 1910 A.D.
Pandara Pattom before the issue of the proclamation or thaiveppu or converted gardens covered by Government Order No.1458/Land Revenue, dated 11th February 1908 A.D.\textsuperscript{103}

As there was no uniformity of procedure in regard to the disposal of puthuvals within town limits, it was laid down that all occupied Sirkar lands, pending registry, in the towns of Nagercoil, Trivandrum, Quilon, Alleppey and Kottayam, should be registered only on recovery of a minimum Vilayartham of Rs.100 per acre\textsuperscript{104} and that all unoccupied Sirkar should be disposed of by public auction at an upset price of rupee 100 per acre. Further the tax on all lands granted under the Coffee Land Rules was raised from 12 annas to one British Rupee per acre and the tax on all grass lands granted for homestead and farmstead from 4 anna to 5 annas per acre. It was added that these taxes would remain unaltered until the next general Revenue Settlement of the State\textsuperscript{105}.

Detailed instructions were issued regarding the construction, repair and maintenance of irrigation work under the Irrigation Regulation, III of 1072.\textsuperscript{106} It was laid down-

(a) That petty irrigation works should be attended to wholly by the ryots concerned and that, in case the proprietors were unable, on account of want of co-operation or other causes to do the works, the same might be done by the Sirkar and the cost therefore recovered pro rata from the lands benefited under section 16 of the Regulation.

\textsuperscript{103} Royal Proclamation, dated 17th June 1910 A.D.
\textsuperscript{104} T G G, dated 14th Karkadagam 1085 M.E, p.1217.
\textsuperscript{105} Royal Proclamation, dated 17th Kanni 1086 M.E. (3rd October 1910).
\textsuperscript{106} G.O.No.2933 / L R, dated 18th March 1911 A.D, (5th Minam 1086 M.E.)
(b) That in regard to minor irrigation works half the cost should be recovered from the ryots concerned and that after such works had been constructed or completely restored or repaired at the cost, wholly or partly of the Government, the ryots concerned should maintain them under section 13 of the Regulation.

(c) That the construction, repair and maintenance of major irrigation works would be wholly attended to by Government and the policy pursued of imposing an irrigation cess under section 18 of the Regulation as was done in respect of the Kodayar and Thalaiyar schemes.

The minimum rate of assessment for puthuval lands (dry and garden) throughout the State was fixed at 5 Panams per acre. The system of levying the tax known as malavaram and vilameladi on fugitive cultivation on unregistered lands at the disposal of Government was abolished. It was directed that all Government lands including cherikals should be dealt with under the ordinary puthuval rules, except such lands as might be granted for the cultivation of coffee, tea, rubber, cardamom etc., under special rules. It was further directed that unauthorized occupation of any Government cheriakal other Government land should be proceeded against under the Land Conservancy Regulation.

The lands in the Ambalapuzha kandukrishi should be dealt with in the same manner as kandukrishi lands in the Karthigapalli taluk in the matter of demanding security from the ryots. No security was to be insisted on in the first instance, but if a ryot failed to pay the tax in time, it was to be recovered by means of coercive steps under the Revenue Recovery Regulation and no further lease was to be given to him.

108. G.O.No.3427/L.R, dated 10th April 1911 A.D.
109. Ibid.
unless he furnished security for future tax. If he failed to furnish such security, the land was to be immediately resumed and leased to another. The policy of Government was to bring the revenue registry of alienated \textit{kandukrishi} lands in accordance with actual possession by transferring registry in favour of the aliens in possession.

A set of rules was passed under Royal sanction on the 22\textsuperscript{nd} August 1911 6\textsuperscript{th} Chingam (1087 M.E), under the Irrigation Regulation, III of 1072. By these rules-

(a) Every Tahsildar was appointed and declared an Irrigation Officer under the Regulation in respect of minor and petty irrigation works in his taluk.

(b) The distribution of water of all the petty and minor irrigation works in a taluk was placed under the control of the Tahsildar of the taluk and that of all the major works under the control of the officers of the Public Works Department.

(c) The procedure for the construction, restoration and repair of minor irrigation works under sections 8,9,11 and 12 for the maintenance of such works under section 13 of the Regulation and for the recovery of the cost incurred from the ryots \textit{pro rata}, was prescribed, and

(d) Provision was made for appeals from the decisions of Tahsildars to the Division \textit{Peishkars} and from the latter to Government, to be preferred within 30 days from the date of the order or decision complained against.

Some specific orders were passed on the recommendation of the Committee appointed by Government Order No.12744/Land Revenue, dated 6\textsuperscript{th} December 1910, to report on certain questions connected with the irrigation of the area commanded by

110. \textit{G.O.No.4320 / L.R}, dated 25th May 1911 A.D.
the Kodayar project. The following points were mainly dealt with in this Government Order.\(^{112}\)

(a) The Public Works Department was instructed to undertake the administration of the sluices in some of the larger tanks so as to enable the Department to efficiently, control the consumption of water in them and avoid the large wastage of water which the Department had brought to notice in the distribution of water by the Puravukars under such tanks.

(b) The date for opening the reservoir and the main channels was fixed as the 1\(^{st}\) of June every year. The date of closing was fixed as the 15\(^{th}\) of February tentatively. It was added that the channels should not be kept open beyond this date (15\(^{th}\) February) except in cases of absolute necessity and without the special sanction of Government previously obtained.

(c) In regard to “irregular conversions” conversions outside the blocks, it was directed that they should in the first instance be included in the water-cess accounts but that, should in any case it be found impracticable to supply water to any converted land, the Peishkar should apply to the Government for the remission of the cess on the land after the necessary enquiry.

Some specific instruction were issued regarding the treatment of Thiruppuvaram charged on kandukrishi lands in favour of (a) private individuals or institutions, (b) Sripandaragagai, (c) Sripadam, and (d) Sirkar institutions.\(^{113}\) The minimum rate of tharavilai for wet lands reclaimed from the Vembanad Lake was reduced from Rs.25

\(^{112}\) G.O.No.323 / L.R.dated 14th December 1911 A.D.
\(^{113}\) G O No.1044/L R, dated 17th January 1912 A.D
to Rs.15 per acre.\textsuperscript{114} It was directed that in every case in which the \textit{tharaviali} due from a single registry-holder exceeded Rs.1,000, it should be levied in five equal yearly instalments.\textsuperscript{115}

It was added that the concessions granted by this Government Order would apply to the \textit{tharavilai} on the lands granted under the \textit{Puthuval} Rules before the 1\textsuperscript{st} 
\textit{Chingam} 1088 M.E. or to the \textit{tharavilai} on the lands to be granted for the cultivation of coffee, tea, rubber etc., under special rules, in which case the number and nature of the instalments in which the \textit{tharavilai} should be levied would be determined according to the merits of each case.\textsuperscript{116}

It was laid down that the rates below the 8\textsuperscript{th} \textit{tharam} as per Settlement schedule of rates had become obsolete as the minimum rate of assessment had been fixed as five \textit{Panam} per acre for dry and garden lands throughout the State. In regard to lands in the towns under the Town Improvement Committees, a special rate of assessment of 35 \textit{Panams} per acre was fixed.\textsuperscript{117}

By a Government Order NO.13024/Land Revenue, dated 4\textsuperscript{th} December 1912A.D. 19\textsuperscript{th} \textit{Virschigam} (1088 M.E.,) some special concessions were granted in regard to the registry of lands in the \textit{Neyyattinkari} taluk in the names of the Pulayas in view to remedy the special disabilities which they were laboring under in the matter of obtaining lands for habitation. It was directed that an area of 500 acres in the \textit{Vilappil Pakuthi} should be set apart for this purpose and divided into one acre bits for registry in the names of such of the Pulayas as agreed to settle on the land. The

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{114} G O No.2310/L R, dated 17th February 1912 A.D
\item \textsuperscript{115} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{116} T G G, dated 22nd Kumbham 1087 M.E, p.597.
\item \textsuperscript{117} Ibid dated 28th Minam 1087M.E.P.879.
\end{itemize}
tharavilai was remitted as a special concession. But if any of the lands were to be alienated by the Pulayas, the Government reserved to themselves the power to levy the full tharavilai due under the rules. No special concession was considered necessary in the matter of the assessment on the land.\textsuperscript{118}

By Government Order No.13027/Land Revenue, dated 6\textsuperscript{th} December 1912 A.D. 21\textsuperscript{st} Vrischigam 1088 M.E.), the instruction laid down in Government Order No.11859/Land Revenue, dated 15\textsuperscript{th} September 1908 A.D. on the question of thiruppuvaram were partly revised, in view to bring them into accord with the latest decisions of the High Court. It was laid down that the right of all thiruppu holders to collect their varam at the Pre-Settlement rate was to be allowed to the thiruppu holder, the necessary reduction (to make up the full amount of the Pre-Settlement varam) being made in the iruppukaram or the net demand due to the Sirkai\textsuperscript{119} Where the Settlement pattom was less than the Pre-Settlement varam, the whole of the Settlement pattom was to be given to the thiruppu holder and he was also to be given the balance, i.e., the difference between the Pre-Settlement varam and Settlement Pattam by the Government until the next Revenue Settlement of the State.

It was further laid down that, in regard to the varam charged on Service Inam lands, if a Service Inam holder made regular default in the payment of the varam charged on the land, the same would be resumed from the latter and given over to some other who might be prepared to pay the varam regularly and also perform the allotted service.\textsuperscript{120}

\textsuperscript{118} G.O.No.13024 / L R. dated 24th December 1912 A.D.  
\textsuperscript{119} G.O.No.13027 / L R, dated 6th December 1912 A.D.  
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid
It was directed that the *karampethippu* procedure should be followed in respect of all alienations of Jenmam land whether such alienations took place before or after the Settlement and that the *Vilaitharam* or commutation rate should be calculated at 11 chuckrams per *parai* for the whole of the paddy assessment and arrears recovered for a period not exceeding 5 years.\(^{121}\)

By a Royal Proclamation dated 11\(^{th}\) May 1913 A.D 29\(^{th}\) *Medam* (1088 M.E.), it was laid down that in respect of *karanma* service in *Sirkar Devaswams*, if owing to incompetency, negligence or other cause, the *Karanma* service was not being properly and regularly performed or if any alienation of the *karanma* service or of the property, *thiruppuvaram* or other emolument attached thereto, had been effected by the *karanma* holder or by any member or members of the *karanma* family, it was open to Government to suspend remove, determine, cancel, or deal with in any other manner the *karanma* right of the family to the service. The decision of Government in such matters was final and no action would lie in any Court against such decision.\(^{122}\)

By a notification No.5914/Land Revenue dated 6\(^{th}\) June 1913 A.D 24\(^{th}\) *Edavam* (1088 M.E.), the rules regarding the assessment on cardamom gardens and lands granted for wet and dry cultivation within the Cardamom Hills and Periyar Reserve (Clause of the Revised Rules dated 12\(^{th}\) August 1905A.D) were cancelled. It was directed that the assignment of lands for set and dry cultivation within the Cardamom Hills and Periyar Reserves should be regulated by the ordinary *Puthuval Rules*.\(^{123}\)

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121. G O No.4568 / L R, dated 16th April 1913 A.D.  
122. *Royal Proclamation*, dated 11th May 1913 A.D.  
It was declared that, in accordance with past usage, the ryots of Thovalai, Agastiwaram, Eranest and Kalkum taluks were exempted from the liability to pay half the cost an account of minor irrigation works in their taluks. It was further directed that all minor irrigation works within the area commanded by the Kodayar project should be treated as major.\textsuperscript{124}

It was directed that escheat and \textit{pokuld} lands which were in the possession of the \textit{pakuthi} or escheated persons and hence at the absolute disposal of Government, should be treated exactly the \textit{puthuval} lands and the assessment fixed as under.\textsuperscript{125}

- Dry lands - a minimum rate of \textit{panams} per acre
- Garden lands - tree assessment according is the nature and number of the bearing trees.
- Wet lands - Wet assessment and less than the 10\textsuperscript{th} \textit{tharam}.

Orders were passed in the statements received from the Division \textit{peishkars} regarding the separation of \textit{Devaswam} land revenue from the \textit{Sirkar} land revenue. On examination of the \textit{Pakuthiwar}s assessments, the wet demand on the \textit{Sirkar Devaswam} lands was provisionally fixed at Rs.3,85,601.22 \textit{chuckrams} and it was ordered that no alteration in this figure should be made except with the previous sanction of Government.\textsuperscript{126} It was further directed that the \textit{pattas} and \textit{thandaper} for the \textit{Devaswam} lands should be separated from the \textit{pattas and thandaper} for the \textit{Sirkar} lands.

\textsuperscript{124} Go No.417/LR, dated 9th June 1913 A.D.
\textsuperscript{125} Go No.420/LR, dated 9th June 1913 A.D.
\textsuperscript{126} G.O.No.9033 / LR, dated 9th August 1913 A.D.
In regard to the *Rajabhogam*, it was ordered that the Government would refrain, as a special case and for the time being, from charging any *Rajabhogam* on the *Devaswam* lands.\(^{127}\) It was also ordered that the lands under the Main Left Bank Channel of the Kodayar Project should be explicitly excluded from the *ayacut* which was fixed as beginning at the Puthen Dam.\(^{128}\) It was further directed that the system of levying water cess on lands benefited only by percolation should be discontinued.\(^{129}\)

It was directed that the water cess on dry lands converted into wet under the Kodayar Project, once levied, should not be remitted in subsequent years for the reason that no paddy was grown at the time.\(^{130}\) By Government Order No.13662/Land Revenue dated 12\(^{th}\) December1913A.D 27\(^{th}\) Vrischigam (1080 M.E.) It was directed that in cases in which the *tharavilai* due on lands registered under the *puthuval* rules was allowed to be paid in instalments the registry should be made on the following condition, viz. “should there by any default in the payment of any instalment of the *tharavilai*, the Government reserve to themselves the right to cancel the registry and evict the occupant under the Land Conservancy Regulation, and the registry holder will also forfeit any claim to the instalments of *tharavilai* already paid or to the cost of improvements, if any, already effected”.\(^{131}\)

It was further directed that no registry under the *puthuval* rules should ordinarily be made except in the names of single individuals or of registered companies and that, if in any case a registry was given jointly to two or more people, the complete liability

\(^{127}\) *Ibid*

\(^{128}\) G.O.No.9129 / LR, dated 14th August 1913 A.D.

\(^{129}\) *Ibid*

\(^{130}\) *Huzur sadhanam* No.10447, dated 18th September1913 A.D.

\(^{131}\) G.O.No.13662 / LR, dated 12th December 1913 A.D.
of each of them for the tharavilai and assessment due on the entire area should be made clear.\footnote{132}

It is made mention in a Government Order No.70/Land Revenue dated 24\textsuperscript{th} December 1913 10\textsuperscript{th} Dhanu (1089 M.E), that some special orders were passed in regard to the disposal of puthuval applications in the Chengannur taluk and a temporary staff was sanctioned for the purpose. In this connection a minimum tharavilai of Rs.15 per acre and a minimum assessment of one rupee per acre were fixed for lands in the pakuthis of Rani and Kumpalazha in the Chengannur taluk.\footnote{133}

It was added that in cases in which the tharavilai due by a single applicant exceeded Rs.500, it might be allowed to be paid in ten equal yearly instalments and where the amount wasRs.500 or less but above one hundred, in five equal yearly instalments.\footnote{134}

This special concession was allowed only to the natives of Travancore. It was further directed that in every case in which the tharavilai was allowed to be paid in instalments, the registry would be subject to the following condition, viz. that where the registry holder defaulted to pay any instalment of the tharavilai, Government would have the right to cancel the registry and evict the occupant under the Land Conservancy Regulation and that the registry holder would also forfeit any claim to the instalment of tharavilai already paid or to the cost of improvements already effected.\footnote{135}

It was further declared that the minimum rates tharavilai and assessment specified in this Government Order the special concessions granted to natives of

\footnote{132. T G G, dated 9th Dhanu 1089 M.E, p. 2174.}
\footnote{133. Ibid}
\footnote{134. Ibid}
\footnote{135. Ibid}
Travancore applicable also to the *puthuvals* in the *pakuthis* of Ezhumattur in Thiruvela taluk and Manimalai in Peermade taluk.\(^{136}\)

The minimum rates of *tharavilai* were fixed as follows for the waste lands in the Nedumangad taluk available for registry under the *puthuval Rules*.\(^{137}\)

1. In the case of lands lying within a distance of ten miles from the town of Trivandrum-Rs.10 per acre.

2. In the case of lands lying outside the ten miles limit from the town of Trivandrum Rs.5 per acre.

3. Minimum assessment of one rupee per acre irrespective of whether the lands were situated within or without the ten mile limit from the town of Trivandrum.

4. It was further directed that where the *tharavilai* due by a single applicant exceeded Rs.500, it might be allowed to be paid in ten equal yearly instalments, and where the amount was Rs.500 less but above Rs.100, in five equal yearly instalments. This special concession was allowed only to the natives of Travancore.\(^{138}\)

In every case in which *tharavilai* was allowed to be paid in instalments, the registry was to be subject to the following condition, viz., that where the registry holder defaulted to pay any instalment of the *tharavilai* the Government had the right to cancel the registry and evict the occupant under the Land Conservancy Regulation and that the registry holder would also forfeit any claim to the instalments of *tharavilai* already paid or to the cost of improvements, if any, already effected.\(^{139}\)

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136. *Ibid*
137. G O.No.537 / L.R. dated 14th January 1914 A.D.
138. *Ibid*
To sum of Dewan Rajagopalachari began to encourage the agriculturists with a inauguration of a Department of Agriculture in the year 1908. After the establishment of the department he spread new ideas among agriculturists and organized agricultural exhibitions, seeds and manure were distributed fee of cost. The coconut farm was saved by careful research from the diseases to which they were then subjected. The Vembanad reclamation scheme was carried on with vigor security of tenure was given to the land-lords of Pallipuram, since the days of Sir T.Madhava Rao, when these lands were taken over by the government, they were leased out to tenants on Kuthaga Pattom basis these lands were now registered as private holdings in the name on the tenants who helped them. Lands were registered in the Cardamom Hills for enterprising people. Like Rajagopalachari, Dewan Krishnan Nair also devoted much attention to promoting agricultural enterprise in the State the survey department reorganize more efficient measures were taken to prevent encroachment on Government land. Agricultural loans were given to cultivators in South Travancore, and this led to increase of the area of wet-lands under cultivation. All this brought in good revenue to the State.