

NATIONALISM AND PEASANT MOVEMENTS IN SOUTH CANARA DISTRICT

*A written Account of the Research work Submitted to
the University of Calicut for the Fulfillment of the
Requirement for the Ph. D. in History*

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2006

DECLARATION

I, M. K. Rajasekharan, hereby declare that this thesis work- **Nationalism and Peasant Movements In South Canara District** is original and carried out by me in Department of History, University of Calicut. I do further declare that this study has not been considered as the basis of the award of any degree or fellowship in this or any other Universities.

This work is done under the supervision and guidance of Dr. V. V. Kunhikrishnan, former Deputy Director of Collegiate Education, Government of Kerala.

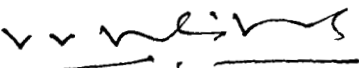
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Dissertation entitled "**Nationalism and Peasant Movements In South Canara District**" is a bonafide record of genuine research done by M. K. Rajasekharan under my supervision for the degree of Ph. D. in History, of Calicut University. This dissertation or any part of it has not been previously submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any University.

Payyannur,
24-02-2006.


Dr. V. V. Kunhikrishnan
(Supervising Teacher)

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INTRODUCTION

The study aims at examining the British colonial administration and its impact upon the rural peasantry. It is an attempt to understand the reaction of the peasantry against the feudalistic agrarian relations and colonial oppression in South Canara. Substantial changes in the agrarian relations were brought by the British land settlement in South Canara District. The support given to the land holding class by the British government had adversely affected the economic interests of the peasantry. Thus an attempt is made to study the land revenue system and land revenue administration that existed during the pre-colonial and the colonial period. It is intended to analyse, how the peasantry of the area were impoverished by the British land revenue policies.

One of the major objectives of the study are to understand the

emergence of peasant organizations and the peasant movements in South Canara District. It would throw light on the impact of the movement in the political, social and economic fields. One of the important objectives of the study is to compare the militant and radical movements of Kasaragod taluk of South Canara District with other parts of South Canara. The impact of the peasant movement upon the national movement in the region would also be analysed. It also aims to understand the tenancy legislations in the area. Another object of the study is to understand the legislative measures undertaken by the Governments in South Canara District (Karnataka Government) and Kasaragod District (Kerala Government) regarding their agrarian problems⁽¹⁾.

For the purpose of the study an interdisciplinary approach is adopted, that means an approach of combining various disciplines such as history, economics, sociology and political science. It definitely requires a historical treatment to bring out the salient features of the agrarian structure and various peasant struggles in the district. Various data's connected with the study are collected involving diverse methods and numerous sources.

The primary sources of the present study is based are the proceedings and reports of the government, official correspondences, the manual of administration, the U.S.S. files of the government,

1. *After the formation of the linguistic states, the South Canara or the Dakshina Kannada District became the part of the Karnataka State and the present Kasaragod District became a part of the Kerala state.*

fortnightly reports, the various acts and orders of the government, which are available in the Tamilnadu Archives, Chennai. The Karnataka State Archives, Bangalore, the Divisional Archives, Mysore and the Regional Archives, Calicut also provide primary sources of the study. The national newspapers especially Mathrubhumi provides the valuable informations of the region during nationalistic struggles. Aruna, a Kannada weekly (1956-1976) published from Mangalore also provide information's regarding the agitations of the peasantry in the South Canara District.

The Madras Presidency produced many District Manuals, among them South Canara was presented in two volumes, first by J. Sturrock⁽¹⁾ (1894) and the second by H. A. Stuart⁽²⁾ (1895). The first was a product of the labour and experience of an ICS officer and the second was a statistical supplement compiled by H. A. Stuart who was also ICS, using the data of the Census of 1891. These administrative records are the earliest contributions to the historiography of South Canara. As they are official, they generally illustrate the colonial interests.

Most of the native writers concerned with understanding of the pre-colonial history of the region. Among them M. Ganapati Rao Aygal⁽³⁾ made a pioneer, through his Kannada work, Ancient History of South

1. J. Sturrock, *Madras District Manuals, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894).*

2. H. A. Stuart, *Madras District Manuals, South Canara. Vol. II (Madras, 1895).*

3. M. Ganapathy Rao Aygal, *Dakshina Kannada Jilleya Pracheena Itihasa (Kannada), (Mangalore, 1923).*

Canara District, published in 1923. He gave importance to political history. B. A. Saletor⁽¹⁾ occupies a prominent place in the historical writing of South Canara. He glorified the dynasty especially the history of the Alupas over Tulunadu. Though certain narrow Tulu, nationalism had influenced his writings, it is the first critical history of the region by making use of the sources available.

The two Gazetteers of South Canara District published in 1938⁽²⁾ and 1973⁽³⁾ also contains information's related with this study.

K. V. Ramesh⁽⁴⁾ had written a valuable book on history of South Canara through the study of inscriptions. It contain the history from earliest times up to the fall of the Vijayanagara empire. It is an important source for the social, economic and religious condition of the period. P. Gururaja Bhatt⁽⁵⁾ had published books which deals largely with the ancient and medieval history of Tulunadu.

K. K. N. Kurup⁽⁶⁾, had studied the agrarian struggles in Kerala and Kasaragod District. The Kayyur ryot (Kasaragod taluk of South Canara District) is a useful work throwing light on the agrarian problems of Kasaragod. These studies furnish valuable information about the history

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1. B. A. Saletor, *Ancient Karnataka, Vol. I, History of Tuluva, (Poona, 1936)*.
 2. K. N. Krishna Swami and J. F. Hall, *Madras District Gazetteers, South Canara District, Statistical Appendix, (Madras, 1938)*.
 3. *Gazetteer of India, Karnataka State, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973)*.
 4. K. V. Ramesh, *A History of South Kanara, (Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1970)*.
 5. P. Gururaja Bhatt, *Antiquities of South Kanara, (Udipi, 1969)*, *Studies In Tuluva, History and Culture, (Manipal, 1975)*.
 6. K. K. N. Kurup, *Agrarian Struggles In Kerala, (Thiruvananthapuram, 1989)*, *The Kayyur Ryot, (Calicut, 1978)*.

of the peasant organisation of the Kasaragod taluk. K. G Vasanta Madhava⁽¹⁾ has published books on the political and religious aspects of South Canara.

The unpublished research work of T. N. Ramakrishnan⁽²⁾ on Reforms and Agricultural Development of Kasaragod District, the dissertation⁽³⁾ for MPhil by H. B. Dhanalakshmi on Socio Economic Life in South Kanara, the dissertation⁽⁴⁾ of Catharine. A. T on Administrative career of Sir Munro in Madras Presidency are some of the sources for the study.

N. Shyam Bhat⁽⁵⁾ has made studies of South Canara during the period of 1799 to 1860. His studies contain the brief history of South Canara, the agrarian relation and early peasant uprisings. This book is one of the important source materials for this study. C. B. Damle's⁽⁶⁾ studies on Land Reforms and Changing Agrarian Relation in Dakshina Kannada District also provide important information about the land legislations of South Canara. Perspective on Dakshina Kannada and Kodagu⁽⁷⁾ contain the history and society

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1. K. G. Vasantha Madhava, *Trends In Karnataka Historical Research, (With reference to coastal Karnataka, (University of Calicut, 1996), Religions In Coastal Karnataka, 1500, 1763, (New Delhi, 1985).*
 2. T. N. Ramakrishnan, *Reforms and Agricultural Development, A Case Study In Kasaragod District Of Kerala State, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Mangalore University.*
 3. H. B. Dhanalakshmi, *Socio-Economic Life In South Canara, During 1525-1675, Unpublished Dissertation for Mphil, Presidency College, Madras, 1990.*
 4. *Administrative Career of Sir Thomas Munro In Madras Presidency, A Dissertation for Mphil, University Of Madras, 1999.*
 5. N. Shyam Bhat, *South Kanara, 1799-1860, (New Delhi, 1998).*
 6. C. B. Damle, *Impact of Tenancy Legislation and Changing Agrarian Relations, A Case Study Dakshina Kannada District, Karnataka, Social Scientist, Vol. 17, No. 11-12, 1989.*
 7. *Perspective on Dakshina Kannada and Kodagu, (ed), Mangalore University, Decennial Volume Mangala Gangotri, 1991.*

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 7. *Perspective on Dakshina Kannada and Kodagu, (ed), Mangalore University, Decennial Volume Mangala Gangotri, 1991.*

also the agriculture and trade of the district. K. S. Shivanna⁽¹⁾ has studied the agrarian system of Karnataka from 1736 to 1761, contain the features of medieval agrarian economy, land tenure system, and land revenue assessment.

The present study is divided in to six chapters. The first chapter introduces the topic and categorises the movements of the rich peasants and the poor peasants. It makes a brief survey of the history of South Canara before the advent of the British. In order to make systematic analysis of the long history of South Canara, it is divided in to four phases, the Alupas, the Vijayanagara, the Keladi and the Mysore rulers respectively. A brief survey of the advent and decline of the Portuguese power in South Canara, the history of the three important Chieftains, namely the Raja of Vittal, the Raja of Kumbala and the Raja of Nileshtar are also included in this. More over, it mentions the situation, boundaries, the name of the district the geographical features of the district and a brief note on Buchanan's journey in South Canara.

The second chapter examines the land tenure system and the land revenue assessment existed in South Canara during the pre-colonial period. To achieve a measure of manageability, it is divided in to four divisions, as the Alupas, the Vijayanagara, the Keladi and the Mysore rulers respectively. It attempts to study the land tenure system, land revenue assessment during the British period, the nature of the ryotwari

7. K. S. Shivanna, *The Agrarian System Of Karnataka, 1736-1761, University of Mysore, 1983.*

system, the settlement and resettlement in South Canara. It tries to find out the causes for the impoverishment of the peasantry and also the early resistance movements by the Raja of Vittal, Kumbala and Nileshwar against the British supremacy.

The third chapter deals with the impact of the impoverishment of the peasantry and how the economic grievances created tensions in the rural agrarian life. A brief account of the exploitation and the atrocities of the peasantry by the landlords moneylenders and the government are also mentioned.

The fourth chapter gives a brief account of the early peasant uprisings known as the Koot rebellions of 1810-11 and 1830-31 against the exaction of the land revenue and also the rebellion of Kallayana Swami. It examines the origin of the peasant organisation, the mobilization of the peasantry and various movements developed in South Canara against landlordism and colonialism. It also examines the organisation and development of the Congress Socialist Party and the Communist Party in the area. It also examines the repressive measures under taken by the government against the peasant struggles and the Communists.

The fifth chapter discusses the tenancy legislation introduced in South Canara District by the Madras Government up to 1956. In 1956 linguistic states came in to existence and South Canara was divided in to two districts, one the South Canara District or the Dakshina Kannada District as a part of the Karnataka State and Kasaragod District as a

part of Kerala State. So this chapter attempts to find out the legislative measures introduced in Kerala and also in Karnataka and its impact on the region of former South Canara.

The 6th chapter is the concluding chapter which examines the nature of the peasant movements in the South Canara District. It attempts to make a comparative study of the militant and radical movements in Kasaragod Taluk with other parts of the South Canara District.

The study of the peasant movements of South Canara in particular and Karnataka in general has not received adequate attention from the historians. Its study is a recent phenomenon. Hence, this is an attempt to examine the role of peasantry in the South Canara District on social, economic and political transformation and their endeavors to resist oppression, injustice and colonialism.

The present study traces the historical problems involved in land tenurial system and agitation made by the tenants during the colonial period and there after. It also attempts a comparison of tenancy and land reforms implemented in Karnataka and Kerala. Through some studies were made to highlight the peasant agitations of South Canara no detailed research work has been undertaken to familiarise how the tenancy movement and later peasant movement of South Canara District put pressure on governments to introduce reforms. These aspects are studied in depth based on primary sources.

CHAPTER - I

BACKGROUND CHAPTER

National liberation movement in India brought new social classes into politics. Among these social classes the peasants occupied a prominent position. The national movement reached at the grass root paving the way for the growth of a new culture. During the British period the entire Indian rural scene had been indulging in protest, revolt and even large scale struggles. In these struggles against British colonialism, the peasants played a significant role in weakening the basic structure of the British administration. The study of agrarian system, social structure and their struggles in India has recently developed as an important theme of historical research.

In all agrarian societies, land is the most important means of wealth and source of power and prestige. Rights in land are often hereditary with power and prestige tending to the ascriptive attributes.

Consequently, changes in the institutional⁽¹⁾ frame work of agriculture, the pattern of ownership, control and use of land or more briefly the land system as a whole, will have far reaching consequences on the land based social order in these societies.

In such societies the rulers extracted more land revenue and oppressed the peasantry for favourable revenue collection and caused discontent among the part of the peasantry against the established authority. This developed as a common feature of the 19th century. The 20th century marked the growth of national consciousness and the national movement, it made deep impact in channelising the discontent. Thus with the involvement of the peasantry, national movement became a mass organisation.

The peasants as a class have been the back-bone of the society through the ages. But, it is a paradox, that the class suffered from several handicaps. The British colonial policies and the new land revenue system (Zamindari, Ryotwari and Mahalwari) along with the new administrative system had transformed the rural agrarian structure. The traditional agrarian system and the industrial structure had collapsed, causing oppression, over crowding in agriculture sector culminating in the impoverishment of the peasantry. This resulted in the resistance movements against the colonial rule. These movements developed against the established authority which was a familiar feature during the colonial administration.

History had recorded some peasant movements, upsurges and insurrections. But in many cases its impact might not be far reaching. Moreland⁽¹⁾ points out that the feature of the pre-modern Indian polity was a sovereign who ruled with an army that supported the throne and the peasantry paid for it. Some of the peasant insurgences that have been recorded in ancient and medieval India were caused by heavy taxation and oppression by the army in collecting land revenues.

R. S. Sharma⁽²⁾ has noted the first recorded peasant rebellion that occurred in the 11th century in North Bengal, which resulted in the death of a Pala Ruler. During the period of the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526) many peasant uprisings took place, and the basic cause was heavy taxation. Several instances of lower-class uprisings⁽³⁾ in the Mughal Empire in which many poor peasants, the tax-payers, fought against the tyranny of the landlords - the tax receivers - or their police. In many of the peasant wars, religious ideology provided a powerful revolutionary force, therefore, both in terms of motivation and organisation they sharply resembled some of the peasant wars of Medieval Europe.

Many scholars have tried to define the peasants and identify the integral class division of the peasant society. Eric Wolf defined⁽⁴⁾ peasantry as a population that are essentially involved in cultivation

1. W. H. Moreland, *The Agrarian System of Muslim India*, (Cambridge, 1929) p. XI.

2. R. S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*, Madras, 1965, p. 298.

3. W. C. Smith, 'Lower-class Uprisings In The Mugal Empire', *Islamic Culture*, XX, 1 (January 1946), p. 21-46. quoted in *Peasant Movements In India*, D. N. Dhanagrare, Delhi, 1983, p.29.

4. Eric. R. Wolf, *Peasant Wars of 20th Century*, (London 1969), p. XVIII.

and making autonomous decisions regarding the process of cultivation. Theoder Shanin defined⁽¹⁾ the peasant as who, with the help of simple equipment and labour of their families produced mainly for their own consumption and for the fulfillment of obligation to the holders of political and economic powers.

There are differences in these two definitions. Eric Wolf took descriptive categorisation of peasantry. He stressed the potential⁽²⁾ of middle class peasants in revolution. The poor peasants (landless peasants) who had no tactical power and were not in a position to organise or pursue rebellion. At the same time Theoder Shanin considered the position of peasants in the process of production as the most important one. Thus the peasant occupy a key role in the economic structure.

A. R. Desai expressed⁽³⁾

In fact, during and after the second world war, the metaphor troops and peasants were the two arms of the Kingdom which eptimises the peasantry in a large number of colonial and semi-colonial countries participated on a massive scale both in the national liberation struggle to over throw imperialism.

In his review of land reform studies in India, P. C. Joshi states⁽⁴⁾

1. Theoder Shanin, *Peasants and Peasant Societies (ed)*, (London 1977), p. 240.

2. Eric. R. Wolf, *Peasant Wars of 20th Century* (London, 1969), p. XVIII.

3. A. R. Desai, *Peasant Struggle In India* (Delhi, 1979), p. XII, XIII.

4. P. C. Joshi, *Land Reform In India-Treands and Perspective*, (Bombay, 1995), p.54.

History shows that peasantry is seldom capable of throwing up an autonomous social movement under its own leadership for its emancipation from the rule of feudal or semi-feudal interests.

The peasantry had played a key role to overthrow imperialism during and after the second world war in a large number of colonial and semi-colonial countries of the world. But, in India, there was almost a total neglect in the systematical study of the agrarian movements and their impact on the national movements up to 1970's. But there after many historians conducted their studies on the role of the various classes of the peasants in social, economic and political transformation and their attempts to resist oppression and injustice. Recently many of the modern historians have given importance for the subaltern studies in history.

In all feudal types of societies⁽¹⁾ there have always, been individual and small groups driven by hunger and humiliation to commit acts of violence. These acts were not guided by any ideology but as a heroic action by an individual or a group against the feudalistic oppression. These acts were almost invariably designed⁽²⁾ as 'crime' by the rulers of such societies and were suppressed ruthlessly.

A study of the agrarian movements in India, in historical perspective shows that there have been movements of both rich and poor peasants.

The Santal uprising (Orissa, 1855-56) was basically a tribal movement⁽³⁾ of poor peasants. The introduction of permanent settlement

1. *Ranjith Guha, Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgencies In Colonial India, (New Delhi, 1983), p. 76.*

2. *Ibid, p. 76.*

3. *D. N. Dhanagare, Peasant Movements In India 1920-1950, (Delhi, 1983), p.35.*

eventually led to the wholesale appropriation of land for recovery of revenue dues and land transfers to urban money lenders. This had deeply hurt the tribal sentiments. Santals revolted against the landlord, mahajans and darogas (police). But it was mercilessly crushed, thousands of Santals were massacred.

One of the causes for the revolt of 1857 was the impoverishment of the rural peasantry by the British colonial administration. Between 1840 and 1857, the transfer⁽¹⁾ of land from cultivators to non-cultivating classes of money lenders, urban traders and so on had increased considerably. Evictions, the imposition of levies and illegal taxes by corrupt revenue officials had steadily built up tension. The unrest culminated in the revolt of 1857.

The Bombay peasant⁽²⁾ revolt (1871-75) was not well planned, nor were they wide spread. The peasants aimed their blows not on the government, but on money lenders, to frighten them into surrender or to get possession of the documents or papers. The British suppressed the rising.

The Champaran movement of 1917 (Bihar) was held by rich and wealthy peasants who belonged to the so called 'superior castes'. The peasants struggled in connection with the indigo plantation against the British Planters. They invited Gandhiji and he undertook a leading role in the agitation. The movement marched to a success and created a new confidence among the peasants.

1. D. N. Dhanagare, *Peasant Movements In India 1920-1950*, (Delhi, 1983), p.36.

2. A. R. Desai, *Peasant Struggle In India* (Delhi, 1979), p. 70.

The Kheda⁽¹⁾ struggle of 1918 (Kheda District of Gujarat) was essentially a struggle of rich peasants. After returning from South Africa Gandhiji made the experiment of non-co-operation movement by leading the Champaran movement and Kheda struggle.

The progress of Khilafat Movement ended in an open rebellion in Malabar, called as the Malabar Mappila Rebellion. It was actually a rebellion against poverty and the harassment of the landlords. After the rebellion the need of tenancy legislation⁽²⁾ and the readjustment of landlord-tenant relationship was sharply felt.

The Aika movement (United Province) of 1921-22 was directed against the exploitation of the zamindars and landlords. Though this movement was suppressed by the zamindars, money lenders and the British, it played a significant role in challenging the foundation of the colonial and feudal authority in the region.

The famous Bardoli Satyagraha (1928) in Surat District of Gujarat was led by Sardar Vallabhai Patel⁽³⁾ with the blessings of Gandhiji. It was essentially a movement of rich and well to do class of peasants, which ended in victory.

The protest of poor peasants of Bihar in 1932 under the leadership of Sahajanand Saraswati, the leader of Kisan Sabha, turned out to be an important event in the history of the agrarian movement.

The Tebhaga Movement⁽⁴⁾ under the leadership of Bengal

1. A. R. Desai, *Peasant Struggle In India* (Delhi, 1979), p. 70.

2. V. V. Kunhikrishnan, *Tenancy Legislation In Malabar*, (New Delhi, 1993), p. 59.

3. D. N. Dhanagrare, *Peasant Movements In India 1920-1950*, (Delhi, 1983), p.45-46.

4. A. R. Desai, *Peasant Struggle In India* (Delhi, 1979), p. 482.

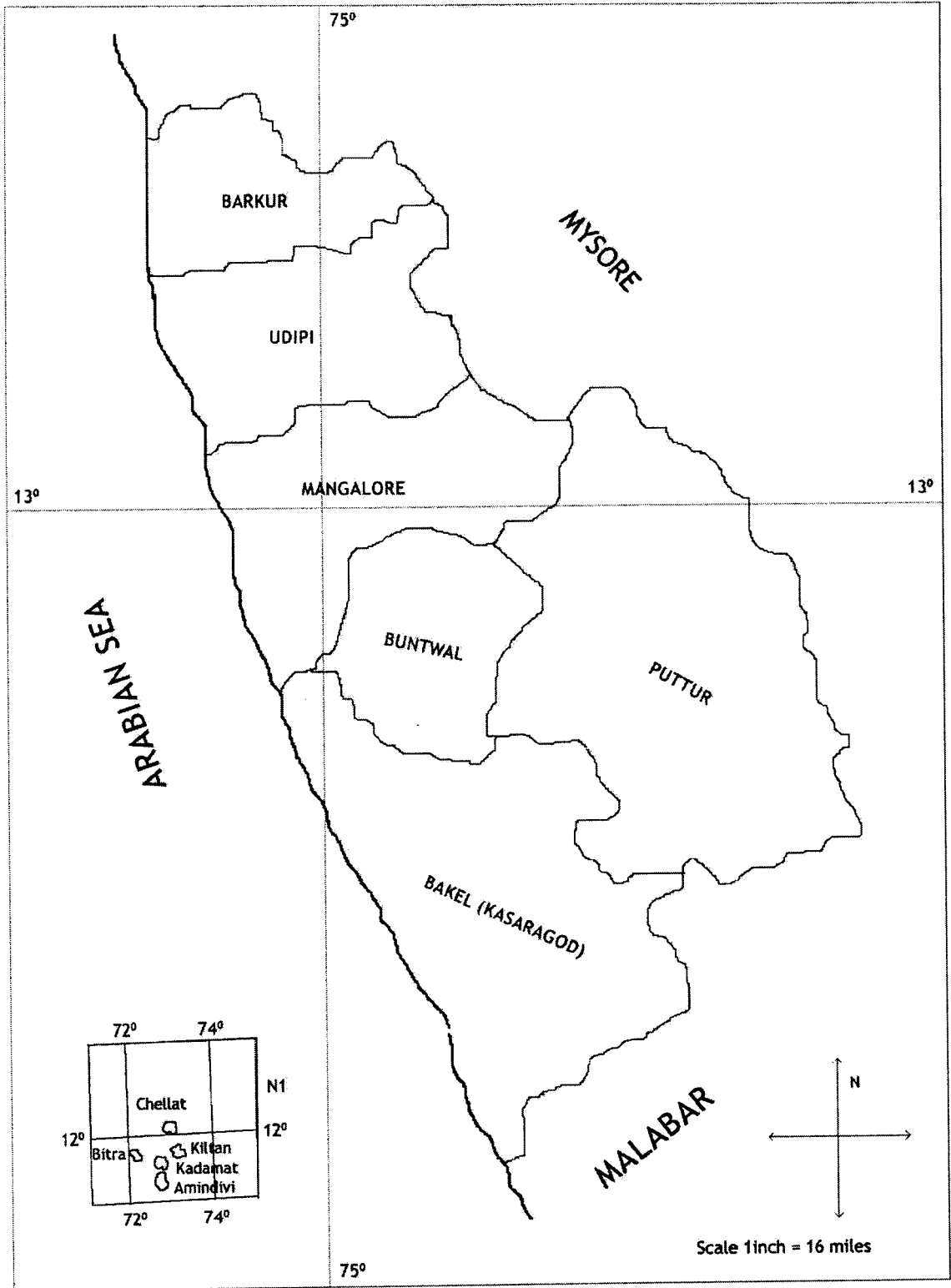
Provincial Kisan Sabha (1946-47) was also certainly a movement of the poor peasants. Ultimately the Tebhaga movement failed due to the repressive measures of the British. It brought significant, immediate as well as far reaching changes, in the social and economic structure.

When we examine the above struggles, it is revealed that the movements led by rich peasants were a success but, the struggles of the poor peasants were suppressed miserably. The poor peasants generally revolted against their landlords and moneylenders. The British administration came forward to suppress the revolts and they acted as a protector of the landlords and moneylenders. This was one of the major significance of the colonial administration having a link among the British government, landowning class and the money lenders.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SOUTH CANARA DISTRICT

The use of the term South Canara and its geographical limits calls for some clarification. The present day districts of Dakshina Kannada and Udipi of Karnataka together with the Kasaragod of Kerala State constituted the South Canara District in the Madras Presidency during 1860 to 1956. The district was situated on the western coast of India, half way between Bombay and Cape Commorin. It was the northern district belonging to the Madras Presidency which occupied the western portion of the Peninsula of India. Geographically the South

MAP. 1 : SOUTH CANARA DISTRICT (1860)



Canara region is separated from the rest of South Indian Peninsula by the western ghats.

The district was situated⁽¹⁾ between the North latitude $12^{\circ} 4'15''$ and $13^{\circ} 58'30''$ and East longitude $74^{\circ} 43'26''$ and $75^{\circ} 44'31''$. It was bounded on the north by Northern Canara (Bombay Presidency) on the South by Malabar, on the east by Mysore and Coorg and on the west by Arabian sea.

The geographical features of South Canara give an insight to the climatic conditions and the nature of soil. The costal strip of South Canara between the mountain ranges and the sea never exceeds more than 50 miles. The mountain range approaching the extreme north of South Canara district is with in five miles of the sea. Then the main line of the range soon swerves abruptly eastward round the Kettur valley, to the south of this valley rises the prominent place of Kudachadiri (4411 ft). Then the ghats run south east of Kudremuch, the highest peak in the district (6215 ft) above sea level. The Coorg and Malabar hills are the Southern boundaries of the district. The west of the ghats, a broken laterite plateau, slopes gradually towards the sea. The area is a sea bed with rich soil, the annual rainfall is high, averaging about 150 inches per annum. The humidity is also high at 75% to 80% nearly one-half of the area is forestry and one half fully rocky land. The area under cultivation is only one fifth of the total. Rice is the major crop grown. It has been said that most⁽²⁾ of the farming

1. J. Sturrock, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 1.*

2. P. Gururaja Bhatt, *Studies In Tuluva History and Culture, (Manipal, 1975), p. 33.*

activities concede to religious activities and festivals in the region.

The name of the district, Canara, Kannada or Karnate is derived by Cladwell⁽¹⁾ from the old Dravidian word K'ar, black cotton soil of the southern plateau of Deccan. Generally, the name Karnara spread to all the countries under the domination of the rulers Karnara and was corrupted into Kannada, the English name Canara⁽²⁾ is confined to the Western coast.

The name 'Kanara'⁽³⁾ (which was formerly spelt) is derived from 'Kannada' the name of regional language of the state. It appears that the Portuguese, who on arrival in this part of India, found the common linguistic medium of the people to be Kannada, and accordingly called the area as 'Canara', 'd' being not much in use in Portuguese. This name applied to the whole costal belt of this area and was continued to be used as such by the British. The Tulunadu is situated⁽⁴⁾ between the south of the river Kalyanapuram near Udipi, North of the Chandragiri river in Kasaragod and the western ghat.

The word Tulu⁽⁵⁾ meaning mild, is not in common use and though the Tulu people were mild and peaceable, as a rule marked more than their neighbours and have given trouble enough at times. According to the "Keralolpathi"⁽⁶⁾ the name comes from that one of the Perumals of

1. J. Sturrock, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 2.*

2. *Ibid, p. 2.*

3. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 1.*

4. C. Raghavan, *Tulunadum bhashayum nattarivum, (Mal), (Thiruvananthapuram, 2003), p. 1.*

5. J. Sturrock, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 2.*

6. *Ibid, p. 2.*

Kerala who fixed his residence in the northern portion of his dominions just before its separation from Kerala called "Tulubhan Perumal".

According to B. A. Saletore⁽¹⁾, the word Tulu might be traced to the Cannada verbal root, Tulu, which means "to attack". This signifies the native spirit of the ancient people and their war like activities.

The Mushaka Vamsa written by Atula mention's the expansion of Nannan, the ruler of Eli hill (Eli-malai, present Kannur District of Kerala) towards Konkan Desa and Tulunadu. Reference to Nannan in Sangham literature⁽²⁾ illustrate his occupation of Tulunadu and his attention further South. The date of Nannan was impossible to fix, as he might have lived and ruled sometime in the first three countries of the Christian era.

It is mentioned that the kingdom of Ezhimala under Nannan was included the whole of the present Kannur district embraced with in itself the southern most part of the Tulu country and the parts of the Coorg and Coondapur as well⁽³⁾. The death of Nannan ended the glorious period in the history of the Ezhimala Kingdom.

In the middle of the 4th century A.D saw the advent of Mayura Sarma as the ruler of the Kadambamandak. We do not know how long Kadamba rule founded by Mayura Sarma continued to be existed.

During the early centuries of the Christian era, Tuluva was inhabited⁽⁴⁾ by the Kosar (Kosar were the tribal inhabitants of some

1. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District (Bangalore, 1973), p. 2.*

2. *K. V. Ramesh, A History of South Kanara, (Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1970), p. 20.*

3. *Cannannore District Gazetteer, (Thiruvananthapuram, 1972), p. 64.*

4. *K. V. Ramesh, A History of South Kanara, (Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1970), p. 269.*

other region, who migrated to Tulunadu) and again it came under the sway of Nannan with the appearance of the Vaddarse⁽¹⁾ inscription. In the middle of the 7th century the Tulu country emerges from historical darkness and from the inscription we know that the people of South Canara were subjected to a ruler whose name was Aluvasara and whose dynamic name was glanced from successive records as Aluva or Alupa. Thus the dawn of datable history in the middle of 7th century to the end of the 14th century AD, the region of South Canara was under the rule of Aluvas or Alupas.

The gramapaddhati⁽²⁾, is a tradition , which contains the history of the Brahmin settlement of the Tulu region. It is broadly divisible in two parts. The earlier part belongs to the realm of mythology, dealing with the role of Siva in the origin of Kingship and state in this region. In the second part there are details of the kings, some protest and even rebellions. It gives the details of rule of different kings like Mayura Varma, Chandraganda and Lokaditya. There are also references to the settlement of Brahmins in 32 gramas along with their family names in gramapaddhati.

Another part of the mythological story of gramapaddhati narrates the birth of Kadamba. When Siva and Parvati came to Sahya Hills, a baby was born to them under a Kadamba tree. The child had three eyes. He was succeeded by Vasu Chakravarti whose daughter Susile married Hemanga Raya of Surya Vamsa. Their son was Mayura Varma.

1. K. V. Ramesh, *A History of South Kanara*, (Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1970), p. 269-270.
 2. POLI, *A Commemorative Value for Canara*, (ed.), *District Administration, D K District*, (Mangalore, 2000), p. 27.

When Mayura Verma became the king he was advised by the Rishies to bring Brahmins from Achicchatras, on the banks of river Godavari and he brought Brahmins from there. The Brahmins settled in Haiva, Tuluva and Kerala. In Tuluva the Brahmins settled in thirty two villages. Sudras were brought along with the Brahmins to work for them.

Buchanan's Journey

In 1801 Dr. Buchanan was deputed by Wellesley, the then Governor General of India to investigate and report on the state of agriculture, art and commerce, the religion, manners and customs, the history, natural and civil antiquities in Mysore and other areas newly acquired.

Buchanan entered in the district from the south, Malabar frontier to Hosdurg. He was struck by the neglected appearance of the country owing to the want of inhabitants, which the Nayar informant attributed to depopulation by war and famines. Passing further north towards the Chadragiri river he called that place Tuluva or Tulunadu. He found the country showing some signs of arid deserted land, though there were traces of former cultivation. In the neighbourhood of Kumbala he found the paddy lands, more neatly cultivated than the further south area and saw many ruins of former gardens. At Manjeshwar⁽¹⁾ he found a number of Konkannies in flourishing circumstances and after visiting Mangalore he reported that to judge from appearances of occupants of land in Tuluva were richer than those of Malabar. The cultivation

1. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District (Bangalore, 1973), p. 67.*

he found carried on partly by slaves, but mainly by hired servants. At Bantwal he noticed new house buildings and the people were busily engaged in commerce.

The region is referred⁽¹⁾ as Tulunadu in Agananuru - a Sangham work of the early centuries of the Christian era and as Tulu - Vaishya in the Barakuru inscriptions. During the Vijayanagara period, South Canara was also referred in the inscriptions as Tulu-rajya or Tulu desa. Aluvakheda⁽²⁾, is the name given to this region by some outside inscriptions of Tulunadu.

Sturrock observed that⁽³⁾ the Brahminical influence in Tuluva dates only from the introduction of the Brahmin's by Kadamba king Mayura Varma and prior to this Jainism had no doubt obtained a footing. The political history of South Canara District prior to the advent of the British rule may be broadly divided into four phases

1. The Alupas
2. The Vijayanagara
3. The Keladi and
4. The Mysore rule.

The Alupas

Gururaja Bhatt expresses that from the early centuries of the Christian era, the area was known as Alvekheda, which means⁽⁴⁾ the lord of the Alupas, thus the first century of the Christian era to the

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1. K. V. Ramesh, *A History of South Kanara*, (Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1970), p. XVIII.
 2. *Ibid*, p. XVIII.
 3. J. Sturrock, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894)*, p. 57.
 4. P. Gururaja Bhatt, *Antiquities of South Kanara*, (Uduppi, 1969), p. II.

middle of the 15th century the Alupas ruled over the Alvekheda, indeed a unique record of unbroken, political supremacy for a period of 1500 years. The regular history of this dynasty as revealed (through inscriptions) starts only from the middle of the 17th century.

Most probably, the Alupas were in the beginning, tribal chiefs⁽¹⁾ of local origin, the evidence in this connection is, of course Ptolemy⁽²⁾, for it is he who speaks of Oloiknora (identified with Alvekheda) and this makes a direct reference to the Alupas. Ptolemy says this Oloikhara was one of the inland centers of pirates. Plini⁽³⁾ also refers to the pirates that infested the region between Muziris and Nitrias. Thus perhaps, in those days there were some tribes in the costal region each of which included a band of fighters headed by a chieftain some of whom possibly lived by piracy.

These aspects reveal that, there were a number of petty chiefs who often engaged in internecine wars under about the beginning of the 6th century, when one of them ultimately rose into prominence. The Alupa Kingdom had later gained sufficient importance by about the beginning of the 6th century, since⁽⁴⁾ its subjugation has been mentioned by the Kadamba King Ravivarma and in the list of conquests of the western Chalukya 'king' Kirthivarma I.

During the period of the⁽⁵⁾ early Alupas, their kingdom was

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1. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 38.*
 2. *Madras District Gazetteers, South Canara District, Statistical Appendix, (Madras, 1938), p. 172.*
 3. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 38.*
 4. *Ibid, p. 39.*
 5. *K. V. Ramesh, A History of South Kanara, (Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1970), p. 242.*

primarily divided into divisions called 'nadu', and it was placed in charge of an officer whose functions were expressed in the phrase-nattumudime, means leadership over nadu. The cities were placed under the administration of officers who had the designation of nayaka. Taxes on land and water were the main sources of income for the royal treasury. Agricultural products were subject to taxation. Taxes on water meant tolls collected from marine and river trades. There was no information regarding to administration of justice.

Information regarding administrative practices⁽¹⁾ is found in greater detail in the inscriptions of the medieval and later Alupas. The early Alupas refer their regions merely as Rajya. The medieval and later Alupas used Vijaya-rajya and ekachatrathirajya. The King was the supreme head and the ministers known as pradhana were the head of the official hierarchy the chief minister was called as maha-pradhan. There were also a set of officials known as⁽²⁾ desipurusharu means spiritual personages who guided the ruler. The Princes and princesses of the royal family took active part in the administration of the kingdom.

Various officials such as Adhikari was the administrator of nadu (a kingdom was divided into divisions called nadu), odeva was the head of village, senabova was the village clerk, uraluva (ruler of a given village) tiadapa (servant), srikarna (royal scribe), sahani (another who tends war horses), behari (official who looked matters of trade) etc existed during this period. Guilds and associations find, frequent

1. K. V. Ramesh, *A History of South Kanara*, (Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1970), p. 43.

2. *Ibid*, p. 248.

references in the inscriptions. Medieval and later Alupa inscriptions contain very little information on the administration of justice.

South Canara Under the Vijayanagara Empire

The Vijayanagara empire came into existence in 1336. It was founded by the five brothers, Harihara, Bukka, Marappa, Muddappa and Kampana. Harihara I was crowned as its first emperor. Though its beginning was humble, but very soon, due to the prevailing political circumstances paved for territorial expansion and turned as an empire in South India.

The earliest inscription⁽¹⁾ of the Vijayanagara period seen at Attavara in Mangalore Taluk in AD 1345, reveals that South Canara itself came to form a part of the empire with a decade of its birth. This marked the establishment of an efficient and centralised form of government in South Canara for about three centuries. For administrative convenience the Vijayanagara rulers divided⁽²⁾ South Canara into Mangalore and Barkur rajyas and two governors were appointed to look after each from Mangalore and Barkur as head quarters. But many times only one governor ruled over both Mangalore and Barkur rajyas. The authority who made these appointments was either the emperor or an imperial officer or both. The governors were changed at the will of their superiors with out any regard of their duration.

K. V. Ramesh⁽³⁾ opines that the Vijayanagara rulers annexed South

1. K. V. Ramesh, *A History of South Kanara*, (Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1970), p. 150.

2. N. Shyam Bhat, *South Kanara*, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 21.

3. K. V. Ramesh, *A History of South Kanara*, (Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1970), p. 151.

Canara because of its strategic position connected with war. The rulers could hope to build up a formidable cavalry only with the help of horse, imported from Arabia and for doing this they needed suitable ports. South Canara possessed such ports in Mangalore and Barkur. Thus they annexed south Canara as a part of their empire.

In the beginning all the local Chiefs were recognised by the Vijayanagara rulers. The collection of revenue⁽¹⁾, general administrative powers and execution powers remained in their hands and they were allowed to enjoy certain portions of their territories free of tax and the revenue collected by them was paid to Vijayanagara Officer called Wodeyar at Barkur.

There are many inscriptions of the Vijayanagara rulers discovered from different parts of South Canara. For example, Kantavara of Karkala taluk, Udipi, Coondapur, Barkur, Mudabidure, Tiruvailu etc. These inscriptions gives information about the political life of the period. Of these the Barkur rajya comprised of the Udipi and Coondapur taluks, while in the Mangalore rajya was included the Mangalore, Karkala, Puttur and Kasaragod taluks. The inscription also gives the name of the governors who were appointed by the emperors to rule these rajyas. An inscription from Barakura⁽²⁾ states that Mahapradhana Simganna-odeya was administrating the Tulu and Mahala rajayas from his head quarters at Barakur. The Mahala rajyas is supposed to be the North Malabar of Kerala state.

1. N. Shyam Bhat, *South Kanara*, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 21.

2. K. V. Ramesh, *A History of South Kanara*, (Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1970), p. 43, (The Barakura inscription was in AD.1390).

An inscription from Mudabidare⁽¹⁾ of Karkala taluk records gifts of lands to Chandogra Parsvadeva during the reign of the Chauta ruler Vikra-Chauta. The Chautas were the minor family of Jain chieftains who ruled over a small territory in the Tulu country from the 12th century to the 18th century.

Ibn Batuta⁽²⁾ the African traveller, visited the coast of Canara in 1342. He had mentioned a number of places which he passed through along the coast from Karwar to Calicut. He describes the coast roads as well shaded with trees and states that at every half a mile, there was a rest house with a well in charge of a person and he found the country a fairly prosperous state. He also⁽³⁾ mentions the Muhammadan Governor of Honore was subject to an infidel King Harihara of Vijayanagara.

Some time after the conquest of the Tuluva country by the Vijayanagara emperor Narasimha Saluva (1486-91), the Kolathiri⁽⁴⁾ lost his supremacy over the territory lying the north of Chandragiri or Payaswini river. The current tradition prevalent in the Mangalore and Kasaragod taluk represents a branch of Bairusu Wodeyar family of Karnataka as having setup rule over the area till it was extirpated in the 17th century by Sivappa Nayaka of Bedinur. The Raja of Kumbala governed his kingdom acknowledging his suzerainty of the Vijayanagar

1. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 59 (The Mudabidare inscription was in AD. 1390).*

2. *Ibid, p. 49-50.*

3. *J. Sturrock, Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 65.*

4. *Cannannore District Gazetteer, (Thiruvananthapuram, 1972), p. 96.*

empire and it testified the overloadship of Vijayanagara.

It was during the reign of⁽¹⁾ Salava Narasimha II (1491-1505) that the Portuguese arrived in India and in 1505 an ambassador of the Vijayanagara King gave permission to the Portuguese to build a fort any where in his dominion.

The Portuguese made attempts to establish their political supremacy over Mangalore considering its commercial and military importance. The Portuguese took possession of Mangalore after overcoming minor resistance in 1526 under the Viceroy⁽²⁾, Lopes Vas De Sampaya. After this, they proceeded to levy a kind of tributes of grain from all the sea parts. The resistance of the Chieftains continued in Mangalore against the Portuguese which proved strong at Mangalore again in 1530.

Buchanan⁽³⁾ mentions two inscriptions of a Rayara Wodeyar at Barkur, the governor appointed by the Vijayanagara empire. It tells the grant by which the landlordship of Tuluva was made over to the founder of the Ikkeri family, Mangalore and Barkur.

The Tulunadu witnessed⁽⁴⁾ the emergence of a number of feudatory states enjoying Semi-independent powers from the beginning of the Vijayanagara overlord ship until the establishment of the British power. The chronology⁽⁵⁾ of their feudatory state may be reconstituted as follows.

1. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 52.*

2. *Ibid, p. 52.*

3. *Francis Buchanan, Journey From Madras Through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar, Vol. II, (Madras, 1870), p. 122.*

4. *P. Gururaja Bhatt, Antiquities of South Kanara, (Uduppi, 1969), p. IV.*

5. *Ibid, p. IV-V.*

1. The Bangas of Bangavadi (Bengadi) (14th century to 19th century)
2. The Choutas of Mudabidre (14th century to 19th century)
3. The Tolahas of Suralu (11th century to 19th century)
4. The Bhairarasa wodeyars of Karkal (14th century to 17th century)
5. The Ajilas of Venur (12th century to 19th century)
6. The Samantas of Simanturu, Mulki (14th century to 19th century)
7. The Konnekambalis of Hosangadi (14th century to 19th century)
8. The Rajas of Kumbala (14th century to 19th century)
9. The Rajas of Vittal (14th century to 19th century)
10. The Hegades of Nandalike (14th century to 15th century)
11. The Rulers of Nagire (13th century to 17th century)
12. The Rajas of Hadavalli (Sangitapura, 15th century to 17th century)
13. The Kadambas of Chandavara (11th century to 14th century)

Abbakka Devi and Portuguese

The queen of Ullal, Abbakka Devi had engaged a brave and persistent opposition towards the Portuguese with a close alliance with several Chiefs of Malabar. The queen refused to pay tribute to the Portuguese of Goa, When they collided with the Chief of Canara her erstwhile ally. So in 1555 Dom Alvares da Silverira⁽¹⁾ was nominated admiral of a fleet of 21 sails, which had been specially fitted out for service on the sea coast of Calicut. He was sent against the queen of Ullal. The city of Mangalore was almost lost for the queen, but the Zamorin of Calicut averted the crisis by bringing an

1. George Moracs, *Mangalore, A Historical Sketch*, (New Delhi, 1991), p. 7.

amicable peace treaty between the queen and the Portuguese Admiral.

When the war between the Portuguese and the Cannannore came to a close, the Portuguese Viceroy Dom Antao de Nornha made preparation for war with the queen of Ullal. A punitive expedition sent⁽¹⁾ against her by the Portuguese Governor under Joao Piexote, after some initial success, ended in disaster with Piexote himself being slain.

Enraged at this the Portuguese Viceroy Dom Antao de Noraha⁽²⁾ himself started from Goa carrying a total of 3000 fighting men, a veritable Portuguese armada determined to bring about the final subjugation of the queen of Ullal, in September 1567. In the actual battle that followed, however the Portuguese⁽³⁾ obtained complete victory over the queen. The Portuguese set fire to the city and cut down many palm and other groves.

South Canara Under the Nayakas of Keladi

After the destruction of the Vijayanagara empire the Nayakas of Keladi emerged as a dominant power in Canara during the 16th century to 18th century, up to the invasion of Haider Ali of Mysore. They belonged to an agriculturist family of Kelade and Chaudappa Gauda (1500-1540) of this family was appointed as the Chiefs of that area with the title

1. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 53.*

2. *George Moracs, Mangalore, A Historical Sketch, (New Delhi, 1991), p. 8.*

3. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 54.*

of Nayaka⁽¹⁾ by the Vijayanagara emperor, Sadasiva Raya (1544-1565) with this accession, the Nayakas of Keladi or Ikkeri emerged from a period of comparative obscurity to one of the political lime light.

Sadasiva Nayaka (1544-1565) was the successor of Chaudappa Gauda. The power of administration of the central regions of Canara was entrusted to the Sadasiva Nayaka of Keladi by the Vijayanagara ruler Sadasiva Raya about 1550. And the destruction of the capital of Vijayanagara by the Mohammedans in 1565 had given the Keladi Nayakas an unquestioned political supremacy in Canara. Sadasiva Nayaka was a great warrior and he had done valuable military services to Sadasiva Raya, the Vijayanagara emperor. The construction of Kasaragod fort⁽²⁾ is attributed to him.

About 1613, the rulers of the Keladi continued as to be the feudatories of Vijayanagara and the Venkatappa Nayak I (1586-1629), made it independent. He was very powerful and successfully subjugated the whole of western coast from Honnavor⁽³⁾ (North Canara district) to Nileshwar.

The Raja of Nileshwar was a branch of the Kolathiri royal family. The territory of the Nileshwar was extended from river Bakel in the north to river Kavvayi in the south. In 1615-17 and again in 1646, the Nayakas of Keladi⁽⁴⁾ had tried to subdue the Raja of Nileshwar and annex his territory. However it was not annexed until 1737. It was

1. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 54.*

2. *Ibid, p. 54.*

3. *J. Sturrock, Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 71.*

4. *N. Shyam Bhat, South Kanara, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 29.*

during the reign of Somasekhara Nayaka II of Keladi⁽¹⁾ (1714-1739), the fort of Hosdurg was built and the Raja of Nileshtar was compelled to submit after a struggle of twelve years in which both the English and the French took part.

An agreement⁽²⁾ was signed by the Kolathiri (Nileshtar Branch) King with Captain Surappaiya, the Keladi General at Mangalore on 26 August, 1737. It fixed the line of connecting the Uraballi fort and the Taliparamba river as boundary between the two kingdoms. This agreement was signed in the presence of the British council of the Tellichery factory. The Nileshtar polegar paid an annual rent⁽³⁾ of 2500 Bahadry Pagodas (Rs. 10,000) to the Raja of Bedinur. The subordination of Nileshtar to Bedinur continued up to 1763, the innovation of Haider Ali of Mysore.

In 1755, during the reign of queen Veerammaji (1757-1763) the Raja of Cannanore in alliance with the Maratha followers of Angria, organised an expedition⁽⁴⁾ to Canara coast, and amongst other places, they plundered Manjeshwar and started expedition further north, which is said to have marched eighteen leagues inland and secured a booty of 40,00,000 pagodas from the Kollur temple. It was at the time of Veerammaji that the power of the rulers of Bedinur⁽¹⁾ came to its end.

1. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 56.*

2. *N. Shyam Bhat, South Kanara, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 29.*

3. *Munro's letter to William Petrie, Dated 16th June 1800, Selection from the records of the collector of South Canara (Mangalore, 1879), p. 8.*

4. *J. Sturrock, Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 71.*

Haider Ali, taking advantage of the internal feude's Bedinur, annexed its territory in 1763.

The Keladi rulers continued the Vijayanagara system of administration. The two provinces, Mangalore and Barkur existed during the Vijayanagara period continued. The provinces were administered by governors. There were two kinds⁽²⁾ of governors in Bedinur one was directly appointed by the king and he was responsible to the king and the other was the chief of feudatory states. The governor of Mangalore also acted as the governor of Keladi army in his province.

The trade relations existed between the Arabian countries and also with the Portuguese during the Vijayanagara period continued in the Keladi rule. The British also started their commercial activities with South Canara during this period.

Land revenue continued to be the main source of income of the state. Apart from the land revenue state received revenue from customs duty, professional tax, sales tax, commercial tax, judicial fines, property tax and revenue from religious institutions.

About 1673 the English traveller Eryer⁽³⁾ visited the coast of Canara and was struck with the number of Christian converts, while those who had not been converted were marvelously conversant with the devil, alluding apparently to demon or Bhuta worship. He also noted that the people of Canara had good laws and obeyed them and travelled

1. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 38.*

2. *N. Shyam Bhat, South Kanara, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 30.*

3. *J. Sturrock, Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 73.*

without guides along broad roads not along by-paths, as in Malabar.

Captain Hamilton⁽¹⁾, who visited Canara in 1718, mentions that the Dutch had by that time established a factory at Barcelore (Basarur) and that Portuguese used to send rice from that place to Muscat and bring back horses dates and pearls.

South Canara Under Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan

Mysore ruler, Haider Ali captured Bedinur in 1763 from the Nayakas of Keladi⁽²⁾ and annexed it with the Mysore state. He sacked the city and renamed as Haidarnagar. Haider Ali occupied Basavaraja Durga, Honnavour and Mangalore and also Ballalarajaya Durga when the Bedinur queen had taken shelter. While regarding the importance of the Mangalore as a naval state, he established dockyard and an arsenal there and promptly commenced through the civil officers of the former government, an administration which, lasted both under Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan.

The struggle for power resulted four successive wars called Mysore wars between the British and the Mysore rulers. The first Mysore war broke⁽³⁾ out in 1766 and in February 1768 Mangalore was taken by the English expedition from Bombay and on receipt of the news, Tipu made a lightning attack on the port to drive the English away. He was immediately followed by Haider Ali in person. The English army was

1. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 57.*

2. *N. Shyam Bhat, South Kanara, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 32.*

3. *J. Sturrock, Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 76.*

completely routed. Tipu had already taken Mangalore before the arrival of his father at there. The English left⁽¹⁾ the port and sailed away abandoning 80 European sick, 180 Sepoys and all the guns they had. Mangalore had thus been retaken within a week of capture by the English. The English was ready to make peace with Haider. The Portuguese who had joined with the English hoping that the English would become master in the war and they would gain certain trade and commercial concessions. But the Portuguese was greatly disappointed.

A treaty⁽²⁾ was signed in September 1770 between Haider and the English. It provided for the supply of rice to Bombay from Mangalore and other ports. The following year Haider Ali concluded a treaty with the Portuguese also. In 1776 Haider Ali revoked all the privileges and ejected the Portuguese from their factory at Mangalore and ordered a navy of considerable size to be built and kept at the mouth of the river. After taking Mangalore from the English, in 1768 Haider Ali moved above the ghats by the Subramanya pass. At this time, he ceded the Raja of Coorg and Panja and Bellare maganes in the Puttur taluk. Thus the end of the first Mysore war saw Haider Ali as the complete master of South Canara region.

The second Mysore war⁽³⁾ began in 1781. Haider Ali died in December 1782 in a camp near Chittur, in the course of the war. He

1. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 62.*

2. *Ibid, p. 62.*

3. *Ibid, p. 63.*

was succeeded by Tipu and he continued the war. General Mathews landed⁽¹⁾ at Coondapur with a force from Bombay, which achieved a remarkable and unexpected success. He was succeeded in capturing the Hosangadi Fort. General Mathews then advanced and entered Bedinur. On the 27th January, the gates having been thrown open by the governor who had been a favorite of the late Haider Ali, but had learnt that Tipu had determined to degrade him. The English general was however forced to capture on the arrival of Tipu with a large army.

Before the surrender of Bedinur, Tipu had despatched a force to appear before Mangalore. But it was attacked and defeated about twelve miles away from Mangalore. On receipt of this news of reverse, Tipu moved in person with a large army⁽²⁾ Mangalore which was held by Colonel Campbell with a force of 700 Europeans and 2000 Sepoys. After a preliminary engagement at an out post on the twenty third may in which four officers and ten Europeans and 200 Sepoys were lost, Campbell withdraw all outposts and made arrangements to stand a regular seize.

Tipu soon perceived that either surrender or speedy capture by assault was not to be thought of and sent off his cavalry as the monsoon was approaching, but they were over taken by a storm and half of the horses were lost. After wards, Tipu made three regular assaults⁽³⁾, but all of them entered in failure. Except in the extreme south Tipu

1. J. Sturrock, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 76.*

2. *Ibid, p. 77.*

3. *Ibid, p. 77.*

completed the suppression of the old chiefs which had began under the Bedinur rules and dispossessed them of all but their private lands. The Kumbala Raja⁽¹⁾ was driven from his country and when he returned soon afterwards, he was taken and hanged. His younger brother was also hanged. A nephew of his was also put to death in 1794. The Hegade of Vittala had already fled to Tellichery some time before. Two of the princes of Nileshwar were hanged in 1787 by the commandant of Bakel, but their successor, who came to terms, was spared and he was in possession of his territory when Canara was annexed by the British.

The third Mysore war⁽²⁾ ended with the treaty of Srirangapattana on 18th March 1792. Tipu was forced to cede one half of his kingdom to the British. The uneven character of the enhanced land revenue and the oppression by the Mysore rulers the Rajas of Kumbala, Vittal and Nileshwar had given support to the British in the Mysore war. The diplomacy of Wellesley prevented Tipu Sultan from getting any foreign military aid or support of native rulers.

As soon as the last Mysore war broke out in 1799, the Kumbala Raja and the Vittal Hegade both returned to Canara, but the former at any rate acted more like a leader of banditti than any thing else, and the Raja of Coorg took opportunity of raiding in the direction of Jamalabad and Bantwal, and into the territories of the Raja of Kumbala, who was an old enemy of the Coorgs. On the downfall of Tipu, the

1. N. Shyam Bhat, *South Kanara*, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 33.

2. *Ibid*, p. 53.

English in order to reward the Raja of Coorg for the services rendered by him during the wars against Mysore, returned to him the Maganes of Amara, Sullaya, Panja and Bellare, which had been seized by Haider Ali in 1775.

On 4th May 1799 both Tipu and Srirangapattana fell. After the fall, the political supremacy over the west coast passed in to the hands of the English. Sir Thomas Munro was appointed the first Collector of Canara in June 1799. From 1st February 1800 he was placed under the control of the Madras Board of Revenue.

The British and Canara

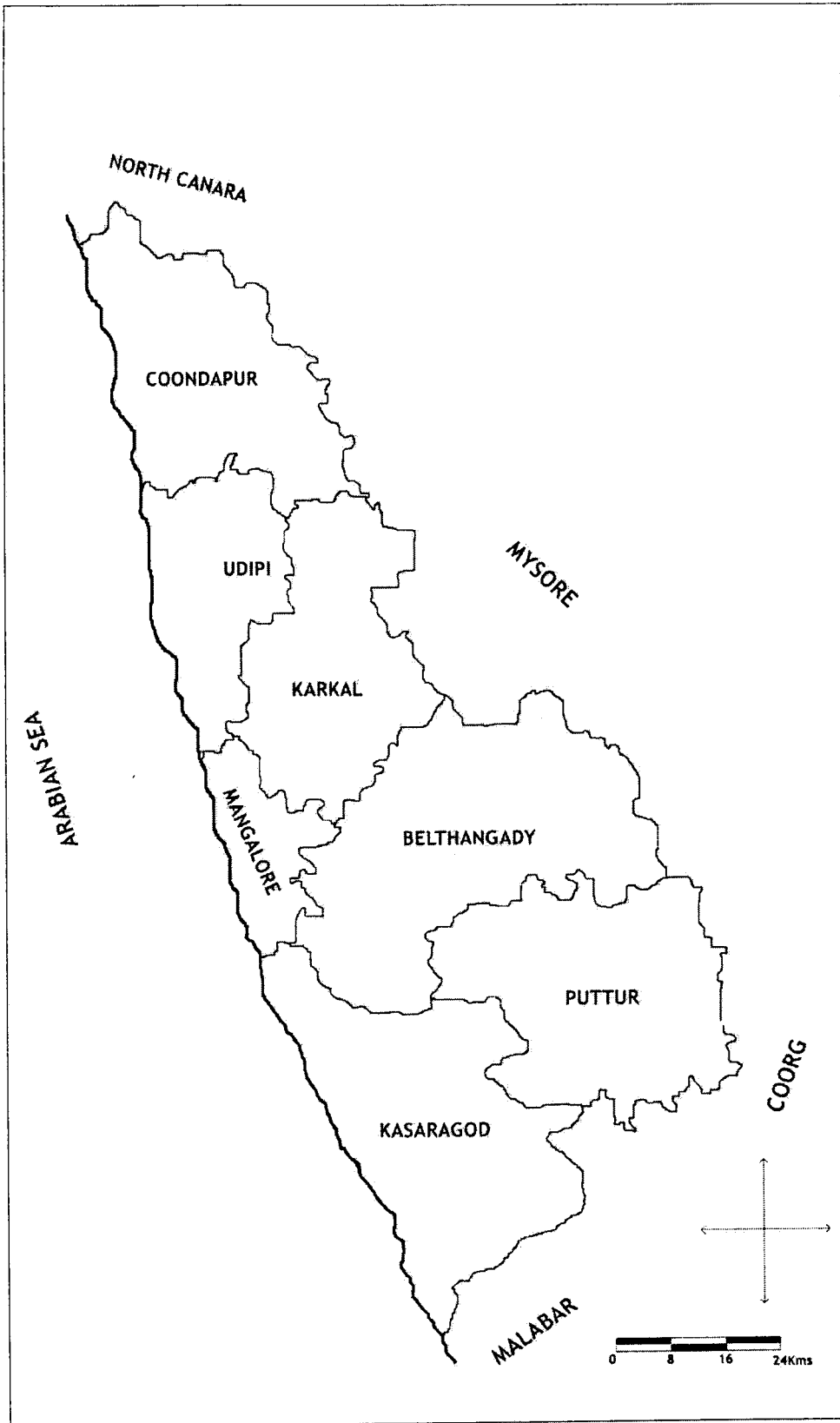
Under the British rule, both South and North Canara's formed one district in the Madras Presidency from 1799 to 1860. They were⁽¹⁾ bifurcated in 1860 and continued in to two separate districts as South Canara and North Canara Districts. In 1862 north Canara (excluding the Coondapur taluk) was transferred to the Bombay presidency while South Canara was retained in the Madras Presidency itself.

In accordance with⁽²⁾ the Town Improvement Act 1865, the internal administration of the towns was entrusted to municipalities. Under the provisions of this act, the Mangalore Municipality was constituted in 1866. South Canara got its first District Board in 1884, while Coondapur, Uppinangadi, Mangalore and Kasaragod taluks were given Taluk Boards.

1. J. Sturrock, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 3.*

2. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 71.*

MAP - 2: SOUTH CANARA IN 1956
(Before the formation of the linguistic states)



In 1896 there were only five taluks in South Canara District, namely Mangalore (Inclusive of the Amindivi Islands) Coondapur, Udipi, Kasaragod and Uppinagadi. A new taluk called Karkal was formed with effect from first July 1912. In 1927 the taluk of Uppinagadi was renamed as Puttur. For the purpose of revenue administration, the district was divided into three charges⁽¹⁾ or divisions namely Coondapur, Mangalore and Puttur.

In 1954, another taluk, namely Belthangadi was constituted for administrative convenience. But on first of November, 1956, the taluk of Kasaragod which was part of South Canara District was transferred to Kerala state due to the formation of linguistic states. Here after South Canara District began to be known as Dakshina Kannada District, and became a part of the Karnataka State. Apart from the transfer of Kasaragod taluk to the Kerala, the Amindivi islands⁽²⁾, which formed a part of the district, were also transferred to the newly formed union territory of Laccadive, Minicoy and Aminidivi Islands.

Aliyasantana Law of Inheritance

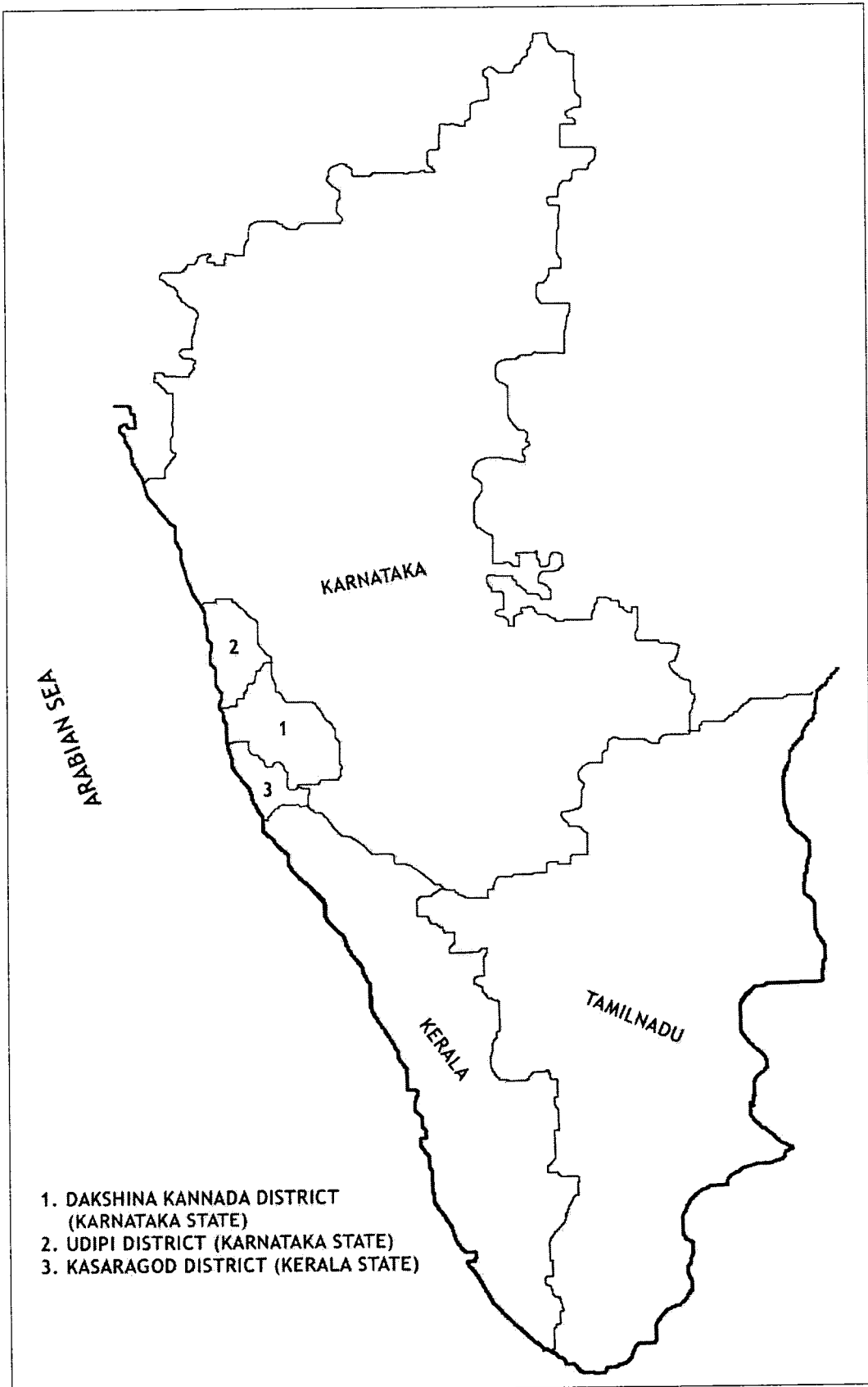
A form of inheritance known as Aliyasantana or Aliyakuttu or Matriarchal law of inheritance existed in this district. According to this custom, the property vests in the females of a family and descends from mother to daughter. But, usually under which, the property descends from maternal uncle to nephew or sister's son⁽³⁾. Thus the

1. J. Sturrock, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894)*, p. 2.

2. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973)*, p. 71.

3. J. Sturrock, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894)*, p. 55.

MAP - 3: PRESENT POSITION OF THE FORMER SOUTH CANARA DISTRICT



right of inheritance of the sister's son to the property managed by mother's brother namely Aliya-kuttu or Aliyasantana.

This system was supposed to have originated in the polyandrous habits of the primitive people, in which all landed property was vested in the women⁽¹⁾. When Vijayanagara rule was established in South Canara, a number of local ruling families, mostly Jaina families generally followed the Aliyasantana system of inheritance. Gradually, the system came to be adopted by a good section of the area and the wide prevalence of this system was attributed only to the 14th century⁽²⁾.

The prevalence of this matrilineal system of succession in parts of the neighbouring Kerala state influenced the adoption of the Aliyasantana system by the rulers and people of South Canara. The system of inheritance was followed⁽³⁾ by all the old Tulu-land owning, cultivating and labour classes as well as the Mappilas, the descendants of early Arab settlers who formed connections with the Tulu women of the land-owning classes and adopted the then prevailing rule of inheritance. Among the Brahmin community and also in some non-Brahmin communities 'makkalakattu' or Marumakkattayam was prevalent⁽⁴⁾. But majority of the non-Brahmins had been followed the Aliyasantana law.

The Madras Aliyanasantana Act, 1949, had defined the Aliyasantana

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1. J. Sturrock, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 135.*
 2. K. V. Ramesh, *A History of South Kanara, (Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1970), p. 20.*
 3. J. Sturrock, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 135.*
 4. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 114.*

system in which descent was traced in the female line, but does not include the system of inheritance known as the Marumakkattayam⁽¹⁾. The Aliyasantana custom differ from the Marumakkattayam law of Kerala in that⁽²⁾

a male is the head or the Yajaman in the Aliyasantana system, where as the women is the principal figure in whom the property is vested under the Marumakkattayam law. According the latter law, the eldest woman becomes the head of the family. In the Aliyakattu law, the eldest brother of the women becomes the head of the family and the property is inherited by his sister's son. If the eldest in the family is a woman, then the next male member becomes the head. Even though Aliyasantana law postulates inheritance through the female line, the principle figure, who is the heir, is always the sister's son. It is said that the Aliyasantana law is older than the Marumakkattayam system.

According to the customary Aliyasantana law which existed formerly, there was no right for partition except by common consent of adult members and even then, a male member had only a life interest in the property. This custom, no doubt prevented the division of landed property and this gave rise to the pattern of large joint families among the many land owning families in the district. In principle, the Aliyasantana system vested the property rights in females, of a family descending from mother to daughter and in practice, the nephews succeeded their maternal uncles. The eldest member of the eldest

1. *The Madras code, Government of Madras Law Department, (Madras, 1961), p.4.*

2. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 114.*

branch, whether male or female, is the 'Yajaman', Yajaman means⁽¹⁾ the oldest member, male or female of a 'kutumba' or 'kavaru'.

The Madras Aliyasantana Act, (Madras Act of 1949) had defined and amended in certain respects the laws relating to marriage, maintenance, guardianship, intestate succession, family management and partition applicable to persons governed by the Aliyasantana law of inheritance⁽²⁾.

According to the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 (a Central Act) a division of the joint property has to be the per capita between all the members of the kutumba or kavaru. 'Kutumba' means⁽³⁾ the group of persons forming a joint family with community of property governed by the Aliyasantana Law of inheritance. 'Kavaru' used in relation to a female, means the group of persons consisting of that female, her children and all her descendants in the female line⁽⁴⁾. The Madras Aliyasantana (Mysore Amendment Act), 1961 (Mysore Act No. 1 of 1962), made some changes in the provisions in regard to partition of properties and also provided that any male or female member of a kutumba or kavaru having undivided interest in its properties should be entitled to claim partition of his or her share and the claimant should be allowed to share that would fall to him or her. If a division of properties were made for per capita among all the members of the kutumba or kavaru.

1. *The Madras code, Government of Madras Law Department, (Madras, 1961), p.4.*

2. *Ibid, p.3.*

3. *Ibid, p. 4.*

4. *Ibid, p. 4.*

The study of nationalism and peasant movements in South Canara District seeks to analyse the various aspects of the local history with in the broader national level. Even though the colonial policy of the British administration was same all over India, the regional differences resulted in certain peculiarities. For example, in South Canara, there existed a high land revenue assessment, comparing with all other districts of the Madras Presidency. Even though the British officials criticised the excessive land revenue assessment imposed during the Mysore rulers, the assessment continued during the British period also. Thus, the high extraction of land revenue and the existence of the intermediaries backed by the British officials had impoverished the peasants.

Sir Thomas Munro, the first Collector of Canara introduced Ryotwari system, but the real ryots did not come to the account. The ideal ryot of Munro was nothing but land monopolists or zamindars. The oppression of the peasants by the landlords, moneylenders and the government was the feature of the agrarian structure during the colonial period in the area, which ultimately resulted in the organisation of the peasantry and also the resistance movement against the landlordism on one hand and colonialism on the other.

CHAPTER 2

BRITISH RULE AND IMPOVERISHMENT OF THE PEASANTRY

From time immemorial agriculture has been the main occupation of the majority of people in India. In recent times, problems relating to various aspects of agrarian studies like "agrarian structure" and "agrarian relations" have acquired great significance attracting the attention of many scholars. Agrarian structure is an institutional frame work of agricultural production which includes land tenure system, distribution of ownership imposed on the peasant by the landlords and the government.

Tenancy which generally implies relationship between landlords and tenants was a part of the agrarian system. The study of agrarian structure would lead to the study of agrarian or the peasant class. Tenant was the actual tiller, who had so many parties to satisfy besides the state. The tenant had to bear the full cost of the cultivation and the landlords were generally confined to extract rent regularly. Land tenure refers to the condition under which

various classes and institutions held land⁽¹⁾.

In South Canara District the formation of the various agrarian classes and inter-relation could be seen in a historical perspective as evolved by the pre-British period and the British Land Revenue administration. Land being the center of rural relationship, the mode of acquisition of land by purchase, or as gift or on lease etc. determined in the past the forms of control and utilisation of land. More over the policies and methods adopted by the rulers in collecting rather extracting the land revenue had significant impact up on the peasants among whom the possessed land was alienated from their holdings either by abandonment or mortgage or sale. This resulted in the formation of various agrarian classes⁽²⁾ in which rich landlords were at the top and insecure tenants and labourers at the bottom of the structure of the land relations.

The South Canara District was characterised by the presence of strongly developed landed property⁽³⁾ even prior to the 12th century A.D. There existed military tenure, some what similar to the feudal system of Europe. The castes such Bunts were considered as the martial castes did not pay any land tax and instead they fought for the kings on the war fields. The Brahmins were exempted⁽⁴⁾ from payment of any land tax as they looked after the maintenance of the temples. Donations of land in the form of the 'inam' to

1. K. S. Shivanna, *The Agrarian System of Kamataka, 1736-1761*, (University Of Mysore, 1983) p. 21.

2. *Perspective on Dakshina Kannada and Kodagu*, Mangalore University, Decennial Volume, (ed), (Mangala Gangotri, 1991), p. 145.

3. C. D. Maclean, *Manual of Administration, Madras Presidency, Vol. I*, (Madras, 1884), p. 114.

4. *Ibid*, p.114.

temples were known as 'Devadaya' and those to Brahmins as 'Brahmadaya'. Further, rulers donated⁽¹⁾ the land to the monasteries, Jain Basadis, to some relatives of royal families, to military men of exceptional bravery and so on. However the inams to upper castes created a class of absentee landlords. They extracted rent and free services without any investment. The cultivating peasants in such inam lands were suddenly converted in to tenants. The landed intermediaries dominated⁽²⁾ the whole social existence of the agricultural classes and gradually the peasant cultivators were reduced to serfdom.

One of the dominant features of the land system in the medieval Karnataka was the common practice⁽³⁾ of granting land or a portion of revenue from land, instead of money, military, social, economic and religious services rendered to the state by individuals and institutions in various capacities. This culminated in the feudal exploitation of land and in this process of feudalism the land system played a prominent role.

During the early historical period there existed slavery⁽⁴⁾ in Canara and the greater part of the labourers were slaves. Thus land became gradually the subject of distinct properties, the labourer was the personal slave of the occupier of the soil. The slave was liable to be sold and mortgaged independently. Buchanan⁽⁵⁾ reports that even the selling and mortgaging of slaves were a common practice that existed among the landlords, in Canara.

In South Canara District the Brahmins and Bunts claimed for themselves

1. K. V. Ramesh, *A History of South Kanara*, (Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1970), p. 100.
2. R. S. Sharma, *Early Indian Feudalism*, Kunwar Muhammed Ashraf, (Memorial Volume), Horst Krugner (ed), (New Delhi, 1969), p. 39-43.
3. K. S. Shivanna, *The Agrarian System of Karnataka, 1736-1761*, (University Of Mysore, 1983) p. 21.
4. C. D. Maclean, *Manual of Administration, Madras Presidency, Vol. I*, (Madras, 1884), p. 112.
5. Francis Buchanan, *Journey From Madras Through The Countries Of Mysore, Canara and Malabar, 1801, Vol. 2*, p. 225.

the right on property in soil⁽¹⁾. They subjugated the native population who enjoyed the right on land by reclaiming in to bondage first and serfdom later. They declared themselves as the "lords of the soil". Thus the humble cultivators were eventually reduced to the status of tenants. The actual cultivators had to pay rent in kind and were forced to perform unpaid labour for the intermediaries.

Caste superiority was at its acme in the agrarian relationship. It is possible to behold, three distinct⁽²⁾ interpretations from the available literature on the history of Kerala and Karnataka land tenure. They are the caste based, Brahmin centered and the upper caste dominated land system existed in the pre-British period in South Canara.

Let us examine the nature of the land tenure system during the pre-British period.

LAND TENURE SYSTEM DURING THE ALUPAS RULE IN SOUTH CANARA

The inscriptions⁽³⁾ of the medieval and later Alupas furnish more information on the economic conditions which prevailed during their times. Land revenue was the main source of income for the state. It was during this period that the word "balu"⁽⁴⁾ came to be used as a synonym for landed property. Land was owned by the ruler as well as the citizens. Land was measured generally in terms of seeds required to sow the field. It was popularly known as the 'bijawari⁽⁵⁾ mode of computation' (Bija means seed). Mudi or mude,

1. *Vijay Kumar Thakur and Ashok Aoushman (ed), Peasants In Indian History, (Patna, 1996), p. 374.*

2. *P. Radhakrishnan, Peasant Struggles, Land Reforms and Social Changes (New Delhi), 1989, p. 14.*

3. *K. V. Ramesh, A History of South Kanara, (Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1970), p. 275.*

4. *Ibid, p. 275.*

5. *P. Gururaja Bhatt, Studies In Tuluva History And Culture, (Manipal, 1975), p. 19.*

kanduga, mana, hane, kuduti were certain units of measuring grains and liquids. Though coinage did exist, the government received tax in kind. Land owners and cultivators paid part of their products in to the royal treasury as tax. The quantum of this levy⁽¹⁾ is no where specified in the available records.

LAND TENURE SYSTEM DURING THE VIJAYANAGARA RULE IN SOUTH CANARA

The Vijayanagara rulers and their successors in Karnataka created a class of intermediaries in the form of land grants or assessment. They extracted⁽²⁾ the surplus produce from the peasant leaving them on a mere subsistence level. All over South Canara the royal revenue was collected by imperial officers (adhikaris) with the help of local guttedar or monopolist. Without this process of exploitation of the surplus production of the peasants, the glorious or luxurious life could not be possible for the upper class.

Brahamadaya Tenure, (lands held by Brahmins) Devadaya Tenure, (lands held by temples) Mathapura Tenure (lands held by Matts) and Service Tenure (lands granted in return for military service, village officers and for improving and extending agriculture) were the major tenures which existed⁽³⁾ during the Vijayanagara period. Lands of Brahmins, Temples and Matt's, were lightly taxed or exempted. The Vijayanagara rulers fixed the assessment by assuming the output to be 1:12 of the seed sown. Early traditions assign the one

1. K. V. Ramesh, *A History of South Kanara*, (Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1970), p. 278.

2. K. S. Shivanna, *The Agrarian System of Karnataka, 1736-1761*, (University Of Mysore, 1983) p. 21.

3. *Ibid*, p. 22-34.

sixth⁽¹⁾ of the gross produce as the share claimed by Government up to 1252 A.D. After this the local prince added about ten per cent. Revenue was paid either in money or in kind.

This arrangement continued till 1336, the early period of the Vijayanagara dynasty. Harihar Ray's minister⁽²⁾ published a manual for the use of the officers of the state, in which the assessment of the land and the conversion of the grain revenue in to money were elaborately dealt with. The assessment took the Sastra rate⁽³⁾ of the one sixth of the gross production as the government share. The landlord received one fourth, the cultivator received one half and the rest had gone to the temple and to the Brahmins.

Leasing out land was a common system during this period. The system of leasing⁽⁴⁾ the tenants, Geni, Guttige, siddhaya and varna were common in South Canara. In addition to tenants, there were agricultural labourers in the period under review. They were grouped in to two i.e, hired labourers and serfs. The custom of hiring labourers for agricultural operations was very old in Karnataka. Huleyalus or simply holeyasa were the agriestic serfs of Karnataka. The South Canara serfs were known as⁽⁵⁾ muladalu or bought men or slaves who primarily served in the agricultural operations.

During the Vijayanagara period the land revenue arrangements⁽⁶⁾ consisted of two stages - assessment and actual collection. The first principle of

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1. J. Sturrock, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 82.*
 2. *Ibid, p. 95, See also Letter Relating To The Early Revenue Administration Of Canara, Letter From Sir Thomas Munro To W. Petrie, Letter No 1846, Dated 31st May, 1800, para. 7, 8.*
 3. Alexander J. Arbuthnot, *Selections From The Minutes of Munro, (Madras, 1886), p. 60.*
 4. K. S. Shivanna, *The Agrarian System of Karnataka, 1736-1761, (University Of Mysore, 1983) p. 43.*
 5. *Ibid, p. 53-54.*
 6. K. S. Shivanna, *The Agrarian System of Karnataka, 1736-1761, (University Of Mysore, 1983) p. 63.*

any organised system of land revenue assessment demands that the sum payable by the cultivator should be determined mainly by the class of soil and condition of cultivation . This principle was followed during the Vijayanagar period. Four modes of cultivations were taken in to account for assessment, they were Kadarama (Dry cultivation), Niraramba (wet cultivation), Totaramba (garden cultivation) and Kumari (Shifting cultivation). Any how it is believed that the land reserve assessment during the Vijayanagara period was moderate.

LAND REVENUE SYSTEM DURING THE KELADI RULE IN SOUTH CANARA

These rulers never recognized the proprietorship of the soil as a right vested in the land holders but levied land revenue from the subjects as rent and not as revenue⁽¹⁾.

The revenue collected from the region of South Canara through out the Vijayanagara a rule remained unaltered till 1618. In that year the Keladi or Bedinur Government levied an extra assessment⁽²⁾ equal to fifty percent of the ancient land rent except in Mangalore Hobli. Between 1618 and 1660 a special assessment was also imposed on coconut and fruit trees. In the vast stretch of land possessed by the poligars, the Bedinur additions were not so heavy. The Keladi rulers made proper deductions⁽³⁾ in the assessment owing to unforeseen reasons and thus hindered them from paying full amount of the demand. The rates of revenue were fixed in two ways, i.e. on the fertility of land (sowing capacity or bijawari) and on the basis of the number of ploughs

1. *Report Of The Malabar Tenancy Committee, 1940, Madras, Chapter 11.*

2. *Fifth Report From The Select Committee, Vol. II, (Madras, 1813), p. 448.*

3. *K. S. Shivanna, The Agrarian System of Kamataka, 1736-1761, (University Of Mysore, 1983) p. 85.*

required for cultivation.

There were three kinds⁽¹⁾ of assessments during the time of Keladi rulers; 1-Rekha assessment or standard rent, 2. Bijawari or seed assessment and 3. Shist assessment.

The condition of the tenant was worsened and he was left merely with 25 per cent of the total produce. By 1678 more than one third of the present districts of South Canara was held by local chieftains, but they were subjected to pay only a portion of the enhanced revenue and the rent was levied from the people.

The Vijayanagara and Keladi rulers discarded the traditional principle of land revenue, ie; one sixth of the gross produce as the share claimed by the Government. They followed a theory of differential taxation which imposed more tax on wet land than dry land, for raising more revenue to the government.

LAND TENURE SYSTEM DURING THE MYSORE RULE IN SOUTH CANARA

Haider Ali of Mysore conquered Canara in A.D. 1763. He ordered an investigation to be made in to every source of revenue⁽²⁾. He readily imposed a variety of oppressive extra assessments on the formerly deducted waste and uncultivated lands.

Haider Ali imposed⁽³⁾ an additional land revenue equivalent to fifty percent of its assessment fixed in A.D. 1618 by the Bedinur government which raised the state collection from 3,20,827 pagodas to 5,33,202 pagodas. The

1. K. S. Shivanna, *The Agrarian System of Karnataka, 1736-1761*, (University Of Mysore, 1983) p. 80.

2. *The proceedings of the Board of Revenue, Dated 15th September, 1831. para. 7.*

3. *Ibid, para, 7-8.*

huge amount of money spent on wars drained the treasury of Mysore. They could realise more revenue for the state only by increasing land revenue. Between 1779-1782⁽¹⁾ a number of other additions were made, so that when Haider died in 1782, the extra assessment or shamil amounted to more than the Shist or standard assessment.

Haider's son Tipu sultan came to power in A.D 1787. He continued the excessive impositions of the land revenue which further worsened the situation. Tipu abolished⁽²⁾ inam land, in order to raise additional land taxes and ordered the ryots to cultivate the lands of those who deserted it. Besides, the granting of Jaghirs⁽³⁾ was introduced by Tipu Sultan at the beginning of 1798.

The excessive tax imposed by Tipu Sultan hastened the process of extinction of the age old class of peasant proprietors or inam holders or landlords, most of whom were reduced to the status of labourers. The enhancement of taxation during the Mysore Government resulted in the impoverishment of the agrarian structure.

The chieftains of this area, eg. Rajas of Nileshwar, Kumbala and Vittal rebelled against the Mysore Sultans and supported the British because of this excessive land revenue. The Mysore rulers did not follow a uniform policy of revenue administration throughout their kingdom. In this aspect of revenue administration South Canara and Malabar were almost treated⁽⁴⁾ like "internal colonies". In this region the land revenue extraction was too much. It ended in the failure of the cultivators paying the revenue and outstanding balances

1. N. Shyam Bhat, *South Kanara*, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 97.

2. J. Sturrock, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894)*, p. 132-133.

3. M. H. Gopal, *Tipu Sulthan's Mysore, An Economic Study*, (Bombay, 1971), p. 29.

4. N. Shyam Bhat, *South Kanara*, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 37.

became frequent.

In order to attain more revenue, the Mysore rulers introduced the assessment which was on the basis of elimination of⁽¹⁾ intermediary, without the survey of land and fixity of government share on the basis of actual produce. Before the end of Tipu's reign, there was a total depression in agriculture sector. This was mainly because of the excessive assessment and numerous vast stretches of land were left unoccupied owing to the fight or death of cultivators in South Canara. So the revenue collections fell short from 10 percent to 60 percent of the assessment. The Mysore rulers actually received the traditional land revenue system prevailed in Canara despite their enhancement in the land revenue. Thus the Mysore rulers ruined the traditional land revenue system prevailed in Canara during the later half of the 18th century.

LAND TENURE SYSTEM DURING THE BRITISH PERIOD

The East India Company annexed South Canara to the Madras Presidency in 1799. As it was a direct conquest⁽²⁾ by the company from Tipu, its Government also practiced the system of their predecessors and collected rent instead of tax .

A fairly satisfactory account of land tenancy system in the area was estimated by the Bombay High Court in 1875, in its judgment⁽³⁾ delivered in Vaikunta Bapujis Vs Government of Bombay.

After becoming the first Collector of Canara, Sir. Thomas Munro found

1. V. V. Kunhikrishnan, *Tenancy Legislation In Malabar, 1880-1970*, (New Delhi, 1993), p. 3.

2. K. K. N. Kurup, *The Kayyur Riot, (Calicut, 1978)*, p. 25.

3. *The Bombay High Court Report, Vol. XII, 1875*, p. 52,132, 153, 156, 159.

a very widely established system of private property in land. Without any alteration Munro accepted the existing institution as he found. Munro's policy was not to supersede the existing system by a new one, but to restore and strengthen it.

RYOTWARI SYSTEM

In Canara almost all land was private property, acquired either as gift or purchase or descent from an antiquity too remote to be traced. There were more title deeds and the validity of these deeds could not be established without annihilating all the rights of the present landlords. Munro opposed⁽¹⁾ the introduction of zamindari system or the permanent system of land revenue, mainly on the ground that it would disturb the existing system of private property. He opined that dividing⁽²⁾ Canara in to great estates, would only be an attempt to carry it backward a century or two and to force from that state to which it must again inevitably return. The land revenue system which Sir Thomas Munro recommended was in its leading principles Ryotwari in character.

The system which was most prevalent on many parts of the Madras Presidency from time immemorial was known as⁽³⁾ 'amani'. The word is also usually applied to lands in the immediate possession and management of revenue office. It denotes the collection of revenue direct by government through its village servants without any intervention of village farmers or zamindars, either by taking a share of the produce or by collection of money rents. The ryotwari system is really⁽⁴⁾ amani system.

1. *Alexander J. Arbuthnot, Selections From The Minutes of Munro, (Madras, 1886), p. 83-84.*

2. *Ibid, p. 84.*

3. *S. Sundararaja Iyengar, Land Tenures In Madras Presidency, (Madras, 1961), p. 63.*

4. *Ibid, p. 53.*

The word ryot is a corruption of the Arabic word⁽¹⁾ 'Rayot' which signifies literally 'pasture' or a herd of a cattle and was introduced into India after the Muhamedan conquest.

A ryotwari settlement means the division of all arid lands⁽²⁾ whether cultivated or wasted in to blocks or lots, the assessment of each block at a fixed rate for a term of years and the extraction of revenue from each occupant according to the area of land thus assessed which he occupies. The occupant holds under an annual lease from the government and enjoys all the advantages of absolute proprietorship, subject to payment of the revenue due on the lands he holds during the year.

Under ryotwari system each occupant dealt directly with the government and was responsible for his own revenue assessment only. A ryotwari settlement was thus a settlement⁽³⁾ with the peasantry, as tenants of the state enjoying a tenant right, which could be inherited, sold or burdened for debt in presiding the same manner as a proprietary right, subject always to payment of the revenue, that is to say that rent due to the state.

According to theory there was no intermediary or middleman in the ryotwari tenure. The government directly deals⁽⁴⁾ with individual who was assuming to be acting his own accounts. This individual was usually supposed to be a very small holder but in practice this was not true. The large land holders having thousands of acres of land were also included in the category. The ryot who acquired the possession was permitted to remain in the

1. *S. Sundararaja Iyengar, Land Tenures In Madras Presidency, (Madras, 1961), p. 59.*

2. *C. D. Madaan, Manual of Administration, Madras Presidency, Vol. I, (Madras, 1884), p. 103-104.*

3. *Ibid, p. 104-105.*

4. *Ibid, p. 121.*

possession as long as he pays the rent to the government. Even when he becomes a defaulter, the government sells such portion of his land as is sufficient to cover the amount due.

Munro's conception of the ryots is debatable. In ryotwari settlement the peasants or tenants were called as ryots. But in practice, the land monopolists or zamindars who possessed thousands of acres of land was the ideal ryot of Munro. The cultivating ryot or the real ryot did not come in to account. That means the term ryot certainly did not include⁽¹⁾ agricultural labourers.

A scholar, after studying the land ownership and agrarian system in the Kasaragod Taluk during the period in question says⁽²⁾,

Though scholars like R.C. Dutt had analysed Munro's ryotwari system as a settlement with the ryot or cultivating peasant in his capacity as proprietor in practice the ideal ryot of Munro was, nothing but a land monopolist or zamindar who possessed thousands of acres of land and remained an absentee landlord.

The main object of the company was to make efficient exploitation of the economic surplus by systematising the pre-colonial agrarian relations in South Canara. The company mainly aimed to attain the support of the land lord class for establishing an efficient administrative system and colonial exploitation.

1. *POLI, A Commemorative Value For Canara, (ed), Published By District Commissioner, D K District, Mangalore, p. 53.*

2. *K. K. N. Kurup, Ryotwary and Land Monopoly System In Kasaragod Taluk, A Case Study of Land Owing Family, (Unpublished Research Paper), p.101.*

At the end of the eighteenth century the agrarian situation in South Canara was a curious blend⁽¹⁾ of peasant proprietary system and a system of sub-infeudation with landlords, sub-tenants and bonded labour representing different layers of interest on land, looked in ties of mutual interdependence.

NATURE OF THE LAND TENURE SYSTEM

As far the particulars gathered from traditions and accounts, it appears that in the 14th century at the time when the Rekha⁽²⁾ or Bijnuggor standard was paid, the whole of the lands in South Canara were parcelled out among the large number of lands paying an annual rent or revenue in various gradations from five to five thousand pagodas. The greatest estates, however, were not common and the average being fifty pagodas.

Private property and hereditary proprietary right over the soil were the characteristic features of land ownership in South Canara. Munro and his successors were impressed with the system of property right that prevailed in this region.

In the early times, the total assessment paid to government by an individual in a village is called 'warg', hence it arose that in course of time people called this land as⁽³⁾ warg. In other districts such land was called a 'khata'. The warg and khata both mean the same thing, an entry in village accounts was called a khata and hence the term originated as warg.

The estates are known as wargs. The word warg was derived from

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1. *Vijay Kumar Thakur and Ashok Aoushman (ed), Peasants In Indian History, (Patna, 1996), p. 380.*
 2. *Fifth Report From The Select Committee, Vol. II, (Madras, 1813), p. 455-456.*
 3. *Part I, The 'Joint Report' And Correspondance Relating To Thereto, p. 175.*

Sanskrit⁽¹⁾ 'varga' a leaf having originally been used for the leaf accounts kept by the revenue authorities. The estates so framed went by the name 'warg'. In the course of time it turned out to denote, the holding for which the accounts are kept. A warg is often composed of unconnected parts⁽²⁾ in different villages and sometimes even in different districts. Though the theoretical basis of assessment was a scheme of the produce in each field, the assessment was never fixed on particular fields or portions of a warg, but was a lump assessment for the whole warg.

A wargadar was a proprietor of a hereditary warg or estate. In that capacity he some times represents the whole village or more, collecting and paying the assessment as a whole. A warg or warga means⁽³⁾ the registered holding and wargadar means a registered holder. The holder enjoys a proprietary right in his warg, subject only to payment of assessment to government and was not divested of the property except by sale of his land for default in the payment of revenue or in execution of decrees of court or by his own acts of resignation or private gift, sale etc. He enjoys the liberty to convert dry land into wet, to grow any crops he chooses and to effect improvements to the land without liability for the enhancement of assessment.

The warg or estates, were of two kinds. Muli warg and Geni warg or Sirkar Geni - wargs. The 'Muli' tenure was the characteristic tenure of Canara and the position of the mulawargadar was the proprietor of the ancestral hereditary estate. The man in whose name has stood⁽⁴⁾ in the village accounts

1. J. Sturrock, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 118.*

2. S. Sundararaja Iyengar, *Land Tenures In Madras Presidency, (Madras, 1961), p. 32.*

3. N. Shyam Bhat, *South Kanara, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 85.*

4. *Part I, The 'Joint Reoport' And Correspondance Relating To Therete, p. 175.*

from ancient times was called a 'muldar' or 'muli wargadar'. 'Mula' was derived from the Sanskrit 'Mul' signifying literally a root and figuratively, inter alia, the root of a tree or origin of a family. Private property had been known as mulawarga and its owner mulawargadar.

Apart from private property there was also land owned by government Geni or Sirkar Geni wargs or estates. They were escheated to government by lapse of heirs or by abandonment by proprietors. In a large number of cases these lands were cultivated by tenant or genigars, who were either by old tenants or new occupiers put in by government. They paid their rent directly to Sirkar and hence the name Sirkar-geni. Numerous abandonment of lands were occurred during the invasion of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan. However, there was no essential differences between sirkar- ganiwargdar and mula-wargdar.

Wargs were also classified⁽¹⁾ in to Kadim and hosagame wargs. The former suggesting that they were formed before the commencement of the company's government. Hosagame means newly reclaimed lands and the tenure of hosagame wargadar was exactly the same as that of Kadim wargadar except that the privileges and easements over jungle⁽²⁾ and pasture land attached to mulawarg had not been extended to hosagame wargs. The Tenure of a hosagame was exactly the same as that of a mulawargadar.

Sometimes, even after the wargadar had sold away a portion of the warg, the patta for the whole warg stands in his name and the purchaser, instead of paying his share of the revenue direct to government pays it to the

1. *Vijay Kumar Thakur and Ashok Aoushman (ed), Peasants In Indian History, (Patna, 1996), p. 384.*

2. *Ibid, p. 384.*

wargadar who there up on pays the full assessment to government and such an owner was called⁽¹⁾ walawargadar. When however, a sum was fixed on the deed as the proportionate revenue on the portion sold and the purchaser pays it direct to the government that was known as⁽²⁾ kudutaledar. A kudutaledar in South Canara was in exactly the same position as a pattadar or joint pattadar in Malabar.

Still other types of land which came to be assessed were known as kumari and kumaki. Kumari was a method of cultivation by filling and burning a patch of forest and raising on the ground, manured with ashes, a crop of rice or dry grain mixed with cotton, castor oil, seeds etc. There were two types of kumaris⁽³⁾. Warg kumari where assessment was collected in total and kumari cultivators were dealt only with the wargadar and Sirkar kumari, where the assessment was paid directly to the government and the cultivators were usually a migratory class.

Kumari cultivation was cultivation of land outside a warg⁽⁴⁾ by filling and burning a patch of the forest and the ashes were used as manure. After one or two crops are raised, the plot is abandoned and a fresh patch is resorted to and treated in the same way for getting a more fertile area. Kumari cultivation gives no proprietary right in the forest in which it was carried or even over the spots which had been actually cultivated.

The government had control over the unoccupied and waste lands. The wasteland was of two kinds (a) those which had once been cultivated

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1. S. Sundararaja Iyengar, *Land Tenures In Madras Presidency*, (Madras, 1961), p. 33.
 2. J. Sturrock, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I* (Madras, 1894), p. 121.
 3. Vijay Kumar Thakur and Ashok Aoushman (ed), *Peasants In Indian History*, (Patna, 1996), p. 386.
 4. S. Sundararaja Iyengar, *Land Tenures In Madras Presidency*, (Madras, 1961), p. 35.

but had fallen out of cultivation and (b) the land which had never been cultivated. The first category⁽¹⁾ of lands were owned by the wargadar and the second by the government.

Apart from the private lands owned by individuals and government property, there were lands owned and managed⁽²⁾ by religious institutions, like temples and matts. They managed the cultivation and paid revenue to the government. The religious institutions have been one of the land controlling units in the village and very often we could notice their involvement in the land transactions.

The High Court of Bombay said⁽³⁾ the Mulgar (Mulawargadar) of Canara enjoys a hereditary and transferable property in the soil and cannot be ousted so long as he pays the revenue assessed on land. Mulawarga and Mulawargadar of South Canara may be compared with Janmam tenure and Janmis of Malabar respectively.

TYPES OF TENANCY

For the purpose of cultivation, lands held either by the private landlords or by religious institutions were leased on certain particular terms and conditions.

Two commonly found classes of tenants under the wargadars in the South Canara District were the mulageni (or permanent tenants) and the chalageni (or tenants-at-will). Apart from these leases, there were other forms of tenancies prevalent ie, vaidigeni, private mortgages or Arwars and Fasalugeni or Phalageni.

1. *N. Shyam Bhat, South Kanara, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 121.*

2. *Ibid, p. 85.*

3. *The Bombay High Court Report, Appendix Vol. XII, 1876, p. 19, (Suit-Vyakunta Bapuji Vs The Government Of Bombay).*

MULAGENI

This was a kind of permanent and hereditary tenancy. It was a permanent lease. A mulagenidar could not be evicted except on non payment of rent and that too, only after being fully compensated for the permanent improvement made by him. The mulagenidar had all the liberties to mortgage or lease and bequeath his land at his interest subject to rent payment.

In the proceedings of the Board of Revenue dated 5th January 1818 says that⁽¹⁾, This class of people (mulagenidar) may, therefore, be considered subordinate land lords, especially as, though many of them cultivated their land by hired labourers or slaves, others sub-rented them to chalagenidar or temporary tenants.

Thus the mulageni tenancy⁽²⁾ was one which was a permanent deed, and the rent was fixed. The mulagar or landlord never had the right to enhance the rent of his mulagenigar. Therefore rent was high in ryotwari settlement. Mulgeni was known as Kayamgeni (Kayam means permanent) and nigdigeni (nidi means fixed). When the revenue payable to government on lands held by mulageni was increased, such increase was to be paid by the mulgar and not by the mulagenigar.

In short, a mulageni can be defined as a tenancy in perpetually at a fixed or invariable rent created in favour of a person called mulagenidar. Mulageni lands guaranteed a steady income to the landlords as well as to their heirs. The system had provided protection to the tenants as long as they paid rent without fail.

1. J. Sturrock, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 130.*

2. N. Shyam Bhat, *South Kanara, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 87.*

CHALAGENI

The Chalageni tenants though nominally mere tenants-at-will⁽¹⁾, used often to so on holding their lands from father to son at a rent paid on kind or money or both and determined by the custom of the country without any written agreement between the landlord and the chalagenigars.

'Chal' means move unfixed or not permanent. Thus chalageni means temporary lease. The chalagenigar was entitled to compensation⁽²⁾ for everlasting improvements made by him before he was evicted. The chalageni tenure had been regarded as an inferior form⁽³⁾ of tenancy entailing a relatively weak position. The landlord had a right to raise the rent or evict the tenant on the expiry of the term. They were entirely at the mercy of landlords. Indebtedness was common among these tenants. They had to supply free labour to cultivate the landlord's farms. It was only when the rent recovery act of 1865⁽⁴⁾ in Madras Presidency made it necessary to produce documentary evidence. But in practice the landlords were not willing to issue the receipt for the rent. When the Raitha Sanghas formed in the 1940's, their important demand was the issue of the receipt for the rent.

Though tenants could be evicted at anytime in practice, however, the tenants were seldom ousted unless they were piled up arrears. The condition of the chalageni tenants all over the district was getting from bad to worse throughout the 19th century. Indebtedness was common among the tenants. More than three fourth of them lived in conditions similar to those of agricultural⁽⁵⁾ labourers.

1. J. Sturrock, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 131.*

2. *Ibid, p. 131.*

3. N. Shyam Bhat, *South Kanara, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 88.*

4. J. Sturrock, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 131.*

5. H. A. Stuart, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. II (Madras, 1895), p. 227.*

VAIDEGENI

Vaidegeni was a term lease that ceased automatically after the expiry of specified term, unless removed on tenant's request or at pleasure of the land lord. This system also facilitated a progressive enhancement of rent at which renewal but then, in contrast to the chalageni which was year to year lease, vaidegeni was usually⁽¹⁾ held for a longer duration often ranging from three to ten years liable to be renewed at the end of each term.

This was especially common while leasing out the lands remarked for coconut plantation⁽²⁾ and was called 'nadagi' in the northern part of the district and 'kuikanami' in the south.

PRIVATE MORTGAGES OR ARWARS

Mortgage with possession was known as 'Arvar' 'Illadarvar' or 'bhogyadi aduru'⁽³⁾ and simple mortgage as 'aduvu'.

Money was advanced on landed security on the condition that neither the mortgagee should hold it as a tenant of the mortgage during the term, in some cases the lands were only hypothecated. Mortgage with possession may be for a fixed or for an indefinite period, the mortgage paying the government assessment and appropriating the rent or produce as interest on the money advance. When the produce of the land mortgaged was held in the agreement to be more than sufficient for this, the surplus was either paid over to the mortgager or applied to the reduction of the mortgage debt.

1. *Vijay Kumar Thakur and Ashok Aoushman (ed), Peasants In Indian History, (Patna, 1996), p. 392.*

2. *J. Sturrock, Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 131.*

3. *Ibid, p. 131.*

FASALUGENI OR PHALAGENI

It was a tenure confined to plantation crops like arecanut and cashew. The lessees never perform any agricultural work themselves. Their responsibility was confined⁽¹⁾ to the protection of crops and gave a fixed share to the land lord as his rent, retaining the rest as their profit. The landlord was not supposed even to enter the garden area during the crop season once the fasalugeni contract was entered into. The rent was mutually decided between the landlord and the leases themselves. The lessees were entitled to only the fruits of the plantation for a limited period in the year usually four months and had no right over land.

LAND REVENUE ASSESSMENT

The main object of the company in the introduction of the new revenue settlement was to make efficient exploitation of the economic surplus by systematising the pre-colonial agrarian relations in South Canara. The company aimed at attaining the support of the landlord class for establishing an efficient administrative system which was favourable for colonial exploitation.

Actually the basis of ryotwari system was the division of the whole area into fields by survey, each field being valued at a fixed rate per acre and the assessment was settled there upon. But on the western coast the ryotwari settlement had been introduced even before conducting the settlement survey. In Canara, lands of different kinds of unknown extents and lying often in different villages constitute a holding, termed a warg and the assessment was fixed in lump sum there on. For making convenience⁽²⁾ in the land-revenue

1. *Vijay Kumar Thakur and Ashok Aoushman (ed), Peasants In Indian History, (Patna, 1996), p. 392.*

2. *Ibid, p. 38.*

collection, Munro decided to make settlement not on fields but on holdings (warg) without any alteration in their size.

In forming the first settlement after the British acquisition of Canara, Munro stated that⁽¹⁾ he considered himself merely as a Collector, whose duty was to investigate and report upon the state about Canara. He did not consider⁽²⁾ himself at liberty to deviate widely from the system he found established. Accordingly he made no other reduction in the assessment of Tipu Sultan than such as was absolutely necessary to ensure the collection of the rest.

Munro stated that, the only reduction⁽³⁾ that he made for the first settlement (Fasli 1209) were by covering the land rent 2½ per cent and the export of customs on rice to two bahaudry pagodas per corge and abolishing the island duties on grain, cattle, sheep etc. Even though the reduction was made, there was an increase of about 3000 pagodas towards the land rent from the cultivation of waste. Reduction in the assessment of Tipu was absolutely necessary in order to ensure the collection of the rest.

As regard to South Canara Munro proposed that a fixed assessment of the northern portion should be the Bedinur assessment, plus 25 per cent⁽⁴⁾ of Haider's additions, while in the rest of the district it should be the Bedinur assessment, plus thirty per cent of the addition.

Still Munro had desired that caution might be observed in imposing the

1. *The Proceedings Of The Board Of Revenue, Dated 15th September, 1831, para 36.*
2. *Alexander J. Arbuthnot, The Minutes of Munro, (Madras, 1886), p. 54.*
3. *Letter From Munro To W. Petrie, Dated 28th June, 1800, para 13.*
4. *Alexander J. Arbuthnot, The Minutes of Munro, (Madras, 1886), p. 55, See also, J. Sturrock, Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 100.*

new assessment on lands. He conformed to the British colonial policy in India in extracting the maximum amount of land revenue, though he had to make some reductions⁽¹⁾ from the revenue collected formerly by Tipu Sultan. Such were the policies persuaded by Munro in the settlement of Faslī (crop or revenue year) 1209 or A.D 1799-1800. The land revenue of the whole province of Canara and Soonda for that year amounted to star pagodas⁽²⁾ 4,54,643 (or Rs.15,91,250.50) and that of South Canara to star Pagodas 2,70,593 (or Rs. 9,47,075). Munro's settlement of the whole province of Canara and Soonda was 20,434 (Rs. 71,519) less than that of Tipu, which amounted to star Pagodas 6,16,089 (or Rs. 21,56,311.50).

However, after six months of his experience of South Canara, Munro⁽³⁾ reported that the information he obtained had induced him to think that a smaller adjustment in the land revenue would suffice. Accordingly, he abandoned his recommendations of a hard and fast rule of fixing the assessment at the Bedinur Shist, plus a certain percentage of the Mysore additions. He⁽⁴⁾ stated that many other points were entitled to as much attention to the Shist which was probably extremely unequal originally and had been rendered more. The settlement⁽⁵⁾ reports and revenue records indicate a definite increase in the revenue collection both from the land and other sources of revenue.

Broadly the settlement of Munro was divided into Shist, ie old standard

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1. *N. Shyam Bhat, South Kanara, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 93.*
 2. *Report On The Revenue Affairs Of Malabar And Canara By William Thackeray, Dated 7th September, 1807, (Calicut, 1911), p. 35.*
 3. *Proceedings Of The Board Of Revenue, Vol. No. 261, Dated 28th August, 1800, para 7480.*
 4. *Munro's Letter To The Board Of Revenue, December, 1800, para 9, See also, J. Sturrock, Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 100.*
 5. *Proceedings Of The Board Of Revenue, Vol. No. 291, Dated 20th July, 1801, para 8387-90.*

rent and Shamil, covering the extra taxes imposed by Bedinur and Mysore rules. Munro believed that the rent of land, however productive it might be, should never on any account be raised higher than it had been some earlier period.

According to Munro the Chief defect in the revenue system of Canara was the want of detailed accounts of the land revenue. The old revenue records in black books⁽¹⁾ were prohibited during the Mysore government and a great part of them had been lost. Another important defect pointed out by Munro was that the district was not surveyed⁽²⁾ before the revenue settlement. If it had been surveyed, the government would not have been in the darkness, information upon every point connected with the revenue would have been always available.

Further Munro never introduced any major changes in the method of revenue assessment and collection. He made no reduction in the assessment⁽³⁾ of Tipu Sultan beyond such as was absolutely necessary to ensure the collection of the rest of the revenue. One significant change that he introduced was the collection of revenue only in cash which had made a drastic change in the traditional revenue system. It had a serious implication of introducing a wide network of money economy⁽⁴⁾ leading to the emergence of merchant money lenders in a basically agrarian economy.

Munro left Canara in 1800, but the revenue system introduced by him continued later also with minor changes. For about ten years the settlement

1. *Letter From Munro To W. Petrie, Dated 31st May, 1800, para 5.*

2. *Report On The Provinces Of Malabar And Canara, Sullivan, Dated 29th January, 1841, (Calicut, 1916), para 41.*

3. *Proceedings Of The Board Of Revenue, Vol. No. 1300, Dated 20th July, 1831, p. 9638, See also, Alexander J. Arbuthnot, The Minutes of Munro, (Madras, 1886), p. 54, 55, 61.*

4. *POLI, A Commemorative Value for Canara, (ed.), District Administration, D.K District, (Mangalore, 2000), p. 53.*

seemed to be realised without difficulty, but reports from AD 1810 to 1812 made references to a large number of demand for remissions from the agriculturists who had suffered excessive assessment. This fact was later stated by Harris in his report in AD 1817⁽¹⁾.

Alexander Read had expressed the difficulty he experienced in making the settlement of 1808-09 and 1809-10. The ryots never came forward for settlement and they refused to pay Kist (instalment of rent). The general state of economic depression added⁽²⁾ to the already existing burden of the payments caused by high extraction of land revenue by the government. The prevalence of a diminished trade hit hard the interest of the people. In reply to the Board⁽³⁾ he recapitulated the substance of the instructions of Munro to his subordinate collectors regulatory for fasli 1210. Munro had desired that caution might be observed in imposing any new assessment on lands that paid the Bedinur rent and half of Haider's additions. No addition should be laid on the ryots who paid the Bedinur and three-fourth of Haider's assessment.

Read suggested⁽⁴⁾ that the government share should be lowered and it should be 30 percent of the gross produce. He held that it was necessary to encourage the tenants and convert government lands in to private lands.

Harris expressed⁽⁵⁾ his belief that the ancient assessment or Shist even did not bear with any degree of equality on the several estates. And he

1. *Letters Relating To The Revenue Administration Of Canara, (Bombay Education Society Press, 1866), p. 146.*

2. *N. Shyam Bhat, South Kanara, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 103.*

3. *Letters Relating To The Revenue Administration Of Canara, (Bombay Education Society Press, 1866), p. 143.*

4. *Letter From Alexander Read To The Board Of Revenue, Dated 1st January 1814, p. 1364-65.*

5. *Letters Relating To The Revenue Administration Of Canara, (Bombay Education Society Press, 1866), p. 146.*

explained that he had been guided in making the settlement by his estimate of the actual productive powers of each estate. But that his demand, had not been limited to the standard of the Shist and three-fourth of the Shamil as Munro had not himself adhered to it in his first settlement. Many estates assessed by him above that standard had continued ever since to pay the higher assessment.

Harris was of the opinion⁽¹⁾ that the deplorable condition of the ryots of the district was not solely caused by over assessment. To him, it was also due to the stagnation of trade in general and the role of the money lenders in the society in particular. However he admitted the fact that while making revenue settlement, the market prices of the products were not taken in to consideration.

Reviewing this correspondence on 30th October 1817 the Board remarked⁽²⁾ that the best standard of demand would be the average collection. A collection realised from each estate since the province had been under the British Government and directed that the settlement for Fasli 1227 should be formed on this basis. This principle was the basis of the 'Tharao' (fixed or determined) and 'Sarasari' (average) settlement in the district. But the land holders resented the 'Tharao' assessment.

Though the Board directed⁽³⁾ its introduction of Fasli 1227, it was not found possible to do so before Fasli 1227 (1819-20).

The low prices made it further difficult to release the demand of the

1. *Proceedings Of The Board Of Revenue, Vol. No. 952, Dated 26th June, 1823, p. 5094.*

2. *J. Sturrock, Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 102.*

3. *Letters Relating To The Revenue Administration Of Canara, (Bombay Education Society Press, 1866), p. 148, 151.*

tharao standard. There appeared organised reaction in the form of Koots in the year 1830-31 with 'no tax campaign' in which⁽¹⁾ the ryots met together and simultaneously declined to pay their Kist (instalment). Stokes⁽²⁾ who enquired into the matter, branded the collector's reaction as manipulated by the Head shiristadar and other Brahmins against collection and the employment of Christian officers, but ultimately agreed that the fall in prices was the crucial factor that increased the pressure of assessment.

Stokes recommended⁽³⁾ continuation of tharao assessment by fixing the maximum revenue demand on each estate at an early attainable standard, to encourage agricultural improvement and put an end to the annual fluctuation in the settlement.

On the inequality of the assessment Viveash, the Collector of Canara expressed the opinion⁽⁴⁾ that the settlement originally formed on the principles of taking one third of the gross produce and subsequently fixed at the average of 17 years of collection, is ample to secure both remuneration for labour and profit for capital employed and that remissions are unnecessary on occasions of loss. Taking the view expressed in Stokes report Viveash conducted⁽⁵⁾ the settlement for the year Fasli 1243 (1833-34) by dividing all estates into two main categories :-

1. Bharti or those holders who were able to pay full tharao assessment
- and 2. Kambharti or those who were not able to pay full tharao assessment.

1. *The Settlement Of Land Revenue Of Canara, Fasli 1229, para 16.*

2. *Report Of John Stokes On Revision Of Assessment And The Disturbances Koots, (Mangalore, 1885), p. 120, 121.*

3. *J. Sturrock, Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 106.*

4. *Report Of Mr. Viveash On The Jumabunday Of Canara, Fasli, 1242 and 1243, (Mangalore, 1888), p. 5.*

5. *Ibid, p. 87.*

The Board of Revenue considered the agreement likely to be beneficial to both the properties and the government. The revision of the revenue assessment made by Vivesh in 1834-35 failed to achieve its objective.

The Board of Revenue's proceeding's⁽¹⁾ dated 16th November 1843, reviewed the opinions expressing that inequality in the distribution of assessment and arrived at the conclusion that the latest revision of the assessment had not been more successful than the proceeding's attempts directed to the same end.

In accordance with the direction of the Board of Revenue Blane⁽²⁾, the then Collector of the District submitted his report on the 20th September 1848. He put forward his opinion that a survey would be a measure of the greatest utility and benefit, that no satisfactory revision of the assessment was possible without it.

Agreeing with the Board, Blane also pointed out that⁽³⁾ a survey founded in the measuring of all the land in the district would solve the revenue problems. But the Board never took much interest in appointing more officials to introduce a general survey system in South Canara. There was no change in the revenue assessment in the 1850's, in which the revenue realised by the government registered a steady increase. Blane's report⁽⁴⁾ was sent to the government on 8th May 1851 by the Board of Revenue. However the usual demand for remissions by the ryots and granting of remissions continued in the subsequent years. Even in 1859, W. Fisher reported⁽⁵⁾ about arrears of

1. *J. Sturrock, Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 107.*

2. *Ibid, p. 109.*

3. *N. Shyam Bhat, South Kanara, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 118.*

4. *J. Sturrock, Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 113.*

5. *Proceedings Of The Board Of Revenue, Vol. No. 2252, Dated 22nd August, 1850, p. 11780-82.*

revenue, remissions granted due to over assessment and failures of the government to realise the revenue from the estates.

For average assessment for all kinds of lands, an average computed on that date was about Rs. 3-6-0 an acre⁽¹⁾ and that was undoubtedly higher than the average for the Presidency as a whole. There existed some difference⁽²⁾ between the ryotwari tenure of South Canara and that obtaining in other districts of the presidency. In South Canara land of different Kinds, of unknown extents and lying often in different places and even in different villages, constitutes a holding, termed 'warg' and the assessment was fixed in lump thereon. Elsewhere, the land was divided into fields of convenient sizes known extents and each bears a fixed assessment.

In a letter⁽³⁾ to the government of India, reviewing the progress of the revision of settlement in this presidency, the Madras government having stated that the settlement of Canara was based on a fixed maximum demand which had been obtained in the majority of cases. The government agreed with the Board of Revenue and the collector. But there was nothing to show that they were in any way pledged to maintain the present assessment unaltered. The survey would be extended in due time to South Canara and be followed by a revision of the terms of settlement on such a basis as might appear expedient when the time arrived for commencing operations.

General Survey

The revenue survey started their work in 1889 and completed the last

1. H. A. Stuart, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. II, (Madras, 1895), p. 225.*

2. *Ibid, p. 224.*

3. J. Sturrock, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 114.*

taluk in 1896. The settlement operation began in October 1894 and at once brought to light the fact that the existing survey could not be made as the basis for any scheme of the settlement as it stood. Accordingly supplementary survey was undertaken to sub-divide the different descriptions of land. The classification of the soils and containing trees in bagayats, together with these revision surveys went on up to 1903.

The survey, classified the agricultural fields in South Canara District into various categories as follows⁽¹⁾.

- Bailu** : These were the low lying lands of good quality with an abundant water supply, capable of producing three crops of paddy a year.
- Majalu** : This land was capable of producing two paddy crops a year and hence costlier and more difficult to irrigate.
- Bettu** : These lands were capable of producing just a single crop of paddy annually.
- Bagayat** : Such lands were specially suitable for arecanat plantation and coconut cultivation.

Each of these land was again sub divided into two categories and was assessed differentially depending on the income generated by the land- which was directly related to the quantity.

The general principles⁽²⁾ finally adopted for the settlement of South Canara were as follows.

Wet lands : Wet land was defined as land levelled and bunded and adapted

1. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 430, 432.*

2. *K. N. Krishna Swamy Ayyer and J. F. Hall, Madras District Gazetteers, Statistical Appendix, South Canara, (Madras, 1938), p. 28.*

to the cultivation of paddy.

Gardens : It was decided to class all bagayats under seven sorts, the rates of assessment varying from Rs. 2 to Rs. 8 an acre.

Second crop : The second crop charge on lands registered at settlement as regular growing two crops had been consolidated at one-fourth of the single crop charge.

The settlement was introduced into the taluks in the following order :

Mangalore - Fasli 1312, Kasaragod, Udipi and Coondapoor - Fasli 1313 and Uppinangadi - 1314.

The area of the district⁽¹⁾ was 25,71,923 acres of which only 7,37,142 acre was occupied. Deducting the Kumari area, which is occupied only for fugitive cultivation the actual occupied area was 5,96,265 acres. Reserved forests accounts for an area of 5,62,895 acres. The large unoccupied dry area of 11,55,217 acres is mostly uncultivable. The average settlement of dry rates was lower than the old minimum darkhast rate Rs. 9-7 as against - 1 an acre.

Prior to settlement the land revenue demand was Rs. 14,19,586. The settlement assessment was Rs. 23,41,260. Before the settlement the average assessment per unoccupied acre was Rs. 2-5-11 and after the settlement it was increased to Rs. 3-14-4 per acre.

The marginal table⁽²⁾ shows the average rates of settlement assessment on the different classes of lands.

1. K. N. Krishna Swamy Ayyer and J. F. Hall, *Madras District Gazetteers, Statistical Appendix, South Canara, (Madras, 1938), p. 28.*

2. *Ibid, p. 30.*

Wet	Rs.	A.	P.
1 st Class	6	14	1
2 nd Class	4	10	1
3 rd Class	2	5	5
Bagayat	4	13	7
Dry	0	14	3
Kumari	0	2	1

The average wet rate for the whole district was Rs. 4-7-11. The total area of warg Kumari was 1,40,877 acres and the average rate per acre was Rs. 2-1. The old assessment on this area was only seven per an acre.

Mulpatta wastes, the lands never brought under cultivation were ordered⁽¹⁾ to be assessed at the rate of 4 annas for an acre. The total extent of the mulapatta wargs as the result of the survey was 9,934 acres and the assessment was Rs. 2566.

The settlement granted increment remission. The total increment remission granted for the whole district amounts to Rs. 33,84,537. According to the return made by the Collector to the Board⁽²⁾ the fasli 1310, there were only 48533 pattadars in the district, of which 10 were only joint pattas. The settlement pattas were 89,654.

1. K. N. Krishna Swamy Ayyer and J. F. Hall, *Madras District Gazetteers, Statistical Appendix, South Canara, (Madras, 1938), p. 31.*

2. *Ibid, p. 33.*

Re-settlement In 1934-35

On 4th November 1925⁽¹⁾ the Government directed the adoption of the following procedure as a tentative measure to issue rough pattas, as a part of the resettlement which was subsequently confirmed in November 1927⁽²⁾

- 1) that rough pattas should be issued on the basis of the land registers prepared by the survey department.
- 2) that objections to rough pattas need no longer be heard by special Assistant settlement Officers, but might be heard and disposed by Special Deputy Tahsildar's.
- 3) that the work of the special staff empowered in South Canara be stopped.

Accordingly a branch office of the resettlement was opened⁽³⁾ at Kasaragod in October 1925 and rough pattas was issued on the basis of the resurvey, land registers for all the resurveyed villages exempting 17 Kumari villages. In February 1927 the Government directed the settlement staff to inspect all porumbokes to classify them correctly and to assign unobjectionable encroachments and land held under effective sivaji jama occupations⁽⁴⁾. The inspections required for these purpose was to be carried out before the hearing of objections to rough patta. The Government also directed that⁽⁵⁾ the miscellaneous accounts of inspection should be made by the settlement staff together with the inspections of purambokes and sivaji janma lands

1. G.O.No. 1711 Revenue, dated 4.11.1925.

2. G.O.No. 2188, Revenue, dated 2.11.1927.

3. G.O.No. 610, Revenue, dated 19.3.1937.

4. G.O.No.182, Revenue dated 1.2.1927.

5. G.O. No.428.MS, Revenue, dated 24.2.1928

before rough patta objections hearing. Thus rough patta objection hearing preceded the miscellaneous accounts inspections in Kasaragod taluk, (excluding kumari villages) while other taluks, the miscellanies accounts inspections was completed⁽¹⁾.

The government decided that the kumaki land should be deemed have been effectively occupied as a house site or planted with trees classified of the resettlement as garden products or otherwise reduced in to extensive possession, but that land around which walls were built merely for the purpose of facilitations the exercise of the normal kumaki privileges should not be deemed to have been effectively occupied⁽²⁾.

Owing to the financial stringency the Government ordered the postponement of fasli 1344(1934-35) of the resettlement of those portions in the district in which resettlement was due before that fasli⁽³⁾. This was resumed in 1933, the work was started on the old lines in the villages of Puttur and Mangalore taluks. Subsequently, in accordance with the further simplification of resettlement procedure ordered⁽⁴⁾.

The Board submitted⁽⁵⁾ for the information of government a combined programme of survey and settlement operations in several taluks of the Madras Presidency, including the South Canara District, which was due for the resettlement during the five years ending Fasli 1344 (1934-35).

1. G.O.No. 182, Revenue dated 1.2.1927.

2. G.O. No.661.MS, dated 7.3.1929.

3. G.O. No.2214,Revenue,dated 21.10.1931.

4. G.O. No.494.MS, Revenue, dated 9.3.1934.

5. G. O. No. 1861, Dated 30th September, 1930, Revenue Department (P. S.), Government Of Madras.

Re-survey preliminary to re-settlement was carried out⁽¹⁾ in 178 villages in South Canara District (viz, 114 of Kasaragod, 27 of Mangalore, 33 of Puttur and 2 in each of Coondapour and Udipi taluks). In the rest of the villages, resurvey was considered unnecessary.

No lands were classified as unassessed at the last settlement subsequently the revenue department transferred to unassessed certain land which were registered as purumboke at the last settlement in accordance with instructions by the government⁽²⁾. This register was left unaltered at resettlement, exception in Karkal where an extent of 1672 acres of reserved forest classified as unassessed was treated as forest puramboke⁽³⁾.

The Special Settlement Officers proposals for resettlement were published and three months time was allowed for making representations from the date of publication of the report in the District Gazette⁽⁴⁾. A scheme of report for the settlement was published in South Canara District Gazette on 20th April 1934. But the request of the South Canara Land Holders Association, the period was extended up to 1st September 1934⁽⁵⁾. The proposals were laid on the table of the legislative council on 19th July 1934. Altogether 116 representations were received, 97 up to 1st September 1934 and rest after that date⁽⁶⁾.

The memorials had raised objections to the reclassification of dry lands converted in to wet or garden, on the ground that such conversion of the dry

1. G.O. No.2237. MS., Revenue, dated 26.9.1928. see also G.O. No. 1853. MS., Revenue, dated 11.8.1928, see also Proceedings of the Board of Revenue No. 3289, MS., 4.10.1928.

2. G.O. No.1368. Revenue, dated 9.8.1911.

3. G.O. No.610, Revenue, dated 19.3.1937.

4. South Kanara District Gazette, on 20.4.1934

5. G.O. No.1513, Revenue, dated 31.7.1934

6. Proceedings of the Board of Revenue No. 3, 16th January 1935, p.1.

lands was affected at ryots expense and that the proposal to the government to levy higher rates of assessment on such lands will involve the taxing of the ryots improvements⁽¹⁾. When a portion of an occupied dry field was converted into garden, each revenue should be considered as a whole for the purpose of determining whether or not it should be classified as garden⁽²⁾.

A separate patta was issued for each Mulageni lease hold showing the name of the Mulagar as pattadar and Mulagenidar as Mulageni tenant⁽³⁾. The procedure was adopted in order to facilitate the prompt collection of the assessment by the attachment of the land in cases in which the terms of the lease did not provide for an enhancement of the land in case in which the terms of the lease did not provide for an enhancement of the rent consequent of the increase of assessment at resettlements the mulagar might refuse to pay the enhanced assessment if he could not make some satisfactory arrangement with the mulagenidar.

The Special Settlement Officer proposed that the existing kistbandi should be altered to one of four equal installment from February to May. The Government directed that throughout the entire district the annual kist should be collected in four equal installments in February, March, April and May⁽⁴⁾.

As a result of resurvey, an extent of 4,800 acres was surveyed for the first time and included within village limits while 22,592 acres in Kasaragod and Puttur which really formed as part of reserved forests were excluded

1. *Proceedings of the Board of Revenue No. 3, 16th January 1935, p.3.*

2. *G.O. No. 494,MS, dated 9.3.1934.*

3. *G.O.No.757, Revenue, 25.8.1902.*

4. *Proceedings of the Board of Revenue No. 3, 16th January 1935, p.4.*

from the village limits.

The main feature of the resettlement was the enhancement⁽¹⁾ of the previously existing rates of assessment on wet and garden lands by 12½ per cent while the rate of assessment on dry lands were left unchanged.

The commutation rates⁽²⁾ were calculated in the usual manner from the average prices of these grains in the ryots' selling months during the 20 non-famine years ending (1932-33) after making a deduction of 25 per cent for wet lands and 20 per cent for garden and dry lands on account of cartage and merchant's profits.

Commutation Rates

The rate for paddy was Rs. 133 per grace at the last settlement. It had arisen to Rs. 241 in 1931-32, an increase of 81 per cent.

The rise in the price of coconuts was from Rs. 22 to Rs. 36 or an increase of 64 per cent and of ragi from 175 to 390 or an increase of 123 per cent⁽³⁾. In spite of these increases the enhancement sanctioned by government in the rates of assessment was only 12½ per cent for wet and garden lands while in the case of dry lands the rates were left unchanged.

The revised rates⁽⁴⁾ for first class wet lands were Rs. 7-14-0, Rs. 6-12-0, Rs. 5-10-0, Rs. 4-8-0, Rs. 3-6-0, Rs. 2-4-0, Rs. 1-11-0, Rs. 1-2-0 and 14 annas for second class lands from Rs. 6-12-0 to 14 annas and for third class lands from

1. *K. N. Krishna Swamy Ayyer and J. F. Hall, Madras District Gazetteers, Statistical Appendix, South Canara, (Madras, 1938), p. 184.*

2. *Ibid, p. 185.*

3. *Ibid, p. 185.*

4. *Ibid, p. 185.*

Rs. 5-10-0 to 14 annas, both in the above order.

As regards to garden lands the rates were⁽¹⁾ for the first eight classes Rs. 9, Rs. 7-14-0, Rs. 6-12-0, Rs. 5-10-0, Rs. 4-8-0, Rs.3-6-0, Rs.2-4-0 and Rs. 1-2-0. In the special coast group villages the wet rates for each taram which had been raised Rs. 1 for single crop at the last settlement was raised to Rs. 1-2-0 at the resettlement. In the case of garden lands a new 8th taram of Rs. 1-2-0 was created in order to give relief to new non-cocoa and non-areca garden.

There was no general reclassification of soils in the district, but the original soil classification was altered. 'Purambokes' and unassessed lands transferred to assessed during resettlement were also suitably classified. Villages were divided into three groups for purpose of wet and dry assessment at the last settlement in all the taluks except the old Uppinangadi (present Puttur) taluk, where a fourth group was added owing to the climate and other difficulties experienced by the inhabitants. Occupied dry land converted to wet were classified as wet I, II (single crop or double crop) and III according to the nature of cultivation and appropriate rates of assessment imposed. There was no reclassification of existing wet land and garden lands.

Kumari, the shifting cultivation in forests⁽²⁾, exist in 21 villages of Kasaragod taluk. In the reclassification they were permanently converted into dry, wet or garden and the productivity was taken as the chief factor for grouping. The previous Kumari rates of annas 3, 2 and 1 per acre of the first,

1. K. N. Krishna Swamy Ayyer and J. F. Hall, *Madras District Gazetteers, Statistical Appendix, South Canara, (Madras, 1938), p. 185.*

2. G.O. No.610, Revenue, dated 19.3.1937.

second and third groups as revised were retained. The experimental resurvey carried out at first in 2 Kumari villages of Kasaragod taluk showed that the frame work of survey was unworkable for the purpose of revenue records and the government, therefore sanctioned a resurvey of the all kumari villages. During the final cheque of the resurvey records the settlement staff attended also in the reclassification of the warg Kumari's that were permanently converted to dry, wet or garden⁽¹⁾.

The total extent of lands included⁽²⁾ in ryotwari holdings is 10,22,212 acres. As a result of resettlement the total assessment on these lands increased from Rs. 25,12,100 to Rs. 28,53,257. Increment remissions both ordinary and special were granted from the years of introduction of resettlement.

At resettlement the government decided⁽³⁾ that in respect of ground rent lands in the district, the existing rate of assumed agriculture assessment of Rs. 6-4-0 an acre should be raised by 80 percent so that the existing rates of Rs 6 and Rs 6-4-0 were raised to Rs. 11-4-0 and all other higher rates were raised by Rs. 5 uniformly.

The primary objective of the government was to increase the revenue derived from land tax. The settlement officer take⁽⁴⁾ the average of the prices that obtained during the 20 normal years preceding the period of settlement for determining the land tax and calculating the rise in prices they enhanced the land tax.

1. *G.O.No. 2082, MS, Revenue, 20.10.1927 see also, Proceedings of the Board of Revenue No 388, Mis. dated 4.2.1931.*
2. *K. N. Krishna Swamy Ayyer and J. F. Hall, Madras District Gazetteers, Statistical Appendix, South Canara, (Madras, 1938), p. 189.*
3. *Ibid, p. 190.*
4. *Swadesamitram, Dated 22nd August, 1934, Madras, The Report On Vernacular Papers, For The Month Of August 1934, Government Of Madras, p. 429.*

The settlement officer had realised the increase of indebtedness of the agriculturists. The number of agriculturists who had raised loans and the amount borrowed by them had increased. The settlement officer had however recommended that the tax of wet and garden lands may be enhanced by 12½ per cent. There was doubt that, if the assessment was enhanced accordingly to his recommendation, the inhabitants, of South Canara District will be obliged to under go great hardships. The enhancement of the assessment in these hard days affected them very much.

The land revenue in South Canara was collected in five kists⁽¹⁾, beginning in January and ending in May. The Kist were levied by the village officers. The company government confined itself to revenue administration and revenue collection, particularly from the agricultural land, without being unduly concerned with developed schemes in agriculture, irrigation, transport, communication and education.

The village arrangements in South Canara were some what similar to those in Malabar⁽²⁾, each warg had its house situated up on it. The headman of village was called as Potal and the curnums, of whom there was one for each group of villages turned Magany or Taraf were called Shanbogues. The Jummabundy generally took place after December, by which time most of the important crops had been harvested and most of the changes likely to be take in holdings were ascertained. It was conducted in different places, mostly four or five in each taluk which were previously notified. The village officers

1. N. Shyam Bhat, *South Kanara*, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 129.

2. C. D. Maclean, *Manual of Administration, Madras Presidency, Vol. I*, (Madras, 1884), p. 117.

concerned were summoned and ryots who had any representations to make were invited to attend.

The settlement officer was usually the revenue officer in-charge of the revenue division. It was the duty of the Tahsildar⁽¹⁾ to see that all the village accounts were ready before the date fixed for the Jumwabundy and this was usually carried out by causing the curnumes to come to the taluk Cutcherry two or three weeks in advance and there they finish whatever incomplete in their accounts.

The lands were divided into estates or warg lands which were registered and numbered for each village. A separate Jumwabundy chitta (revenue account) was kept, in the Huzoor (Collector) and taluk officers for every estate. This account showed the name of the owner of an estate, the particulars of its assessment, net produce of the land at the village rates and annual settlements.

The rapid growth of population added to the pressure on the available agro-economic resources. In the absence of alternative avenues of employment more and more people were willing to lease-in and even sub-lease-in on higher and higher rental rates, in the hope of eking-out a living. In the first half of the 20th century the problem of tenancy and alienation of land through sale and mortgages continued as the dominant class of money lenders-traders-landlords came to occupy a commanding position in the whole system of agricultural production and distribution. The situation was aggravated in the years during and after the economic depression (1929-30) followed by the

1. C. D. Maclean, *Manual of Administration, Madras Presidency, Vol. I, (Madras, 1884), p. 131.*

second world war. The newly enacted Madras Debt Conciliation Act 1936 and the Madras Agriculturalist Relief Act 1938 had served to reinforce the dominance of triumviraty-creditors-traders-land lords in rural society. The period after 1943 witnessed a drastic fall in land transactions in South Canara due to the fear of fall in the land values during the post war period.

IMPOVERISHMENT OF THE PEASANTRY

The rapid commercialisation of rural India and the inexorable monetisation of a rural economy under an imperialist system⁽¹⁾ brought crisis among the peasantry. A study of the land revenue administration reveals that generally the government share was much higher than normal as recognized by the administrators themselves.

Maximisation of land revenue was one of the driving forces of the British in South Canara District and had become one of the major reasons for the impoverishment of the peasantry. The British continued the pre-existing system of rough and ready assessment without a regular survey or classification of land for a century. It is believed that ancient assessment even after the addition by Bedinur Government was moderate⁽²⁾ in South Canara. Numerous additions which were made to the ancient land rent by Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan had caused the impoverishment of South Canara. Munro expressed⁽³⁾ that had such an assessment as that introduced by Haider Ali and Tipu existed in ancient times, Canara would long ago have been converted into a desert. But actually the British continued the same extraction of land revenue policy of the Mysore rulers.

1. K. K. N. Kurup, *The Kayyur Riot, (Calicut, 1978), p. 1.*

2. Alexander J. Arbuthnot, *The Minutes of Munro, (Madras, 1886), p. 62.*

3. *Ibid, P. 62.*

Prior to the British rule the land revenue assessment was paid in money or in kind. The British enforced the payment of land rent through money. The commutation system of the grain in to market price and its fluctuations also caused more sufferings to the rural peasantry.

The administrative records reveal that, one of the characteristic features of the British land revenue administration in South Canara, since 1803-04, was granting of remissions at annual Jummabundy due to the increase in the revenue demand. Remissions granted⁽¹⁾ in a particular year was collected in subsequent years. If a particular ryot failed to pay the arrears for four or five years, his property was auctioned by the government to realize the amount due from this. This was a common feature existed in the whole British period.

There was one important defect in the system of granting remissions to the ryots. As remissions were not generally allowed to the tenants, it added to the receipts of the landlords. The government gave remissions to the landlords though they used to lease out land for actual cultivation to their under tenants. So it brought no benefit⁽²⁾ to the actual farming cultivation.

Even though the ryotwari system was introduced in South Canara, it did not bring any relief to the cultivators. In fact, many of the revenue assessments were high and unequal, resulting the pattern of mounting revenue arrears, auction of the property and its transfer from the poor to the rich ryots, rise of money lenders and so on.

1. *N. Shyam Bhat, South Kanara, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 95, 102.*

2. *ibid, p. 95, 102.*

In addition to high extraction of land revenue, the revenue derived from various other source like salt, tobacco monopoly, village taxes, courts and stamps customs and so on added to the burden of the peasants. It resulted in the impoverishment of the ryots and agriculturists in the region. In fact the peasant unrest of 1810-11 and peasant uprising of 1830-31 were the responses of the peasant against their grievances and attempts to redress some of them.

The British administrators have attempted to prove that the British policy of revenue assessment and collection had always been fair. Sturrock⁽¹⁾, for example, frames a vindication of Munro's assessment which was as high as Tipu's, by writing that the country was growing in prosperity and the demand was moderate. Stuart points out that both demand and collection of revenue increased and that the revenue had been released without any great pressure on the ryots.

There was much anomaly in the assessment of land revenue in South Canara. This resulted in arbitrary assessment of land leading to the same kind of land in different cases being assessed differently. Alexander Read⁽²⁾ recommended to the Board of Revenue, that in order to arrive a standard assessment the government should take 30 percent of the gross produce. Same way Harris⁽³⁾ expressed that the deplorable condition of the ryots of the district - was not only solely caused by over assessment - but also stagnation

1. *POLI, A Commemorative Value for Canara, (ed.), District Administration, D.K District, (Mangalore, 2000), p. 23.*

2. *Letter From Alexander Read To The Board Of Revenue, Dated On 19th January, 1814.*

3. *Sir Thomas Munro's Letter To The Board Of Revenue, Dated On 17th June, 1823.*

of trade in general and the role of the money lenders in particular. Harris⁽¹⁾ also had the opinion that while making the revenue settlement, the market price of the products was also taken in to consideration. Stokes⁽²⁾ who enquired about the disturbances of Koots in 1830-31 found that the Koots had been caused by the rigours of assessment.

In its proceeding's the Board of Revenue⁽³⁾ also admitted the in equality involved in the distribution of assessment. In accordance with the directions put forward by the proceedings of the Board of Revenue, Blane submitted a report on 20th September 1848. In his opinion a survey would be of greatest utility and benefit⁽⁴⁾ for a satisfactory revision of the assessment.

But the revenue survey for settlement was begun in 1889, and completed in 1896, at the same time the revision survey ended in 1903. The settlement of land revenue as a part of the survey had caused great burden upon the people. It paved for great increase in land revenue. Prior to settlement the land revenue demand⁽⁵⁾ was Rs. 14,19,586 and the settlement assessment was Rs. 23,41,260.

The immediate result was that the revenue assessment of district was considerably enhanced. The burden of revenue payment finally fell upon the cultivating ryots of the region. The rent payable to the landlords was

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1. *Sir Thomas Munro's Letter To The Board Of Revenue, Dated On 17th June, 1823.*
 2. *Report Of John Stokes On Revision Of Assessment And The Disturbances Koots, (Mangalore, 1885), para 13.*
 3. *The Board Of Revenues Proceedings, Dated On 16th November, 1843, para 36.*
 4. *Mr. Blane's Letter Dated 20th September, 1848, para 55-57.*
 5. *K. N. Krishna Swamy Ayyer and J. F. Hall, Madras District Gazetteers, Statistical Appendix, South Canara, (Madras, 1938), p. 30.*

revised under the provision of the mulageni rent enhancement act XII, of 1920. The state permitted the landholders to release more rent either in cash or in kind from cultivating ryots to meet the revenue demands.

As a result of the resettlement⁽¹⁾ the total assessment on these lands increased from Rs. 25,12,100 to Rs. 28,53,257. This shows that there was a constant increase of the land revenue assessment during the British period. The assessment of land revenue at higher rents by the British Government and the demand of taxes in cash were new burdens on land owners who safely shifted the burden up on their tenants.

To put it brief, the colonial exploitation⁽²⁾ of economic surplus was more intensified causing large-scale rural poverty. The region (former Kasaragod Taluk) still remained one of the most-backward and under developed areas of Kerala state.

The following table shows the condition of the tenants in South Canara due to excessive land revenue assessment⁽³⁾.

Fasli	Demand Notices	Distrainment or attachment notices	Sale notice
1337	3223	373	168
1338	3650	347	198
1339	4186	680	270
1340	5777	821	656
1345	16348	3488	2655
1346	16397	4221	2613

1. K. N. Krishna Swamy Ayyer and J. F. Hall, *Madras District Gazetteers, Statistical Appendix, South Canara, (Madras, 1938), p. 189.*

2. K. K. N. Kurup, *Agrarian Relations In Kerala, (Thiruvananthapuram, 1989), p. 105.*

3. *Report Of The Settlement Of Land Revenue, Fasli 1338 Vol. II, p. 13, Fasli 1340 Vol. II, p. 16, Fasli 1345, p. 48 and Fasli 1346, p. 50.*

The above table shows that an increase in the issue of the demand notice to the defaulters of revenue from the fasli year 1337 to 1346 and a rapid increase occurred during the fasli years 1345 and 1346. Same way the number of notices of distraint and sale was also increased during the fasli years 1345 and 1346. These two fasli years were after the resettlement period. This reveals that the resettlement had paved for heavy enhancement of land revenue up on the rural population and they were impoverished. The number of defaulters⁽¹⁾ whose immovable property were attached during the fasli 1352 (1942-43) was 8687 against 18,939 in Fasli 1351.

On the other hand we can see a steady increase in the land revenue collection in South Canara⁽²⁾.

Fasli	Land Revenue (Rs)	Fasli	Land Revenue (Rs)
1210	1669314	1317	2195616
1225	1693990	1322	2499600
1245	1701823	1338	2762421
1255	1860734	1345	3076591
1263	1919283	1352	3330899

The major aim of the colonial economic policy in India was the extraction of the Indian wealth as much as possible. South Canara became one of the fertile lands for the British to implement their policy.

1. *Report Of The Settlement Of Land Revenue, Fasli 1352, (Madras, 1948), p. 15.*

2. *The Reports Of The Settlements Of Land Revenue Of Concerned Fasli's.*

Distribution of land-holders by assessment paid⁽¹⁾ by them in South Canara

Table 1

Fasli 1330 of 1920 -21

Pattas under Assessment (In Rs.)	No of single Holders	No of Joint Holders	Total No of Holders	Percentage of Total Holders
Below 1	19382	4266	23648	20.62
1-10	36780	10071	46851	41.86
10-30	19617	3781	23398	20.41
30-50	7679	1314	8993	7.84
50-100	6037	1029	7066	6.16
100-250	3070	461	3531	3.08
250-500	736	110	846	0.74
500-1000	229	31	260	0.23
1000 and above	66	7	73	0.06
Total	93596	21070	114666	100

The table states that 79,492 patta holders, out of 1,14,666 (82.59%) were paying below Rs.30 per year as the land revenue assessment. There were only 73 large land holders (0.06%) who were paying annual rent more than Rs.1000. Out of Rs.24,72,326 as the land revenue assessment of the Fasli 1330, Rs.1,15,906 was imposed upon the large land holders and

1. *The Reports Of The Settlement of Land Revenue, Fasli 1330, p. 44-47 and Fasli 1340, p. 71-77.*

Rs. 13,589 was paid by the 993897 patta holders⁽¹⁾.

Table II

Fasli 1340 or 1330-31

Pattas under Assessment (In Rs.)	No of single Holders	No of Joint Holders	Total Holders	Percentage of Total Holders
Below 1	28819	6458	35277	25.48
1-10	42122	16818	58940	42.57
10-30	19001	5440	24441	17.65
30-50	6813	1692	8505	6.14
50-100	5572	1226	6798	4.9
100-250	2880	492	3372	2.43
250-500	727	90	817	0.59
500-1000	216	24	240	0.17
1000 and above	71	7	78	0.06
Total	106221	32247	138468	100

The number of patta holders who were paying the land revenue less than Rs. 30 per year was increased from 79,492 (82.59%) during the Fasli 1330 to 1,18,658 (85.68%) during the Fasli 1340.

The exploitation of the Chalageni tenants continued persistently through the 19th and 20th centuries. The landlord had the right to raise the rent or evict the chalageni tenants if they refused to pay enhanced rents. Though tenants could be evicted at anytime, in practice, however, the tenants were

1. *The Reports Of The Settlement of Land Revenue, Fasli 1330, p. 44-47 and Fasli 1340, p. 71-77.*

seldom⁽¹⁾ ousted unless they were heavily on arrears.

Generally the tenants came from the class of landless labourers⁽²⁾ who entered in to tenancy by leasing in paddy fields from the upper stratum of rural society. However there was no uniformity in the size of tenanted holdings as these ranged from less than an acre or some times more. Moreover, land under some tenanted holdings was fertile and capable of yielding two or even three crops while in most other holdings only one crop could be had. Further, those tenants who lived in the vicinity of the landlord's house were liable to be exploited more in the form of free (unpaid) labour and other illegal extractions than those tenants who lived away from their landlords.

Generally the fertile lands, were retained by the landlords for self cultivation and the leased out lands were often in poor quality. The landlords used to renew the lease at least orally, every year, thus the lease was so insecure.

It was customary obligation on the part of tenants to give priority to the work in farms under the landlords' self cultivation and then attended to their plots. Before the monsoon broke out, the tenants had to bring their own pair of bullocks for ploughing the landlord's fields, for which the landlord never paid anything to the tenants.

In the first half of the 20th century the problem of tenancy and alienation of land through sale and mortgages continued⁽³⁾ as the dominant class of

1. C. D. Maclean, *Manual of Administration, Madras Presidency, Vol. I, (Madras, 1884), p. 127.*

2. *Perspectives On Dakshina Kannada and Kodagu, Mangalore University Decennial Volume, (ed), Mangalagangothri, 1991, p. 150.*

3. *Ibdi, p. 150.*

money lenders-traders-landlords came to occupy a commanding position in the whole system of agricultural production and distribution.

In Malabar, the forest lands and waste lands were not brought under assessment. But in South Canara the forest and waste lands in the holdings were also assessed. Therefore the colonial exploitation⁽¹⁾ was more intensive in the South Canara than in Malabar.

Even the legal provisions such as section 13 of the Rent Recovery Act VIII of 1865, did not give any relief⁽²⁾ to the chalagenidars against the relentless extractions by the landlords. On the contrary, in response to the legislations the land owners resorted to large scale evictions of such temporary tenants. Suppression of the Chalageni tenants continued until the stringent and so called land reform legislations, introduced in Karnataka in 1974.

EARLY RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS

In the last part of the 18th century and early half of the 19th century, there broke out a number of local resistance movements against the British in South Canara District. Munro remarked⁽³⁾ that the most petty chiefs in ancient times existed in Canara have long since been deprived of all authority and confounded with the mass of the people. But there are still three, who from their long connection with the Bombay Government, deserve a particular consideration. These three are poligars or Rajah's of Kumbala, Vittal and Nileshwar.

1. K. K. N. Kurup, *Agrarian Relations In Kerala, (Thiruvananthapuram, 1989), p. 105.*

2. C. B. Damle, "Impact Of Tenancy Legislation And Changing Agrarian Relations; A Case Study Of Dakshina Kannada District", *Social Scientist, Vol. 17, Nos. 11-12 November-December, 1989, p. 83-97.*

3. *Letter From Munro to W. Petrie Dated On 16th June, 1800, para 1.*

The political structure consisting of Rajas, Chieftains and feudatories were destroyed by the colonial system. These political elements along with the priestly class (Brahmins) controlled the political social and economic affairs of the pre-British period. This dominant class enjoyed absolute control in all fields in their jurisdiction. For a short period Tipu Sultan of Mysore had completely suppressed all the old chiefs and disposed them all. When the last Mysore war broke out in 1799 the Rajas of Kumbala, Vittal and Nileshtar tried to regain their old position.

The British acquisition caused the loss of hereditary status (which the native chiefs had enjoyed) and their reduction in to mere landlords and pensioners. The ideology behind these revolts did not go beyond self preservation and their instinctual character agrees with their description as instances of what has been called "primary resistance". Primary resistance refers⁽¹⁾ to the opposition of pre-colonial as yet largely unchanged, socio-political structures of foreign intrusion, headed by traditional elements and having in the main's a 'restorative' aim.

These Rajas supported the British against the Mysore rulers. When South Canara passed into the hands of the British after the defeat of Tipu Sultan in 1799, the territories of these rajas were also included in this. For them the British annexation was as frustrating as the first time and another occasion to revolt.

The revolt of the three rajas were considered as restorative movements⁽²⁾. Their fear of the loss of identity made them resist against the

1. Eric Stokes, *The Peasant And The Raj*, p. 124, Quoted In *South Kanara*, Shyam Bhat, New Delhi, 1998, p. 70.

2. N. Shyam Bhat, *South Kanara*, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 70.

imposition of the British rule. The revolt of the three former rajas were different from a peasant unrest.

THE RESISTANCE OF THE RAJA OF KUMBALA

When the last Mysore war broke out in 1799, the Raja of Kumbala returned from Tellichery, (the Raja took shelter at British at Tellichery during the Tipu's invasion) and began his activities to regain his territory. The Raja of Kumbala showed⁽¹⁾ a disposition, when company took possession of Canara last year, to maintain himself in Kumbala; but was obliged to return to Malabar by an order from General Hartley. He left his nephew, behind, with a body of armed followers, for the purpose of keeping affairs in confusion, and prevented the inhabitants from coming to a settlement with Munro⁽²⁾, hoping that by that means the District would be given over to the Raja in his own terms. He succeeded so far, that none of the inhabitants came near Munro for settlement for two months. But General Hartley⁽³⁾ threatened to treat the nephew as a rebel and the commissioners of Malabar having stopped his own pension till he should have delivered up the arms he had received from the company's stores.

These measures of the British brought the rebel Raja to the knees of Munro and he acknowledged the British suzerainty. Sir Thomas Munro agreed to increase his pension⁽⁴⁾ from 200 to 400 per month, on condition that neither he nor any member of his family should ever reside in Kumbala. The

1. *Letter From Munro to W. Petrie Dated On 16th June, 1800, para 3.*

2. *Ibid, para 3.*

3. *Alexander J. Arbuthnot, The Minutes of Munro, (Madras, 1886), p. 57.*

4. *Letter From Munro to W. Petrie Dated On 16th June, 1800, para 3.*

government also stressed that the pension was granted to the entire exclusion of any claim to the restitution of the lands formerly possessed by his family.

RESISTANCE OF THE RAJA OF VITTAL

The Raja of Vittal returned in 1799 from Tellichery (he took refuge at there during Tipu invasion) to Vittal in 1799, ignoring the summons from the company's officials. The Raja returned⁽¹⁾ with a number of followers, by whose means he had since armed the inhabitants and taken upon himself the management of the district.

The Hegade had collected and retained the revenue in his own hands, maintaining his position, according to Munro⁽²⁾, entirely by terror. By the assistance of his personal followers, he at first armed a few of the inhabitants and with the idea of reviewing his fortunes, early in 1800, he combined with other disaffected elements in South Canara. Munro⁽³⁾ at once called on Colonel Heart, who was the Commanding Officer of the province, to proceed against Hegade. An army was sent under Lieutenant Colonel Cumine to Jamalabad and it attacked the fort. The British stormed the fort and regained possession of Jamalabad. In the beginning of July 1800, the Tahsildar defeated the Vittal Hegade at Vittal and nine members of his family were imprisoned. With this event and the fall of Jamalabad, all disturbances came to an end and the country settled down quietly⁽⁴⁾.

1. *Letter From Munro to W. Petrie Dated On 16th June, 1800, para 3.*

2. *Ibid, para 3.*

3. *Alexander J. Arbuthnot, The Minutes of Munro, (Madras, 1886), p. 57.*

4. *Letter From Munro to W. Petrie Dated On 16th June, 1800, para 3.*

All property except his private ones was acquired by the British in lieu of which the family was granted an yearly pension⁽¹⁾ of Rs. 6019 and Anna one or star pagodas 143-14-4 per month and 1719-33-48 per annum.

RESISTANCE OF THE RAJA OF NILESHWAR

The Raja of Nileshwar also resisted the British supremacy over South Canara, especially over their territory, Nileshwaram. He kept up armed followers and had dissuaded the land holders from appearing before Munro for settlement with the hope of regaining his former territories.

But all his efforts went in vain when the British forced him to accept their Supremacy. All territories except his private property was acquired by the British and he was given an annual pension of 1000 Bahadry Pagodas or Rs. 4000.

The movements led by the three Rajas of South Canara were apparently a failure. The driving force behind their resistance was the danger of losing their relatives. It was very easy to the colonial government, to suppress all kinds of the early resistance movements of South Canara. In brief, the transition of a feudal society in to colonial system in South Canara occurred without much resistance.

The British land revenue policy based on the exploitation of economic surplus had resulted in over assessment and inequalities in the land revenue administration. It caused indebtedness and impoverishment of the peasantry. Thus the agrarian structure of the district was indulged in unrest and

1. N. Shyam Bhat, *South Kanara*, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 76.

uprisings. Immediately after the establishment of the British power in Canara, the three Raja's of Nileshtar, Kumbala and Vittal started their resistance movements. However, the British never revised their land revenue assessment. In 1810-11 and 1830-31 the Koots rebellions spread in South Canara. These were resistance movements against the economic grievances enhanced by the colonial administration. In the early part of the 20th century the condition of the peasantry became worse due to the enhancement of land revenue through the settlement of 1902-03 and the resettlement of 1934-35 and the great depression of the 1930's. Thus the peasants were forced to rise against their land lords and their colonial masters.

CHAPTER - 3

TENSION RIDDEN PEASANTRY

Without introducing fundamental changes in the pre-colonial agrarian system, Munro introduced the ryotwari settlement in Canara. This settlement was a method of 'squeezing' the economic⁽¹⁾ surplus. The introduction of the colonial administration by the British, transferred the traditional economy in to a colonial economy making changes in the revenue system, administrative system and judicial system. It accelerated the collapse of the traditional agrarian structure and handicrafts. The ruin of handicrafts caused the over crowding of land, which was already in a deteriorating position. Emergence of these new trends in the agrarian structure eventually led to the impoverishment and tension in the rural agrarian structure.

Both in the zamindari and ryotwari areas the large scale rural poverty developed as an impact of these settlements. In vast zamindari areas the

1. K. K. N. Kurup, *Modern Kerala, Studies In Social And Agrarian Relations*, (Delhi, 1998), p. 109.

peasants were left to the tender mercies of the zamindars who rack-rented and compelled them to pay the illegal duties and to perform forced labour. In the ryotwari areas the government itself levied heavy land revenue. They forced the peasants to borrow money from the money lenders. Gradually, over large areas, the status of the cultivators were reduced⁽¹⁾ and they were turned to the status of tenants-at-will, share croppers and landless labourers on the other hand. Their lands, crops and cattle passed in to the hands of the landlords, traders, money lenders and rich peasants. The striking aspect of Indian feudalism, was that⁽²⁾ the peasants attached to the soil owned by landed intermediaries suffered the increasing burden of appropriation, in the form of taxation from time to time.

Government's high revenue demands distressed all agrarian classes especially the lower strata of the peasantry. The resulting discontent⁽³⁾ was manifold. Either the peasants (actual cultivators) revolted or the land lords themselves agitated or some times all agrarian classes joined together and rebelled against the exorbitant demands of the state.

Some eminent historians have emphasised⁽⁴⁾ the point of oppression of the peasantry by irresponsible and greedy landlords. The oppression existed before the British supremacy and was turned as a fairly established pattern of political behaviour. Such assertions⁽⁵⁾, whether true or not, the more fundamental questions have been raised regarding the very nature of land rights

1. Bipan Chandra, *India's Struggle For Independence*, (New Delhi, 1989), p. 50.

2. R. S. Sharma, *Early Indian Feudalism* (ed), (New Delhi, 1969), p. 39-43.

3. D. N. Dhangrare, *Peasant Movement In India, 1920-1950*, (Delhi, 1983), p.32.

4. *Ibid*, p. 32.

5. *Ibid*, p.32.

and land ownership under the British because, the oppression became more severe and crucial during this period.

In South Canara District, prior to the British rule, the Vijayanagara and Bedinur governments had made changes in the traditional land revenue system and revenue assessment. Under the Mysore rulers the traditional land revenue system was ruined. The British had commercialised the agriculture and the basic feature of this was the "efficient exploitation" of the economic surplus. This became the guiding principles in the introduction of the land policy and land revenue administration of the British. For this they had made alliance with the landlord class; practically the combination of the three - the British, the landlords and the money lenders oppressed the rural population, creating tensions in the agrarian structure.

Even though, ryotwari system existed in theory, in practice various kinds of tenancies prevailed in South Canara. A group of landlord intermediaries had emerged between the government and the tenants. Thus the landed intermediaries were exploited by the government and they in turn exploited the cultivators. So the agrarian relations became highly complicated during the British period.

Prior to the British, the land revenue was realised in cash or in kind. But during the British period it was through cash only. The calculation of the market value and commutation prices of the crops had also enhanced the burden. The British introduced differential taxation. For fixing the land revenue the land was classified in to wet, garden and dry. Paddy, coconut and ragi were adopted as the standard crop for wet, garden and dry respectively.

Similarly, the British supremacy in South Canara led to the commercialisation of agriculture. This was introduced without making any change in the mode of cultivation or any improvement in production. Neither the government nor the landlord did provide the capital or any other facilities required for cultivation to the tenants. Commercial agriculture gave rise to the system of land mortgages and alienations. It also resulted in the decline of the production of food grains.

The government was quite unconcerned with the fluctuation⁽¹⁾ of prices. This affected the Tenants hard thus when the price of produce fell below the commutation price, the position of the wargadar became precarious. Thus the landlords naturally shifted the burden in to the shoulders of the cultivating tenants by demanding higher rents causing over much burden.

Since 1820 the jumabundy⁽²⁾ (revenue settlement) price of crops, for example, rice, was more than the market price. Because of this, the ryots had to sell more quantity of crops to realise cash to pay the government revenue. Generally, the result was that a large number of peasants fell in arrears to the government. The land of such peasants were publicly auctioned by the government.

The coercive measures⁽³⁾ adopted by the revenue authorities always became detrimental to the interests of the peasants. The post of Potail or the village headman was hereditary and normally they belonged to a landlord family. That means the village authorities generally supported the landlords.

1. N. Shyam Bhat, *South Kanara*, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 110-111.

2. POLI, *A Commemorative Value for Canara*, (ed.), *District Administration, DK District*, (Mangalore, 2000), p. 54.

3. K. K. N. Kurup, *The Kayyur Riot*, (Calicut, 1978), p. 29.

So perusing the village headman, a landlord could attach⁽¹⁾ standing crops or harvested crops for revenue arrears and sell them in public auction. The usual practice for this sort of attachment was 'tholkettal' or tying the bunches of green leaves at one end of stick and planting or fixing it quite familiar in many parts of the district. So a peasant was uncertain in harvesting his crops. For eviction the landlords got assistance from the revenue authorities and police. So in order to retain the land, the peasant was forced to borrow from the money lenders and thus the peasantries were trapped for ever.

When the ryot had arrears to the government, they mortgaged their land to the money lenders and borrowed loans. It was known as 'bigiadhi adavu' or living mortgage⁽²⁾. Another kind of mortgaging prevalent in the region was called 'torradhoo' or dead mortgage⁽³⁾. When once the ryots came under the grip of the money lenders, they could never free themselves from them till they sold their lands to the money lenders. This resulted in the sale of property and this kind of sale or transfer of property ownership became common⁽⁴⁾ in South Canara from the 1830's onwards.

The process of auctioning land led to the creation of one new set of wargadars, when paid a relatively higher amount of revenue to the government. This was one of the ways by which large scale transfer of property ownership took place.

Transfer of land to the hands of the merchant money lenders was

1. K. K. N. Kurup, *The Kayyur Riot, (Calicut, 1978), p. 29.*
2. *Letter's Relating To Revenue Administration Of Canara, (Bombay, Education Society Press, 1866), p. 78.*
3. *Ibid, p. 78.*
4. POLI, *A Commemorative Value for Canara, (ed.), District Administration, DK District, (Mangalore, 2000), p. 54.*

another kind of transfer of land prevailed in South Canara. The new landlords, money lenders and administrative officials, had links with the British revenue and judicial administration. The favoured groups like landed Brahmins, Bunts and merchants and particularly Saraswat Brahmins (Konkanis) established themselves a complex layer⁽¹⁾ of adept and influential manipulators between the government and the administration.

Revenue sale⁽²⁾ was a common practice regarding the landlord properties of in the ryotwari district. The warg or estate of a wargadar stretches in one village or many villages. Some patta consists of thousands of acres of waste or Kumari land for which also revenue was demanded by the government. The system enhanced total land revenue payable by a landholder or wargadar. The collection of land revenue was a real struggle⁽³⁾ between the revenue officials on one side and the landlords and their tenants on the other, in each fasli or revenue year.

A low level⁽⁴⁾ of demand and prices of their crops were affected by the life of the tenant of South Canara in many times. The price fluctuations, over assessment of the land revenue and the absence of liberal remissions during such periods of economic crisis added the burden of the peasants. The landlords generally did not shift the remission granted by the government to the tenants. Thus granting of remissions did not reach in the lower stratum of the agrarian structure. In order to meet the revenue demand and also the

1. *POLI, A Commemorative Value for Canara, (ed.), District Administration, DK District, (Mangalore, 2000), p. 54.*

2. *K. K. N. Kurup, Modern Kerala, Studies In Social And Agrarian Relations, (Delhi, 1988), p. 116.*

3. *Ibid, p. 116.*

4. *N. Shyam Bhat, South Kanara, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 110.*

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poverty, the ryots were forced to approach the money lenders.

The economic condition of the peasantry entered into a crisis during the period of depression⁽¹⁾. In 1931 the prices began to fall. The peasants could not pay their rent to the landlords in time. The landlords could not pay their assessment in time, the result was the considerable increasing the number of sale of lands in the area since 1931.

As per the settlement report, Fasli 1352⁽²⁾, the government had issued 45,762 sales notice to the defaulters of revenue in South Canara. During the Fasli 1345⁽³⁾ the government had granted remission of Rs. 1,68,856 and in Fasli 1346⁽⁴⁾ the remission was Rs. 2,31,599. This shows the deplorable condition of the peasantry. Many of the cultivators lost their land and new landlord class, emerged due to the revenue administration of the colonial government.

The Board of Revenue submitted its report to the government, a combined programme for survey and resettlement including several taluks of South Canara District of the pre-due for re-settlement during the five years ending Fasli⁽⁵⁾ 1344 (1934-1935). Owing to the financial stringency, the Government directed to shift the financial burden to the peasants and issued the orders for resumption of the survey and settlement which was previously postponed⁽⁶⁾.

Many vernacular News papers of that period had criticised the proposed

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1. K. K. N. Kurup, *Modern Kerala, Studies In Social And Agrarian Relations*, (Delhi, 1988), p. 106.
 2. *Report On The Settlement Of Land Revenue, Fasli 1352*, (Madras, 1948), p. 15.
 3. *Ibid, Fasli 1345*, (Madras, 1937), p. 75.
 4. *Ibid, Fasli 1346*, (Madras, 1938), p. 48-49.
 5. G.O.No.1861, Dated 30th September 1930, Revenue Department.
 6. G.O.No.827, Dated 15th April 1931, see also G.O.No. 2214 Dated 21st October 1931, see also G.O.No.1368 Dated 30th June 1932 - Revenue Department.

land revenue assessment of the government. The proposals of the settlement officer had been approved by the Board of Revenue and the Government without paying any heed to the representation made by the people. Swadesamitram⁽¹⁾ the News paper from Madras expressed satisfaction at the local legislative council having carried the adjournment motion moved by A. B. Shetty to censure the Government for enhancing the land revenue assessment in South Canara District by 12½ per cent as a result of the resettlement. They took strong exception to the observation made by the Hon'ble Revenue Minister in the course of the debate on the motion that the people of this district should reduce the standard of living in order that they may be in a position to pay the enhanced assessment and ask why the government themselves should not adopt a similar course and reduce the salary of their officials in proportion of their revenue.

A. B. Shetty expressed that⁽²⁾ the government recognised that the people were unable to pay even the existing rates of assessment and were giving remission, on other hand introducing resettlement and were levying enhanced rates of assessment. The economic conditions of the people were steadily growing worse. The depression had reduced the ryots to a very sad plight. In spite of remissions, there had been large arrears in the district coercive process had to be used for collecting their arrears. Their properties had been sold for getting their assessment. It was also experienced in the adjournment motion that the people were already over assessed and had been paying

1. *Swadesamitram, Dated 21st January 1935, Mangalore, Report On Vernacular Papers For The Month Of January 1935, Government Of Madras, p. 80, 81.*

2. *G.O.No.637,Mis, Revenue,dated 13.3.1935.*

more than they ought to pay and the government had no justification at all for enhancing the rates of assessment at a time of exceptional distress like this.

The Government realised that⁽¹⁾ the condition of the District had not materially improved since the last settlement and was suffering from the effects of the economic depression. The government considered that vague statements about the 'poverty' and 'misery' prevailing the district, unsupported as they were by the reliable evidence, were valueless. The rates of assessment were determined in accordance with the usual settlement principles and were based up on the actual outturns of the lands of the district as ascertained by enquiry and experiment. In these circumstances and in the light of the facts set out by the Special Settlement Officer and the Board of Revenue, the Government was not ready to postpone the introduction of the resettlement in the district⁽²⁾.

With regard to the new rates of assessment, proposed for wet and garden lands, the Government observed that the Special Settlement Officer has recommended an enhancement of 12½ per cent, in order to bring the rates more into line with the wet and garden rates in the Malabar district which were enhanced at the resettlement by 18¾ per cent. The Government accepted these proposals. The proposed enhancement was moderate and that on the facts reported the maximum increase of 18¾ per cent was justified⁽³⁾.

1. *G.O.No.637, Mis, Revenue, dated 13.3.1935, see also, Proceedings of the Board of Revenue No. 3, 16th January 1935, p. 2, 3.*

2. *Proceedings of the Board of Revenue No. 3, 16th January 1935, p. 3.*

3. *Ibid, p. 4.*

Navayuga⁽¹⁾ of Mangalore observes in an article under heading "A significant defect of the Madras Government".

when the resolution using the deduction of the land revenue to the extent of 33½ per cent came up for discussion, the government gave its customary reply. No definite assurance was given in regard to the districts famine stricken. It is deplorable that the government should still be unaware of the dire state of things in that area (South Canara District)..... In the matter of paying the government dues, that he (ryots) would part with all his belongings and over run in to debt in order to escape the humiliation of allowing his property to be brought up for auction.

The speech made by the Revenue Minister was enough to show how their representatives in the assembly were discharging their duties⁽²⁾. The defeat sustained by the government to prove that their land revenue policy and resettlement system were iniquitous hopes that they would realise the necessity for postponing resettlement at least in view of the condemnation of their policy by the legislative council.

The Drul Islam⁽³⁾ pointed out that the action of the government of enhancing the land revenue by 12½ per cent in South Canara District as a part of the resettlement was not only improper but also ludicrous. Further it remarked that it was reprehensible that the Chief Minister and his colleagues should have voted against the adjournment motion.

1. Navayuga, Dated 31st January 1935, Mangalore, Report On Vernacular Papers For The Month Of January 1935, Government Of Madras, p. 80.

2. Swadesamitram, Dated 22nd January 1935, Madras, Report On Vernacular Papers, For The Month Of January 1935, Government Of Madras, P. 89.

3. Drul Islam, Dated 23rd January 1935, Madras, Report On Vernacular Papers, For The Month Of January 1935, Government Of Madras, P. 81.

Navayuga⁽¹⁾ reported under the heading 'the settlement of the past and present' that the ryots of South Canara was so weakened by the land tax that they were unable even to oppose the injustice done to them. The excessive land tax had done great harm to the development of agriculture. Thus the misfortune was deliberately brought about as the history of the land revenue system in South Canara. The origin of that misfortune was the penal assessment known as 'Shamil' which was proposed by Haider and Tipu to punish certain Poligar of the district, for their disobedience and which was later taken as normal basis for fixity of assessment. Haider Ali and Tipu introduced seven out of twelve of the gross produce as tax. Munro seeking the difficulty of enforcing so high rate, reduced it to five out of twelve of the produce. Very soon Munro could see with his own eyes the consequences of the inadequate assessment and lands were for the most part, left uncultivated. So great was the economic harm done to the people. It gave rise to deep discontent every where and no tax campaign (1810-11) came in to being. As a result, the assessment on the productive lands was slightly reduced. Again there was no tax movements (1830-31) and this time it was put down with the aid of the troops and the highly discontented ryots were promised that the assessment would not be enhanced in future.

The permanent settlement, first brought into being in 1800, was brought after a slight alteration in 1819 and confirmed in 1831. The harm done by the land revenue system resulted in a check to agricultural progress in South Canara. This misfortune fell to South Canara's lot that rate of assessment

1. *Navayuga, Dated 4th February 1935, Madras, Report On Vernacular Papers, For The Month Of February 1935, Government Of Madras, P. 81.*

which had been imposed as a penalty in order to punish disloyalty was adopted as a permanent rate. So high was the rate obtaining in South Canara and nowhere else to be found in the province. Even after 125 years the assessment which laid the ryots of South Canara prostrate had not been lowered by even a pie. For more than a century past South Canara had been paying at Rs. 2-8-1 per acre. In 1919 the average rate for the whole province of Madras reached Rs. 2-1-4 per acre. In the resettlement of 1902 the already excessive rate which was being ruthlessly collected since 1831 was further enhanced by 75 per cent thus the injustice done to South Canara had no bounds.

In a leading article summarising the observations of the various speakers at the wargadars conference protesting against the resettlement in South Canara District and the withdrawal of certain forest concessions, the Kanthirava⁽¹⁾ remarked that the question of obtaining redress through the law courts seems to have developed to a further stage. To what extent the principles of resettlement are at variance with the actual practices was easily seen from the fact that in theory the improvements effected by the ryots were not subject to enhanced assessment, while in practice these improvements had been burdened with increased land tax.

The enhancement of land revenue due to the resettlement in South Canara caused great grievances to the ryots. Many of them failed to pay their rent. It led to arrest and imprisonment. M. Subrahmya Bhatt⁽²⁾ who was the member of local legislative council had moved an adjournment motion to

1. Kanthirava, Dated 19th February 1935, Madras, Report On Vernacular Papers, For The Month Of February 1935, Government Of Madras, P. 81.

2. Swadesamitram, Dated 30th October 1935, Madras, Report On Vernacular Papers, For The Month Of October 1935, Government Of Madras, P. 656.

consider the action of the government in arresting and imprisoning respectable pattadars of South Canara for non payment of land revenue. He expressed that⁽¹⁾ it was highly barbarious to arrest and imprison the pattadars concerned for evading payment of the kists, while, there were several ways of realising the arrears to government. The arrest and imprisonment was not justifiable, even according to the present law.

In addition to this they frequently became victims of the greedy revenue officials who were hands in gloves⁽²⁾ with the money lenders. Generally the ryots were ignorant and illiterate. So they were exploited by signing papers. Many of the revenue officials were locals and that ensured their collaboration with local shylocks. The eminent work of this evil combination⁽³⁾ produced grimly familiar pattern of rural indebtedness and transfer of property.

The growing pauperization⁽⁴⁾ of the cultivating class in the later half of the 19th century must also be attributed partly to the sudden growth in population. Rapid growth of population added to the pressure on the available agro-economic resources. In the absence of alternative avenues of employment more and more people were willing to lease in and every sub lease in on higher rental rates. This caused more demand for the cultivable land. The landlords and the money lenders made use of this situation for gaining more wealth. The land rent increased arbitrarily by the landlords because no tenant

1. Swadesamitram, Dated 30th October 1935, Madras, Report On Vernacular Papers, For The Month Of October 1935, Government Of Madras, P. 656.

2. N. Shyam Bhat, South Kanara, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 122.

3. Ibid, p. 122.

4. D. N. Dhanagrare, Peasant Movements In India, 1920-1950, (Delhi, 1983), p. 38.

could afford to give up the land⁽¹⁾. Similarly, money lenders could tighten their grip on the credit seeking peasantry.

The caste superiority had heightened the dominant position in the agrarian relationship. The class intermediaries (the landlord class) represented⁽²⁾ mainly Brahmins, Bunts or Nairs and Jains. They leased on labour for carrying out all agricultural operations. The tenants came⁽³⁾ from the poor, upper middle castes traditionally associated with cultivation. The labourers were largely from poor middle and low castes and scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The caste superiority coupled with economic superiority had enhanced the dominant position of the higher castes on the agrarian setup. They were traditionally big landlords who owned large estates and collected over a thousand muras⁽⁴⁾ of rice as rent from a number of temporary tenants. Thus the rural power structure turned out to be caste-class configuration in shaping of agrarian inequality.

An analytical study of the ryotwari system in the region highlights⁽⁵⁾ certain basic characteristics of agrarian relations under the colonial administration. There existed big land holding families in South Canara. The institution of temples and the performances of various festivals and rituals were monopolized by the land owning families.

Through this monopoly they indirectly established a religious hollow-ness over the ignorant peasantry, it paved the way for strengthening the

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1. D. N. Dhanagare, *Peasant Movements In India, 1920-1950*, (Delhi, 1983), p. 38.
 2. J. Sturrock, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894)*, p. 192.
 3. Abdul Aziz And Sudhir A. Krishna (ed), *Land Reforms In India, Karnataka*, (New Delhi, 1977), p. 162.
 4. *One Standard 'Mura' is equal to 39 kg. of rice.*
 5. K. K. N. Kurup, *Modern Kerala, Studies In Social And Agrarian Relations*, (Delhi, 1988), p. 109.

exploitation. Thus caste superiority and religious beliefs served as instruments for promoting economic interests of the land holding class, who had no direct participation in agricultural production.

The faulty system⁽¹⁾ of land revenue under the British government was responsible for placing the peasants in miserable situations. Munro who formulated the ryotwari settlement of land in South Canara expressed⁽²⁾ that the excessive land revenue assessment of Haider Ali and Tipu had impoverished the people. But as a part of the colonial policy Munro continued the same land revenue assessment. The British authorities themselves remarked that the over assessment and inequalities in the revenue settlement existed because of the absence of regular land survey. Over assessment had caused problems like land mortgages, rural indebtedness, transfer of property from the lands of the poor to the rich, rise of merchant money lenders and the general impoverishment of agriculture as a whole. But the general survey (completed in 1903) and the resettlement (1934-35) enhanced the burden of the peasantry. The landlords shifted the burden upon the peasantry. Thus the life of the rural peasantry became miserable.

The problem of tenancy and alienation of land through sale and mortgages continued in the first half of the twentieth century. Thus the dominant class of money lenders-traders-landlords came to occupy a commanding position in the whole system of agricultural production and distribution. The Madras Debt Conciliation Act of 1938⁽³⁾ had increased the sale of land as a

1. K. K. N. Kurup, *The Kayyur Riot, (Calicut, 1978), p. 27.*

2. Alexander J. Arbuthnot, *The Minutes of Munro, (Madras, 1886), p. 62.*

3. *Perspectives On Dakshina Kannada and Kodagu, Mangalore University Decennial Volume, (ed), Mangalagangothri, 1991, p. 141.*

better way of debt clearance. Further, the land owners sought renewal of mortgages to avoid scaling down of old debts. The consequence was that there was an increase in tenancy and sub-tenancy in the district.

Stuart⁽¹⁾ pointed out that Mr. Comyon⁽²⁾, the former Collector of South Canara, considered that rather less one per cent of the ryots were in affluent circumstances. About one eighth were well-to-do, that-half were poor, but able to subsist on the produce of their lands without running in to debt and that remaining 35 per cent were very poor and trapped in debt. He also remarked that⁽³⁾, the last class of ryots are very poor, owing small estates, the yield of which is not sufficient for their subsistence. They habitually borrowed and were nearly always in debt, but they were only occasionally driven to the necessity of selling their lands.

The official statement reveals that 35 per cent of the ryots live in a miserable condition and they were forced to sell their land because of the colonial land revenue policy. The landless agricultural labourers were excluded from this 35 percentage who belongs to the largest sect of the population. The condition of the landless poor peasants were more pathetic.

There were four distinct agrarian classes in South Canara. They were the landlords, rich peasants, poor peasants and agricultural labourers. Generally rich landlords belonging to the Brahmins, Bunts or Nairs(Bunts are equal to Nairs in Kasaragod taluk) and Jains, retain a portion of the fertile land for personal cultivation and let out the rest on rent. The land they retain get

1. H. A. Stuart, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. II (Madras, 1895), p. 226.*

2. W. H. Comyon was the collector of South Canara from 24-12-1876 to 12-08-1880.

3. H. A. Stuart, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. II (Madras, 1895), p. 226.*

cultivated by hired labour and they merely supervise the cultivation. The second class also belong the same caste groups of the Brahmins, Bunts or Nairs and Jains. They put in self employment partially in addition to leasing-in-labour.

The Billavas, Ganigas, Devedigas, Kulalals, Nukes, Naiks, Gowdas, Patalis, Gattis, Maniyanis, etc were the poor peasants. This third class of cultivators cultivate land by themselves employing very little hired labour and managed to subsist on the limited produce of their lands.

The last class was the landless agricultural labourers belonging mainly to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, consisted of Byras, Holeyas, Naikes, Thoties, Madigas, Koragas, Bakudas, Samagaras, Kudiyas, Panas, etc. The agricultural labourers belong for the most part to the Holeyas Caste⁽¹⁾. They were two kinds- of-servants, employed by all the year round or for the greater part of it and more field labourers, temporarily engaged for some particular work. Most of them were servants bound to the land, either by custom which was almost as strong as the actual bounds of slavery⁽²⁾ originally indebted to the land-owner from which the labourer finds it difficult to free himself. These classes were called, respectively, Mulada Holeyas and Salada Holeyas. Mulada Holeyas⁽³⁾ were being old hereditary serfs attached to Muliwarg (estate) and the later labourers bound to their master's service by being in debt to them. To these labourers cash payment's were unknown⁽⁴⁾, except occasionally in the case of 'Salade Holeyas'. Where there was a nominal annual payment to be set off against interest or the debt.

1. H. A. Stuart, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. II (Madras, 1895), p. 228.*

2. *Ibid*, p. 228.

3. J. Sturrock, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 210.*

4. *Ibid*, p. 210.

The grain wages consist of rice or paddy. The daily rice payment to men, women and children vary as follows⁽¹⁾.

Men	from	1 seer	to	2 seers	*
Women	from	2/3 seer	to	2 seers	
Children	from	3/8 seers	to	1 seer	

In the whole of South Canara, there existed a custom⁽²⁾ of giving clothes to these labourers by their master and its money value being estimated at 1 rupee per adult and 6 annas for a child. Even though they worked hard they were not in a position to gain the means for their livelihood. Thus there existed extreme exploitation of the landless agricultural labourers in the area.

In Malabar the forests and waste lands were not brought under assessment. But as a part of the ryotwari settlement, in South Canara the forests and waste lands were also assessed. Therefore the colonial exploitation was more intensive in South Canara than in Malabar.

As per the official records⁽³⁾, in South Canara the landlord never allow his tenants-in-will, larger share than one half of the gross produce, if from the share he deducted the expenses of seed, cultivation etc. The remaining quantity will be about one third for the subsistence of the tenants and his family.

1. J. Sturrock, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. I (Madras, 1894), p. 212.*

2. *Ibid, p. 212.*

3. *Letters Relating To The Revenue Administration Of Canara, (Bombay Education Society Press, 1866), p. 80.*

Tenants account

	Moras
Quantity of seed required to sow-	
lands yielding 11 fold	10
Expenses of cultivation	10
Landlords share and sirkar rent	50
Tenants' net share	30
Total	100

From one mora of seed the average returns in paddy was calculated⁽¹⁾ as 11¼ moras. The average payment to rice upon a mora of land was found to be 5 moras or in money 1 bahundry pagodas 6 fananms and 10 annas.

This shows that the tenant was allowed only 30% of the gross produce. If the production was decreased due to bad climate or any sort of natural calamities, he had to pay the full amount to the landlord and the government. Besides, the tenant was forced to pay many illegal extractions to the landlord. Thus, according to the official data the tenant's share was 30% of the gross production but in practice he received only 20% and the 80% of share was taken away as a part of the exploitation by the landlord and the Sirkar.

The role played by⁽²⁾ the law courts under the British were also against the peasantry. As per the law, the law courts intervened in favour of the landlords to evict defaulting tenants and this led to frequent land transactions ultimately impoverishing the peasantry.

1. *Letters Relating To The Revenue Administration Of Canara, (Bombay Education Society Press, 1866), p. 80.*

2. *V. V. Kunhikrishnan, Tenancy Legislation In Malabar, 1880-1970, (New Delhi, 1993), p. 16.*

The condition of chalageni tenants or tenants-at-will, by and large was depressing in South Canara as a whole, mainly because of the fear of eviction and atrocities. They were living entirely in the mercy of the landlord. They owed debts to the landlords, resulting in the payment of rent through borrowing money from the money lenders. They were left with practically, nothing for their survival.

The peasants were subjected to many illegal extractions commonly known as 'Akramapirivukal' and many other feudal levies. The tenant should get the consent of the wargadar in advance for all the important matters including the construction of his house, marriage and other functions.

The chalageni tenants besides paying a fixed rent either in kind or money has also to perform "Biti"⁽¹⁾ (gratuitous) labour at the landlords house. This consists⁽²⁾ in performing gratuitous labour towards the execution of the annual monsoon repairs in the house of his land lord and also in assisting during the occasions of marriage or other ceremony of note, that take place at his landlord's house. The tenants were forced with certain restrictions even on the tenant's language, dress and general behaviour.

It was a customary obligation on the part of tenants of paddy cultivating areas to give priority, to the work in the farms of the landlords. Only after that they were permitted to work on the plot, they had leased in. That means they were bound to render free labour at the landlords will. The tenants had to bring their own bullocks for ploughing the field of the landlords for which the landlord never paid the tenants. Some landlords were so demanding

1. Samuel Miley, *Canara Past And Present, (Mangalore, 1884), p. 58.*

2. *Ibid, p. 58.*

if a tenant did not own any bullocks, he was required to hire them at his own cost for ploughing the landlord's fields. On the days of free labour, the tenants were provided with midday meal and a 25 paise coin at the end of the day for a cup of black tea⁽¹⁾. Some landlords even tried to extract all agricultural works freely from their tenants.

As Stuart⁽²⁾ had written, the majority of the chalagenidars lived from hand to mouth and were entirely at the mercy of the landlords. Taking all Chalageni tenants together Stuart remarked⁽³⁾ that 5 per cent may be said to be in good condition, while about 20 percent are obliged to contract debt on extraordinary occasions and to keep the agricultural stock and implements up to the required strength.

Even in the commercial sector, the arecanut planters preferred to lease-out their own paddy fields to tenants on chalageni terms. Generally this tenancy continued in some plots for several years.

There was also another long established custom in South Canara by which a tenant, before reaping his crop is required to bring to the landlord "Bulakanika"⁽⁴⁾ (crop present) consisting of a fowl, if the land lord was a Christian and vegetables if the landlord was a Hindu and chicken and ghee, if the landlord was a Muslim. The object of this present was to afford the land lord an early opportunity of seeking whether the rent of previous year had been paid by his tenant. If the landlord was satisfied that no balance stands against his tenant, he accepts the present and in this case the acceptance was

1. Panduraga Nayak, *Land Reforms in Dakshina Kannada District, Unpublished MPhil Thesis, Mangalore University, 1991, p. 53*

2. H. A. Stuart, *Madras District Manual, South Canara. Vol. II (Madras, 1895), p. 227.*

3. *Ibid.* p. 227.

4. Samuel Miley, *Canara Past And Present, (Mangalore, 1884), p. 58.*

equivalent to permission to reap the crop. In case of any arrears remain to be paid, the landlord would refuse the present. In such cases the tenant must satisfy his master by some arrangement to pay off the arrears of rent of the preceding year, other wise his crop will be liable to be seized and sold through auction⁽¹⁾ of the court law. It was a statutory privilege, by which the demand of the land lord was satisfied.

The exploitation of the peasantry by the landlord with the support of the British authority existed in several distinct forms besides rack-renting, renewal fee and constant threat of eviction.

The landlords had formulated various arbitrary and illegal extractions like Vasi⁽²⁾, Nuri⁽³⁾, Mukkal⁽⁴⁾ and Seelakkasu or Vechukannal⁽⁵⁾. Vechu Kannal included the presentation to please the landlords. Usually the landlord used false measurers which enabled them to collect rent in excess. Same way, Kazhcha was an offering made to the landlord on special occasions like birth, death and festivals and ceremonies in the landlord's house.

The tenants had to pay 'Hasurvani' - an annual tribute of a basketful of vegetables apart from the fixed rental free labour. If a tenant had not grown the specific vegetables, then the tenants had to buy them to make the basket of Hasurvani sufficiently being to please the landlord. The basket was usually carried by a young sturdy member of the tenant's family. A dissatisfied

1. *Samuel Miley, Canara Past And Present, (Mangalore, 1884), p. 58-59.*

2. *Vasi was a margin to makeup the deficiency in the quantum of grains through drying.*

3. *Nuri, litterarily means three fingeres can hold. This was a large pick of paddy kept aside for every ten paras of paddy measured out.*

4. *Mukkal means three-fourth, this was measured through idangazhi, a measure of roughly one kilo gram of paddy.*

5. *Vechukanal, appears with presents, an offering made to the landloard before seeing him.*

landlord could easily discontinue the lease from the following year.

In most of the villages the landlords also extracted 'Vantige-varada' from their tenants. Under this system, they collected from tenants contributions for any public fund and used these to denote to a public cause just to show their concern, without any drain of their pockets. In Puttur and Sullia taluks the leased out paddy lands were generally away from the rest of the property of the landlords who seldom visited the plots. Hence the extra extractions such as unpaid 'bitti-begar' (free labour), 'hasurvane', 'vantage-varada' etc, so common prior to the land reforms in other taluks were non-existent in these taluks.

There was another description⁽¹⁾ of Dhair tenants, whose status was never above the Dhar (slave). This class of people being very poor, feels itself compelled to seek the support of the well to do. They were so low, both in the social and monetary scales, that they possess nothing, have not even clothes to cover their nudity, nor a hut to shelter them. This class of people there fore, with a view to raise a small hut for their dwelling and there by to secure a shelter for themselves and their family against the inclemency of the wet weather and the heat in the summer were compelled to the door of the rich, under whose control they place their persons and services by becoming their drudge. Tenants voluntarily subjects himself, a certain sum of money (say Rs 20 or 30) in a lump and enters in to an agreement to the effect that he would repay this sum at anytime. It might be demanded from him and that by way of interest of this sum, he would do any service, he

1. *Samuel Miley, Canara Past And Present, (Mangalore, 1884), p. 58, 59.*

might be required to do and that he could receive only half the amount of an ordinary labour. Obviously this led to the advantage of his master.

The extracting nature of landlordism could be best understood from their excessive demands like "Janmi bhogam" (a rent demanded in addition to the false measures which enabled them to collect rent in excess). It was the duty⁽¹⁾ of the peasants to tend the landlord's cattle and act as night watchman in his house. Their women folk were also required to do certain domestic services. Further they claimed the best fruit, best cow and even best women of the tenants. The land lords of the region, apart from the above. Inflicted all the humiliation, ignominies and infringements on the tenants and imposed special taboos and other restraints.

In a feudalistic society all liberties of the tenants were controlled and supervised by the landlords. There should be a chair in the house of tenants meant for the landlord to sit during his visit. They should not wear clothes covering the knees and they should not wear chappals and shirt in front of the landlord. They should not use⁽²⁾ even an umbrella with a handle in the presence of the Janmi.

The tenants had to show respect to the landlords. Untouchability and unapproachability widely prevailed in the region. Due to this the tenant could not go near the landlord, if the landlord belonged to a superior caste. Even the approach of low caste - or polluting caste was regarded as an offence. The tenants had to answer to the landlord only by saying 'raan' meaning yes.

1. V. V. Kunhikrishnan, *Tenancy Legislation In Malabar, 1880-1970*, (New Delhi, 1993), p. 16.

2. *Ibid*, p. 16.

When a Harijan, adiyar or tenant passed the pathayappura or store house of the landlord, he had to observe certain formalities. At the sight of the pathayappura he should remove his clothes from shoulder, lower his palm leaf umbrella and walk with his head bowed.

The landlord potails were the village headman who administered local justice. The pathayappuras or store house were the centers of local administration, where the Potails used to try both civil and criminal disputes. They did not follow any procedure or specific law. The decision was left completely to the interest and will of the landlord. For petty offences the usual punishment was whipping, beating, fining, confining in pathayam (a large wooden basement for grains), tying hands and pouring pickles in to the eyes, tying hands and put in sun heat and making the victim to drink cow dung water. As the legal administration of the area was vested upon the landlord nobody was daring to question the landlord's authority.

Punishing the tenant by using deshavirodham or enmity of all the residents was a common practice existed in some parts of South Canara. If a peasant incurred the displeasure of a landlord, he was excommunicated. The barber would deny the excommunicated person to shave. He would be prohibited from entering temples, bathing in public tanks, water from well, participating in social functions and religious ceremonies. Anybody doing any service to him or even speaking to him was either excommunicated or fined.

The children of the tenants were denied education at the command of the landlord. Even the smallest show of independence was taken as personal affront. All members of the tenant's families worked as wage labourers to

support their families. They lived in thatched houses and managed to have a subsistence standard of living. Under the British rule the law courts intervened in favour of the landlords. So eviction of defaulting tenants became very much easy. It led to frequent land transactions and ultimately the impoverishment of the peasantry. Similarly the commercialization of agriculture was one of the impact of colonial administration.

The agrarian relationship that existed between the land holders and the tenants were not favourable for the development of agrarian economy in the South Canara District. Neither the Government nor the landlord had done anything for the improvement of agriculture. Because of the high land revenue extraction many land holding families were passing through considerable difficulties. The landlord tried to transfer the burden up on the tenants. Both the classes tried to maintain their holding and lease. Thus insecurity became a common feature in the agrarian structure during this period. The exploitative nature of tenancy of Kasaragod was very clearly brought by the Malabar Tenancy Committee Report⁽¹⁾

The tenant of Kasaragod are evicted even on flimsy grounds by force and not through courts. Unjust and arbitrary evictions are common. The tenants has to quit the land at the whim and caprice of the landlord.

This condition in Kasaragod taluk was similar to that of the other parts of the South Canara District. The early 1930's brought greatest hardships and miseries to the peasantry. The great depression caused the fall in prices of agricultural production. The tenants and agricultural labourers were the im-

1. *The Report Of The Malabar Tenancy Committee, 1948, Regional Archives, Calicut, Chapter 4, p. 154.*

mediate victims of the economic depression. Same way the grievances of the actual cultivators had been further accelerated by the resettlement and re-assessment of 1934-35.

The resettlement of 1934-35 had caused the enhancement of sale of land in the district. Lands of the ryots were sold for arrears of revenue due through public auction. The following table shows the proclamation of purchase of lands by the government⁽¹⁾.

Month	1932 (acres)	1935 (acres)	1938 (acres)
Jan	18.4	12.34	130.71
Feb	20.49	20.62	148.27
Mar	85.53	9.25	38.22
Apr	26.17	7.76	130.33
May	57.49	21.47	422.33
Jun	57.09	20.35	39.05
Jul	4.87	229.99	48.71
Aug	Nil	13.58	37.65
Sep	Nil	24.72	13.59
Oct	Nil	42.63	81.76
Nov	1.51	32.39	3.78
Dec	36.06	88.58	35.17
Total	307.61	523.68	1129.57

The above table reveals that in 1932, 307.61 acres of land were sold,

1. *South Canara District Gazette, January-June 1932, July-December 1932, January-June 1935, July-December 1935, January-June 1938, July-December 1938.*

but during the resettlement period it was enhanced to 523.68 acres in 1935. With in the three years 1129.57 acres of land of the ryots were sold because of the default in the payment of land revenue. Thus many tenants lost their land due to the excessive land revenue imposed through the resettlement in the district.

The government realised that the South Canara District in common with other however, been general throughout the presidency and the result of continuing the existing districts was suffering from the economic depression. The fall in prices, rates assessment in the District of South Canara would be to perpetuate the advantage enjoyed by it at the expense of the other district of the presidency. Which have been resettled since the year in which the resettlement in the district was introduced⁽¹⁾.

Distribution of the Land holdings⁽²⁾ (Operational by sites-1995-96)

(Holding in thousands, area in thousand hectares)

Classification of sites	No	Area	% of holdings	% of area
Marginal below 1 hac.	202	75	68.94	24.19
Small between 1-2 hac.	52	74	17.74	23.87
Semi-medium 2-4 hac.	27	74	9.21	23.87
Medium 4-10 hac.	11	61	3.75	19.67
Large, above 10 hac.	1	26	0.34	8.38
Total	293	310	100	100

The government and the landlords used all sorts of atrocities to collect the revenue and the tenants were threatened by the moneylenders with

1. *Proceedings of the Board of Revenue No. 3, 16th January 1935, p. 2.*

2. *Statistical abstract of Karnataka 1998-99, Director of Economics statistics Bangalore 2002.*

eviction. Thus agrarian structure became more crucial in 1930's. Which paved for the emergence of peasant organisations or Raitha Sanghas and new sort of agrarian conflicts along with the national movement.

The report of the Madras Banking Enquiry Committee in 1930 remarked⁽¹⁾:

we find it difficult to draw a clear line between cultivation farm servants and sub-letting. Sub-letting is rarely on a money rental. It is commonly on a sharing system, the landlord getting 40 to 60 or even 80 per cent of the yield and the tenant the rest. The tenant commonly goes on from year to year eking out a precarious living on such terms, borrowing from the landlord, being supplied by him with seed, cattle and implements. The farm servants on the other hand, uses the landlord's seed, cattle and implements gets advances in cash from time to time for petty requirements and is paid from the harvest either a lumpsum of grain or proportion of the yield. The farm servants may in some cases be paid little cash as well as a fixed amount of grain. The tenant may cultivate with his own stock and implements, but there is in practice no very clear line between the two; and when the landlord is an absentee, it is not always obvious whether the actual cultivator is a farm labourer or a sub tenant.

The rural population was indulged in the superstitions and rituals. They believed that the landlords and the tenants were the creation of the god itself and it was their fate to under go all sorts of sufferings. Thus, the belief that as the landlord-tenant relationship was being the command of god, it could not be changed. Nobody dared to question any of the atrocities of the landlords and those who acted against the will of the landlord was punished mercilessly. The British police and Judiciary took part on the side of the

1. *The report of the Madras Banking Enquiry Committee in 1930 Quoted in India Today, R. Palme Dutt, (Calcutta, 1986), p. 242.*

landlord for the atrocities. Thus the landlords exploited the ignorance of the tenants.

Another sort of ill treatment made by the landlord was the non issue of receipt for payments. Generally the landlords did not issue the receipts to the tenants for the payment of rent. The receipt of rent was documental evidence to the tenants. This was the weapon used by the landlords to threaten the tenants to obey their orders, otherwise the tenant would be evicted. No tenant would dare to ask for receipt from the landlord, because the landlords enjoyed all such powers to over rule the tenants.

The peasant was actually in a deteriorated position. The landless peasantry who belonged to the lowest stratum led a life equal to slaves. Many of the landless labourers belonged to the polluting class and had to under go all sorts of sufferings. The tenant paid almost all his produce as rent and left a little for his subsistance. Even though certain reform movements emerged in South Canara in the last part of the 19th century, they never came forward for the upliftment of the downtrodden. Generally they believed in fate and lived without opposing the ill-treatments and inhuman behaviour of the landlords.

The dwelling places of most of the tenants and the landless labourers were in a very pitiable condition. They lived in houses or certain type of shelters built in the places of the landlords. These were insecure and unhygienic. The following table will show the dwelling areas of the people of the South Canara District⁽¹⁾.

1. *The Report Of The Census Of The Madras Presidency, 1871, With Appendix, Vol. I, (Madras, 1874), p. 395.*

Total population.....	9,18,362
No of houses of the better sort.....	2,946
No of their inhabitants	12,070
No of houses of inferior sort	1,81,357
No of inhabitants	9,04,416
<u>Unknown</u>	
No of houses	260
No of their inhabitants	1,876

The above table reveals that only 1.31% of the total population of the district lived in better sorts of houses. 98.48% of the total population lived in inferior sorts of houses. Considering the political and economic condition of that period we can make a conclusion that these people did not have any houses worth the name and they lived in any sort of shelter constructed without any cost.

Munro⁽¹⁾ attributed the unsatisfactory agricultural production to the poverty of the people and to the ryots poverty and high assessment were much the same thing. The one was the cause of the other.

Poverty prevented the ryots from making the land productive and high assessment deprived him of the fruits of his labour.

The cheapness of Grain was another factor discouraging the increase of agricultural output. As Baramhal had little scope of sending out grain, every succeeding addition to the population of farmers

1. Ambica Ghosh, *Emerging Capitalism In Agriculture, The Historical Roots Of Its Uneven Development*, (New Delhi, 1988), p. 205-206.

who cultivated grain only, could add little or nothing to revenue, and by diminishing the price as it increased the quantity of output, proved detrimental to the whole body of cultivators. In these circumstances, any increase of grain cultivation was superfluous to agriculture.

Indebtness and eviction became the common feature of the agrarian system. This caused stagnation and deterioration of agriculture, lack of development of the existing cultivated and area of land passing out of cultivators. Transfer of land to the money lenders and speculators reflected the growth of landlordism and of the proletariat.

The two dominant features of the British rule in the agrarian relations in South Canara was the growing concentration of ownership on one hand and expansion of tenancy on the other. 1930's marked the concentration of land in the hands of the non cultivating owners⁽¹⁾. The economic depression of 1929-34 and the second world war 1939-45 had accelerated the process. The increase in land alienation was one of the adverse effects of this dual crisis in the district. The creditors used pressure on debtors to sell their land to clear off debts. The Madras Debt Conciliation Act 1936 and the Madras Agriculturist Relief Act 1938 did not make any sort of relief to the tenants. But they served only to reinforce the dominance of the creditors, traders and landlords in the rural society.

The above mentioned crisis caused economic depression and second world war resulted in the loss of confidence in banking institutions and their operations. Thus the instability of the value of currency created a turn to

1. *Census Report Of India, 1931, Vol. I, Part I, p. 283.*

invest money in immovable property which was considered as safe investment. This created demand for land resulting in high land values. So the debtors were persuaded to sell their landed property in order to clear the debts. This created important changes in the agrarian relations. New landowners, mostly from non agricultural classes purchased the lands. They did not cultivate the land themselves but preferred to lease their lands out. Thus tenancy and sub-tenancy increased in the district. This caused the emergence of a new group of absentee landlords who were interested in gaining more profit in agrarian relations. However due to the fear of drastic fall in the land values in the post war period, a drastic fall in land transactions had witnessed the period after 1943⁽¹⁾.

With the development of Indian nationalism, Gandhiji started agitation against untouchability and unapproachability. This resulted in Vaikam Satyagraha and Guruvayur Satyagraha in Kerala. This enabled the people of the Malabar and Kasaragod taluk to oppose the caste monopoly. In this background the old beliefs suffered great blow and created a sense of self confidence among the oppressed class to oppose the caste system, landlordism and imperialism.

It was in this situation, that the peasant movement acquired a significant growth in South Canara District. Thus 1930's and 1940's marked the development of the peasant movements in various parts of the district. The second world war gave a new turn to the movement of the peasantry. The food shortage and high prices of essential commodities and the atrocities of

1. *Perspectives On Dakshina Kannada and Kodagu, Mangalore University Decennial Volume, (ed), Mangalagangothri, 1991, p. 141.*

the government, landlords and the money lenders were rousing the peasant movements into more and more militant form. The peasant organisation demanded protection from eviction, reduction of rent, issue of receipt for the payment of rent and also the legislation for the abolishing of landlordism.

Thus 1940's marked powerful struggles in the struggles in the agrarian structure of the district. The peasantry were mobilised under the leadership of the communists and the Karshaka Sangham to challenge the grievances caused by landlordism and imperialism. This resulted in open clashes between the peasants on one side and the government on the other. The tensions developed in the agrarian structure were termed as agrarian conflicts.

CHAPTER - 4

AGITATING PEASANTRY

Organised peasant movements started in South Canara as a part of national movement in the 20th century. These movements culminated as an inspiring force for the social and economic transformation apart from freedom struggles. The most important aspect of the peasant struggles, which started in the 1930's was influenced by political ideology. So the struggles were transformed⁽¹⁾ into broad-based social movements which were directed against landlordism and caste system on one hand and imperialism on the other.

As Bipan Chandra stated⁽²⁾

The establishment of British power in India was a prolonged process of piecemeal conquest and consolidation and the colonisation of the economy and society. This process produced discontent, resentment and resistance at every stage. This popular resistance took in three broad forms: civil rebellions, tribal uprisings and peasant movements.

1. P. Radhakrishnan, *Peasant Struggles, Land Reforms and Social Change (New Delhi), 1989, p. 89.*

2. Bipan Chandra, *India's Struggle For Independence, 1857-1947, (New Delhi, 1989), p. 41.*

These sort of rebellions occurred in various parts of South Canara in the 19th century. The Koots rebellions of 1810-11 and 1830-31 and the rebellion of Kalyana Swami (1837) were important.

Early Resistance Movements

In the history of colonial India, insurgency⁽¹⁾ of the peasantry is as old as colonialism itself. In South Canara there arose peasant movements during 1810-11 and 1830-31. It should be analysed in the light of peasant discontent and frustration on account of economic grievances. There was no highly developed political and national consciousness behind it.

Along with the colonialisaton the company introduced strict control over the economic surplus. So the revenue regulations and commercial agreements enforced on the agrarian class resulted as the major cause of the two uprisings. They resisted the company's rule, demanding the redressal of specific grievances caused by the colonial exploitation. The peasant uprisings of these period could be considered as tax rebellion.

The peasant unrest of 1810-11

The official records did not furnish necessary information's about the nature, organisation and leadership of the peasant unrest of 1810-11. Alexander Read, the then collector of Canara in his letters to the Board of Revenue made some references about economic causes of the unrest. However the government did not give much importance to the unrest of 1810-11.

The peasants refused to pay to kist (installment of revenue) to the government in 1810-11. The main reason for this non payment of kist was that

1. N. Shyam Bhat, *South Kanara*, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 138.

the over assessment of revenue which was a part of the colonial exploitation. The official records states⁽¹⁾ that the koots (assemblages) joined together and announced the refusal to pay the kist to the government and sought remission in the revenue assessment. The demand for remission by the cultivators was made in 1809. In his letters dated on 30th April and 11th May, 1809, Alexander Read⁽²⁾, the Collector complained that he experienced more difficulty than formerly in making his collections, that of late, he saw no signs of improvement.

The ryots of different parts of the district joined together with a view of obtaining reduction of rent. This was reported by Read⁽³⁾ in his letter on 29th December 1810 to the Board of Revenue that, anticipating large demands for remission in settlement of that year arising out of a spirit of combination in the part of the ryots over the whole province. Read recommended⁽⁴⁾ the publication of a proclamation in the name of the Board, declaring that unreasonable claims to remission would not be allowed and specifying those cases in which indulgence on that respect would be granted.

The ryots complained⁽⁵⁾ about the introduction of new heads of revenue. They hated the introduction of salt and tobacco monopoly. Same way they also opposed⁽⁶⁾ the introduction of the British judicial system or law courts and the use of stamp paper.

1. *Proceedings of The Board of Revenue, Dated 10th January 1811, Vol. No. 533, p. 258-59.*

2. *Letter's Relating to the Revenue administration of Canara, (Bombay Education Societies Press, 1866), p. 142.*

3. *Ibid. p. 142.*

4. *Ibid. p. 142.*

5. *N. Shyam Bhat, South Kanara, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 142.*

6. *Proceedings of The Board of Revenue, Dated 30th April 1810, Vol. No. 513, p. 3350-56.*

Another reason for the unrest was the economic depression experienced in the district. Due to this, the prices of agricultural crops had fallen considerably. The prices of the principal crops like rice, coconut, pepper, betelnut, cardamom etc had fallen. Because of the fall of market prices, the commutation rates of the crops had created great harm to the ryots. The cultivators were forced to pay all most all of their crops as the rent. Thus the impoverishment among the ryots caused the resistance of 1810-11.

Even though the protest was weak, comparing with the protest movement of 1830-31, it directed against the revenue administration of the company. Alexander Read⁽¹⁾ himself admitted that the assessment was too high and he thought, the inhabitants were beginning to feel the effects of over assessment more and more every year. Even though they admitted the fact of over assessment they did not take any permanent measures to help the ryots. The government granted temporary remissions in land revenue only which resulted in the peasant uprising of 1830-31.

Peasant Unrest of 1830-31

The over assessment and the crisis in the market prices compelled the ryots to resist the revenue policies of the government in 1830-31. The British administrative records referred this uprising as Koot. It was a strong protest of the peasants of South Canara against the British supremacy.

There were many causes for the disturbances. After the unrest in 1810-11 the government did not make any changes in the excessive

1. *Letter's Relating to the Revenue administration of Canara, (Bombay Education Societies Press, 1866), p. 142-143.*

revenue collection. There was an acute depression⁽¹⁾ for some years after 1820 in trade, commerce and agriculture of the region and resultant low prices of the agricultural products. Thus the depression caused considerable fall in prices of commodities especially rice and also coconut, pepper, cardamom etc through which they earned their livelihood. Apart from the low prices, there was considerable discrepancy that prevailed⁽²⁾ in the government rate of commutation of the value of agricultural products. Thus the low market prices and the high commutation rates of the products seriously affected the economic condition of the peasantry.

The ryots opposed⁽³⁾ the disastrous affects of the salt and tobacco monopoly and the expenses involved in attending the courts, the expenses of stamps, the stamp laws, ferry farms, and the abkary. The Fasli 1240 saw the failure of crops in Canara, thus the production of the food grains were decreased and there was acute scarcity of food grains. The Huzoor jumwabundy⁽⁴⁾ in November 1830 was concluded in a harsh and hasty manner without considering the opinion and accounts of the condition of the ryots. The considerable fall in produce and the adverse market together had reduced the living standards of the people considerably.

Stokes⁽⁵⁾ had written about the Huzoor jumwabundy that,

No hope of future enquiry was held out to the ryots and they

1. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 68.*

2. *N. Shyam Bhat, South Kanara, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 145.*

3. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 68.*

4. *Reports of John Stokes on Revision of Assessment and Disturbances Known as Koots in Canara, (Mangalore, 1885), p. 27-28.*

5. *Ibid, p. 28.*

were left to consider the settlement as fixed and irrevocable, they had no reason to suppose otherwise no revised settlement had ever taken place.

N.S.Cameron the Collector of Canara remarked that⁽¹⁾ the ryots were dissatisfied with the settlement and little attention had been paid to their representations. In this circumstance the ryots sent arzees or petitions⁽²⁾ requesting the government to revise the settlement and grant uniform remission in their collection. When peasant representatives had gone to give petition at Mangalore, they were not able to see the collector because he was out of station. So they had petitioned in harsh words. Stokes had mentioned that⁽³⁾,

Having no means to pay the jummbundy we had resolved to present to you an arzees stating our circumstances at the time you came to make the jummbundy; but as you settled it expeditiously and returned to Mangalore; and as it makes 10 days (or sometime) to do, in concert, a business where all the ryots were concerned; and as on our coming in to Mangalore, we found that you were gone in the direction of Moodabidry for jummbundy; unable to follow, we have addressed this petition to you from this place (probably Mangalore).

The orders on these arzees were dated on 27th December 1830⁽⁴⁾ that,

1. *Reports of John Stokes on Revision of Assessment and Disturbances Known as Koots in Canara, (Mangalore, 1885), p. 28.*

2. *Ibid, p. 28.*

3. *Ibid, p. 42.*

4. *Ibid, p. 42.*

to these arzees the same reply was sent, viz, that the requisite investigation was made at the Huzoor jumma bundy, which having been finished, no further orders would be issued. The first stage of the unrest that was sending petitions was over with this.

The second stage was the beginning of koots or assemblages were the organised combinations among the ryots or union of leaders and active supporters of the peasant movement. They held meetings and discussed their problems and the ways and means to solve it. The first report of a koot, received by Dickinson⁽¹⁾ was from the Tahsildar of Bakel on 3rd January 1831.

The ryots representatives in various parts of South Canara, Bakel, Bundual, Manjeswar, Kumbala, Mulky, Mogral, Udeywar, Bakura, Talapadi, Uppinangady, Vittal, Kadri, Brahmawar, Madhur, Coondapoor, Kumbala, Pady and Kasaragod were the important centers of the koots. The koots extended to North Canara also.

Temples had become the important centers of the koots. Manjunatha temple at Kadri was the major centre of the peasant uprisings, where the "Grand Koot" was organised⁽²⁾ towards the end of January 1831. Number of ryots from Bakel and Bantwal joined the meeting at Kadri. The Venkataramana Temple at Basur, the Mahamayi temple at Mangalore, the temple at Manjeshwar and the temple at Wamanjur were some of the important centers of the koots.

During the Mappila rebellion of Malabar, the Mosque and Madrassah played important centers of the revolters. The Tangals, Mausaliyars, Khazis

1. *Reports of John Stokes on Revision of Assessment and Disturbances Known as Koots in Canara, (Mangalore, 1885), p. 30.*

2. *N. Shyam Bhat, South Kanara, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 152.*

and other important religious leaders of the Islamic faith had actively co-operated in the rebellion. In the Koot resistance the temples became the meeting centre of the ryots but at the same time the Hindu religious leaders never had any link with the peasant uprising.

In order to organise⁽¹⁾ the koots the ryots maintained one potail and one head ryots in each of the village. There were separate headman for the maganes. Further each of the Koots had its own leaders and all of them met and discussed at the 'Grand Koot' (Kadri)⁽²⁾. They also organised 'secret council'. It comprised of two or three Mukesars (Head Ryots) of each magane. The object of this council was to maintain the secrecy of the whole organisational affairs of the koots. The secret council played the role of linking and organising body of these peasant uprising.

The ryots determined to refuse the kists to the government until fresh settlement was made. The koots were well organised and there existed unity among the ryots which enabled them to resist the British rule. Same way, the natives who served as the revenue officials had taken the leading role of the koots.

During the period, the government received the news that the koots continued to increase and that required some assurance in writing, to induce them to disperse. Dickinson on the 2nd February 1831 issued⁽³⁾ a proclamation, stating that he had received all the petitions of the people, was convinced of their losses and would grant them liberal remissions. But, he warned them

1. N. Shyam Bhat, *South Kanara*, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 153.

2. *Ibid*, p. 153.

3. *Reports of John Stokes on Revision of Assessment and Disturbances Known as Koots in Canara*, (Mangalore, 1885), p. 113.

that if they did not disperse, he should be forced to recommend the government for the introduction of Martial law. But the koots were not ready to obey the declaration and argued⁽¹⁾ that they were not in arms against the government and they were not liable to be punished under Regulation VII of 1808.

On 13th March 1831, M.S. Cameron became the collector of Canara. It was after his promise to the ryots the unrest came to an end. Cameron⁽²⁾ promised that their petitions would be considered and remissions would be made after an examination of the losses to redress their hardships. On the other hand the ryots then decided to stop the organising Koots.

Stokes⁽³⁾ made inquiry up on the complaint of the ryots against the native Christians and took certain action. The native Christians who were in the revenue department at the end of February 1831, a few days before Cameron took charge, three of them had been dismissed, three had been induced by harsh treatments to resign, two were dead and one who temporarily employed had been relieved; so that there now remained only thirteen. And also decided that no one had been promoted or newly entertained by Cameron.

Some of the important leaders of the Koots were serving⁽⁴⁾ the government, in the Revenue Department. Soorupa who was the Head Moonshee of Dickinson's Cutcherry at Brahmawar, Krishna Raw who was the Head Serishtadar, Ranga Rao (brother of Krishan Rao) who was the serishtadar of

1. *Reports of John Stokes on Revision of Assessment and Disturbances Known as Koots in Canara, (Mangalore, 1885), p. 113.*

2. *Ibid, p. 113, 117.*

3. *Ibid, p. 122.*

4. *Ibid, p. 118-119.*

the Mangalore taluk, Vyasa Raw who was the Serishtadar of Bakel (Kasaragod) taluk, etc were the important officials, who participated the koots and they had become the leaders of the unrest. Generally the British Government appointed only the landlords or the upper class persons in these posts. Thus the koots unrest was led by upper class or the landlord class. They had the same problems of the ryots, for which they sought redressal.

Even though it was led by the landlord class the middle class ryots and the poor ryots also participated. The reason was that the economic condition became worst and the middle class ryots could not meet the government demands. Same way the poor ryots who cultivated their lands by themselves could not bear the enhanced assessment. The landless labourers who occupied the bottom of the social strata, did not participate in this resistance.

Stokes⁽¹⁾ observed that the koots rebellions were the conspiracy of the Brahmin servants of the company who opposed the native Christians and to restore the Brahmin ascendancy in the Cutcherry. He also put forward his view that the ryots had no opportunity of stating their cases before the government. But he tried to defend the revenue system. Even though Stokes expressed⁽²⁾ the remissions were actually small, the loss of the second crop proved heavy and extensive and in third crop, there was a general failure, but they could not be foreseen and provided for the settlement.

The leaders of the second koots rebellion was punished by the government. Krishna Rao was dismissed⁽³⁾ from service on 8th December 1831.

1. *Reports of John Stokes on Revision of Assessment and Disturbances Known as Koots in Canara, (Mangalore, 1885), p. 109.*

2. *Ibid, p. 108.*

3. *Ibid, p. 105.*

Dickinson directed the Tahsildar of Mangalore to attach the property of some of the defaulters⁽¹⁾. He also issued warrants for the apprehension of 16 persons who were considered to be the ring leaders of the Koot and the Tahsildar of Mangalore was entrusted with the execution of the warrant. Some important officers, Ranga Rao, Namappa, Ballappa, Madhav Row, Surappa, Vyasa Row, Sarvottam Row, and Attavara Ramappa were dismissed from service⁽²⁾. The rebel peasants were interrogated and released after signing a Moochilka (an agreement in writing), in which they agreed that they would not organise the Koot, but begged that they might not be called upon for the second, until the Jumma bandy should have been fixed⁽³⁾.

The British authorities did not introduce any permanent measure to help the ryots and instead recommended the remissions only. He also recommended⁽⁴⁾ the continuation of tharao assessment at an attainable standard to encourage agricultural improvement and put an end to annual fluctuation in the settlement. Though the movement failed to achieve its aim, it put forward the defects of the revenue policy and administration of the company and same way it exposed the undesirable condition of the peasantry. The unrest became an important landmark in the history of the peasant movements in South Canara.

The Rebellion of Kalyana Swami, (1837)

Kalyana Swami's rebellion may be looked as one of the early cases of resistance against the British. The establishment of British supremacy and

1. *Reports of John Stokes on Revision of Assessment and Disturbances Known as Koots in Canara, (Mangalore, 1885), p. 112.*
2. *Ibid, p. 159.*
3. *Ibid, p. 113.*
4. *Ibid, p. 108.*

colonial policy disturbed the traditional land relation and also the economic and social privileges which the chieftains and the landlords enjoyed. They were converted in to subordinate position under the British. Thus the objective of the movement was the restoration of old political, socio and economic order. The rebellion had certain features of peasant uprising also. The rebellion of Kalyana Swami⁽¹⁾ had become a part of folklore in the region. This rebellion may was popularly known as Kalyanappa Katakayi (Katakai means disturbances).

Chikka Veerandara Wodeyar (1820-34) was the last Raja of Coorg. In 1834 he objected the increasing⁽²⁾ interference of the company in the internal administration of Coorg. When the Raja protested, the British deposed him by using force and appointed a company officer, a superintendent, to administer Coorg. A part of territory which were below the ghats were joined to Canara. They gave rise to serious dissatisfaction in these parts.

Prior to the establishment of British rule in Coorg, the ryots paid rent in kind, but after that they were forced to pay rent in cash. As a result of this the ryots were force to sell their products in low prices and approach the money lenders. This created great hardship up on the ryots which caused resentment against the British rule.

As a part of colonial administration they monopolised⁽³⁾ salt and tobacco, the revenue system was transformed, judicial system and law courts were introduced and new method of export of grain was also introduced. The

1. N. Shyam Bhat, *South Kanara*, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 166.

2. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District*, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 69.

3. *Report of M. Lewin, on the internal administration of the province of Canara, Dated 18th December, 1837*, (Mangalore, 1911), p. 2.

people opposed these sort of the reforms. In the letter send by M. Lewin⁽¹⁾ the collector of Canara to Charles Robert Cotton, he appealed him a reduction of the monopoly price that would be acceptable to such part of the community.

The people below the ghats were in fact waiting⁽²⁾ for an opportunity to rise against the British and to overthrow their rule such an opportunity came to them after the disposition of the Coorg Raja, and in Kalyana Swami, who declared himself as the only surviving heir to the Coorg throne, being the second son of Appaji, the uncle of Raja of Coorg.

When he proclaimed himself as the Raja of Coorg people in large numbers joined with him. Kalyana Swami issued a proclamation to the people of Canara and Coorg appealing for their support to overthrow the companies rule. This was the same type of proclamation made by Veluthambi Dalava, the Divan of Travancore at Kundara against the British in 1809.

The actual rebellion⁽³⁾ took place during March and April 1837. In Bellore (29th and 30th March), the insurgents attacked the government office and looted the treasury. On the night of 30th March a report reached⁽⁴⁾ the Collector addressed by the Sheristedar of Bantwal that about 2000 people had assembled in arms at Bellary pett and taken possession of the Peishcar's Cutcherry, and placed the Head Sheristedar, the Tahsildar and other principal servants in confinement.

1. *Report of M. Lewin, on the internal administration of the province of Canara, Dated 18th December, 1837, (Mangalore, 1911), p. 6.*

2. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 69.*

3. *N. Shyam Bhat, South Kanara, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 176.*

4. *Report of M. Lewin, on the internal administration of the province of Canara, Dated 18th December, 1837, (Mangalore, 1911), p. 1.*

From Bellore, Kalyana Swami and his followers marched to Puttur. At Puttur they attacked public offices and looted the treasury. Under the leadership of the Collector, the British army reached at Puttur, but the company's army was easily routed⁽¹⁾ by Kalyana Swami and his followers and the Collector fled to Mangalore on horse. The Collector M. Lewin⁽²⁾ himself remarked that, from Puttur they returned to Bantwal in darkness, in Bantwal they found the place almost deserted and left Bantwal taking Gurpur road and reached Mangalore in the evening without further opposition.

Then the rebels marched to Bantwal on 2nd of April 1837. At Bantwal Lakshmappa, the pensioned descendant of an old feudal chieftain of that place and Manjappa Hegade of Dharmastahala openly supported them. When the main force was at Bantwal a small troop was sent to⁽³⁾ Kasaragod on 2nd April and they looted the treasury there.

On 6th April, the rebels marched to Kumbala and were active there. From Bantwal, the rebellion spread to Uppinangadi and Mulki. The forces of Kalyana Swami marched⁽⁴⁾ from Bantwal to Mangalore on 3rd April and in the meantime Subraya Hegde of Tenku Kumbala Kote was marching with an army towards Mangalore to help Kalyana Swami. But one of the descendents of the Kumbala Raja⁽⁵⁾ brought this to the notice of the British at Tellichery. Soon the British took steps to prevent the Hegde from crossing the river Netravati.

1. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 70.*

2. *Report of M. Lewin, on the internal administration of the province of Canara, Dated 18th December, 1837, (Mangalore, 1911), p. 3.*

3. *N. Shyam Bhat, South Kanara, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 178.*

4. *Report of M. Lewin, on the internal administration of the province of Canara, Dated 18th December, 1837, (Mangalore, 1911), p. 7.*

5. *Ibid, p. 7.*

The rebels were thrown into the sea and made to drown.

Hearing the news of Kalyana Swami's march towards Mangalore the English officials got frightened⁽¹⁾ and left for Tellichery by sea route. After entering the city, Kalyana Swamy broke open the prison gates and freed the prisoners, took over the treasury and set fire to the houses of the English officers at Mangalore. For nearly a fortnight Mangalore was under the possession⁽²⁾ of Kalyana Swami and his flag flew on the present light house hill in place of the company's flags.

The success of Kalyana Swami was short lived. The British troops advanced from Tellicherry and suppressed the ill- disciplined and poorly armed followers of Kalyana Swami. They suppressed the rebellion and captured the leaders. The government proclaimed martial law⁽³⁾ in the district. The British succeeded in suppressing the rebellion and re-established their control by the end of April 1837 and the martial law was withdrawn by the end of June. Kalyana Swami, Lakshmappa and some other prominent leaders were hanged, while the rest were deported to Singapore for life.

The economic burden inflicted by the British caused the peasantry to think the restoration of the Haleri rule and to support Kalyana Swamy. On march 30th 1837, Kalyana Swami proclaimed⁽⁴⁾ that if he became the ruler he would stop the collection of revenue for the first three years and he would abolish the duties on commodities of day today consumption. The high exaction of land revenue, salt and tobacco monopoly introduction of law court

1. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 70.*

2. *Ibid, p. 70.*

3. *N. Shyam Bhat, South Kanara, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 179.*

4. *Ibid, 171.*

were the subject of criticism of the ryots. The old economy was disturbed and had provoked anger and resentment. Thus the peasantry supported the rebellion. Ill-organised and poorly armed followers of Kalyana Swami were not able to resist the well established colonial rule. The rebellion was a failure. But it was a powerful early colonial protest against the British in the history of South Canara.

The Peasant Movements In South Canara District

The class organisation of peasant, the Raitha Sangha (peasant organisation) brought the national movement to the lowest stratum of the rural society and added new dimensions in its anti-imperialist struggles. During the second half of 1930 and 1940 the agrarian classes joined the national movement and played pressure tactics on government for tenancy legislations. The nationalist movement and the organised struggle of Malabar peasantry had been largely responsible⁽¹⁾ for awaking the peasants in Kasaragod taluk of the South Canara District.

The salt satyagraha paved the way for the development of national consciousness in South Canara District. Some of the peasants, who were attracted towards the movement, actively participated in salt satyagraha and other programmes. Their participation was not a collective organisational action but of individual . The organization of the Kerala Congress Socialist Party (1934) brought radical changes in the political situation of Malabar and it affected the adjoining Kasaragod taluk of South Canara. On the basis of the decision of the Congress Socialist Party the peasants were organised in Malabar

1. K. K. N. Kurup, *The Kayyur Riot, (Calicut, 1978), p. 25.*

and Kasaragod taluk.

The peasant movements in the northern part of present Kerala (including Kasaragod taluk) was much related in every respect to the wider political movement⁽¹⁾ or freedom struggle of Kerala. Some of the Congress men attracted towards Communism and Socialism. Thus the study of the peasant movement in this area is the study⁽²⁾ of growth of communism also.

The emergence of the peasant movements known as the Kasaragod Taluk Karshaka Sangham in 1937 marked a new turn in the history of the freedom struggle in the district. Within a few years the Karshaka Sangham spread political and national awareness among the weaker sections and promoted strong nationalist sentiments among them.

Prior to this South Canara witnessed a series of social reform movements⁽³⁾ between 1852 and 1905. The branches of the Brahmasamaj, the Araya Samaj and the Theosophical society started their social reform activities in Mangalore as early as 1870's. They carried propaganda for the upliftment of women and untouchables. The introduction of English education and early vernacular news papers⁽⁴⁾ namely Mangalore Samachar (1842) and Kannada Kegari (Manjeshwar, 1885) paved for the spread of nationalism among the educated people.

Swadeshabhimani (1907) marked the first political journalism in the

1. E. M. S. Namboodiripad, *Autobiography*, 1969, p. 346.

2. K. K. N. Kurup, *Aspects of Kerala History and Culture*, (Thiruvananthapuram, 1997), p. 90.

3. K. G. Vasantha Madhava, *Trends In Karnataka Historical Research*, (History Department, University of Calicut, 1996), p. 89.

4. *Ibid*, p. 90.

district. Navayuga, Tilaka Sandesh (1919), Kantheerava (1919), Satyagrahi (1921), Rashtrabandhu (1928) etc continued the tempo. These aspects had influenced⁽¹⁾ the freedom struggle of South Canara, which became active in the second decade of the 20th century.

The Home Rule Movement of 1916 had little effect in Mangalore. From 1919 onwards the freedom struggle made its impact on South Canara and Mangalore and became the centre of Anti-Rowlat Act. In 1922, an All Karnataka Political Conference was held⁽²⁾ at Mangalore under the presidentship of Smt. Sarojini Naidu and this gave a fillip to the national movement in the area.

The nationalist movement had constant ideological transformation in the second decade of the 20th century. The socialist and Communist ideology began to spread in India during this period. Politically this force and energy found reflection in the rise of left wing inside the Congress. Nehru, Subash Chandra Bose, the Congress Socialists, the Communists and other left-minded socialist groups and individuals made effort to turn⁽³⁾ the nationalist movement to a socialist direction. The effect culminated in the organization of trade unions, Kisan Sabhas, youth and students organizations. Thus the formation of peasant organisations and their struggles for the upliftment of the peasantry on ideological basis were the significant features⁽⁴⁾ of the period from 1930 to 1947.

The depression years (1929-33) had caused great sufferings to the ryots

1. Suryanatha. U. Kamath (ed), *South Kanara Directory*, (Mangalore, 1977), p. 67.
2. *Karnataka State Gazetteer, South Kanara District*, (Bangalore, 1973), p. 72.
3. Bipan Chandra, *India's Struggle For Independence, 1857-1947*, (New Delhi, 1989), p. 26.
4. D. N. Dhangrare, *Peasant Movement In India, 1920-1950*, (Delhi, 1983), p. 35.

by large scale eviction, rack-renting and indebtedness caused by the steep fall in agricultural commodities. The resettlement and new land revenue assessment of 1934-35 had further enhanced the rate of land tax. The landlords in the district passed their burden of the increased land revenue to their tenants by increasing the land rent.

During this period the nationalist leaders were released from jail after the suspension of civil disobedience movement. This movement had created a new trend of political enthusiasm in the region and a number of young men entered in to the national movement. Thus, the so called 'uppina satyagraha' (In Kannada the salt satyagraha was called as uppina satyagraha) was enthusiastically⁽¹⁾ resorted in the coastal towns from Kasaragod to Bednur. The suspension of the civil disobedience movement created frustration among the political activists. Many of them began to think of an alternative and that was the emerging trend of socialist and Communist ideology.

On coming out of jail⁽²⁾ after the salt satyagraha every satyagrahi set himself in his village and started a small reading room. This was one of the major reason for the development of ideological basis of socialism and communism in Malabar district and Kasaragod Taluk. The young men of the locality would gather every day, read the dailes and discuss political matters. They would also tell them what they learned in jail, whom they met, what they talked and what they decided to do. The reading room became the center of political activity.

The Kerala Congress Socialist Party decided to mobilize the peasant,

1. K. G. Vasantha Madhava, *Trends In Karnataka Historical Research*, (History Department, University of Calicut, 1996), p. 89.
2. P. Radhakrishnan, *Peasant Struggles, Land Reforms and Social Change* (New Delhi), 1989, p. 11.

small farmers and workers and had begun to support their economic interests and aspirations. These efforts aroused⁽¹⁾ the working class and peasants and brought them in to the main stream of the national movement.

The Kasaragod taluk of the South Canara District witnessed a severe anti-landlord movement in the second half of the 1930's. At the same time, in other parts of South Canara, the peasant organisations were founded in the second half of the 1940's. There existed a wide gulf in the nature and function of the peasant organisations in the Kasaragod taluk and other parts of South Canara.

In order to study the organisation and the movements of the peasants in the district in a historical perspective, it is necessary to analyse on the movements of the entire Malabar region and Kerala as a whole. The movement on the Malabar region was strongly influenced by the nature and function of the peasant organisation of Kasaragod. The leaders of Malabar and also Kerala like E. M. S. Namboodiripad, P. Krishna Pillai, A. K. Gopalan, K. A. Keraleeyan, Vihnu Bharateeyan, K. P. R. Gopalan, E. K. Nayanar, A. V. Kunhambu and A. K. Pillai were prominent, and their activities paved for the ideological basis of the organisation of peasantry in particular and the Communist Party in general in the Kasaragod Taluk.

In 1927, even before the emergence of the Congress Socialist Party in Kerala and the Malabar Karshaka Sangham, voices were raised against the oppressive attitude of the government towards the peasants in Kasaragod Taluk. A meeting of landlords at Hosdurg taluk office, presided by the Tahasildar,

1. K. K. N. Kurup, *The Kayyur Riot, (Calicut, 1978), p. 7.*

which sought to introduce an agrarian law to safeguard the landlords and also for informing the interests of the peasants. A. C. Kannan Nair⁽¹⁾ of Hosdurg (he belonged to the landlord family) strongly opposed it and the proposal was withdrawn. This was an instance of even individual resistance of opposing the landlords who in turn opposed the peasants. But the peasants were not united before the spread of Kerala Congress Socialists and Karshaka Sangham activities.

Kadakam Satyagraham (1932-33)

This was a protest against the interference of the British administration in the traditional way of life. The development of nationalism mainly by the civil disobedience movement, particularly salt satyagraha held at Payyannur had inspired the nationalists of this region. To a great extent the causes of the Kadakam Satyagraha and the Leaves and Fire Wood Agitation or the Tholum Virakum Agitation of Cheemeni (1946) were identical. At Kadakam, the traditional rights enjoyed by the common people were prohibited by the British Government at the same time at Cheemeni it was prohibited by a private individual with the support of the government.

The Government prohibited⁽²⁾ the collection of fire wood and other materials from the forest. This was the rights enjoyed by the adivasis and other people from time immemorial. Under the leadership of the Congress a satyagraha camp was opened at Kadakam, of Karadukka grama. The satyarahi's entered the forest and cut down the sandal wood trees to show their protest.

1. A. C. Kannan Nair's *Diary, Dated 15th December, 1920, quoted in A. C. Kannan Nair-oru patanam (Mal)*, K. K. N. Kurupu, (Thiruvananthapuram, 1985), p. 20.

2. K. K. N. Kurup, *Swathantra Samaram Kasaragod Talukil (Mal)*, p. XXIV.

The satyagraha volunteers came from Malabar⁽¹⁾ and Kasaragod taluk. The police and the forest officials arrested the satyagrahi's and they were taken to the police station. During the night they were taken to long and unknown places in vehicles and dropped there. Thus the satyagrahi's had to walk a long distance in the night to reach the camp. This was one of the mode of punishments introduced by the authorities.

Advocate Umesh Rao, Manjunath Hegde, his son Rama Hedge, A. V. Kunhambu, Narandatta Krishnan Nair, Krishan Manolithayal, K. Madhavan were the important persons⁽²⁾ who participated in the satyagraha. The visit of P. Krishna Pillai gave inspiration to the volunteers. The potail of that Grama, Vishnu Kadambalithaya had given all assistance to the volunteers. He was arrested and sentenced to six months imprisonment and a penalty of Rs. 75. He was also dismissed⁽³⁾ from the service and he returned back to service in 1937 when Rajaji ministry came to power. Many volunteers were arrested and imprisoned.

The Congress Socialist Party

The South Canara District Congress Socialist Party was formed in 1935, as an opposition with in the Congress. The Karnataka Provincial Congress Socialist Party was organised in May 1935⁽⁴⁾, when the conference of the Karnataka Provincial Congress Party was held at Mangalore. Socialist Youth League, Shirva

1. *Kasaragod Charithravum Samoothavum (Mal)*, Kasaragod District Panchayath, 2001, p. 345.

2. *Ibid*, p. 346, See also K. K. N. Kurup, *Swathantra Samaram Kasaragod Talukil (Mal)*, p. XXIV.

3. *Ibid*, p. 345.

4. *Prabhath*, Dated 7th April, 1935, Mangalore, quoted in the Report of The Vernacular Papers, Government of Madras, For the month of September, 1935, p. 243.

was organised⁽¹⁾ in South Canara. This league was started the sole object of establishing the idea of equality.

The government of Madras had shown serious concern in the organisation of the congress socialist party in South Canara District. In a confidential letter⁽²⁾ of the Inspector General of Police, Madras to the Chief Secretary of Government of Madras remarked that the congress socialist party had been formed in Andra, Kerala and South Canara and a Congress Socialist group in Madras. While the party of Kerala formed various labour unions and organised strikes in six different centers between February and March 1935. So he requested the Governor for the renewal of temporary legislation to deal with these movement called as subversive movements. The constitution of the South Canara District Congress Socialist Party contain almost the complete programmes of the Communist International⁽³⁾. The constitution did not advocate violent methods for the achievement of the objects.

The news paper, *Rashtra Bandhu*⁽⁴⁾ of Mangalore observed the social and economic condition of the district through an article, under the heading "The Ryots are the owners of the country"

There are tillers of the soil, who have never known rest and happiness..... However deplorable be the condition of the urban labour, it is still a thousand times better than the misery of the rural ryot. Our ryots have no thought for anything outside these

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1. *Navayuga, Mangalore, Dated 4th April, 1935, quoted in the Report of The Vernacular Papers, Government of Madras, For the month of 12th September, 1935, p. 545.*
 2. *Confidential Letter from the IG of Police, Madras to the Governor General, Dated 24th May, 1935, USS files, Home Department, Dated 1-9-1935.*
 3. *Government of India, Home Department (Confidential), No. FR/1115/Political, Dated 29th April, 1935, USS files, Dated 1-9-1935.*
 4. *Rashtra Bandhu, Mangalore, Dated 14th January, 1935, quoted in the Report of The Vernacular Papers, Government of Madras, For the month of January 1935, p. 45.*

three questions. What to eat? How to pay the assessment? How to discharge the debt? So far our district (South Canara) is concerned the congress authorities pay no attention to the ryots problem if the country's leaders should forget the ryots and workers of the land at this juncture these can be not greater misfortune to the country.

The resettlement of 1934-35 had enhanced the land revenue to an unbearable limit. The District Congress Committee protested and decided to observe the first week of May 1935 as anti resettlement week.

The South Canara District Congress Committee had passed a resolution to observe the first week of May as an anti re-settlement week in South Canara in order to create an awareness among the public in regard to the distress and suffering caused to the ryots , by the enhancement of the land tax that this burden had exceeded all limits of patient endurance, as it would develop the ryots to constant starvation⁽¹⁾ . The object of the anti-resettlement week was to make it clear to the public how the interests of the ryots were being ignored in order to promote the unhindered the supremacy of the British rule in India. It also aimed to put in to light, how the ryots were kept in a half-starved condition and exploited for the comforts of the British Army.

In July 1935, a peasant organisation, Kolacherry Karshaka Sangham⁽²⁾ was founded at Naniyur in Kolacherry in the Chirakkal taluk of Malabar District. The president and secretary of the unit were V. M. Vishnu Bharateeyan and K. A. Keraleeyan respectively. In the last part of 1935 the peasant

1. *Navayuga, Mangalore, Dated 4th April, 1935, quoted in the Report of The Vernacular Papers, Government of Madras, For the month of April, 1935, p. 216.*

2. *A. K. Poduval, Keralathile Karshaka Prasthanathinte Oru Legu Charithram (Mal), (Thiruvananthapuram, 1969), p. 23.*

organisation called Samyukta Karshaka Sangham⁽¹⁾ was formed at Karivellur. It included the villages of Karivellur, Peralam, Vellur (belonged to former Chirakkal taluk of Malabar District) and Kotakkat (in Kasaragod taluk of South Canara District). A. V. Kunhambu was the president and M. P. Appu was the secretary.

Prior to the formation of the Samyuktha Karshaka Sangham, Abhinava Bharat Yuvak Sangham, a youth organisation was formed at Karivellur⁽²⁾ on 13th April 1934. Its leaders were A. V. Kunhambu, V. V. Kunhambu, M. P. Appu, P. Kunhiraman and others. It was a politically oriented association with definite programme of social services including social reforms. This youth association was responsible for the formation of Samyukta Karshaka Sangham at Karivellur. The Yuvak Sangham helped in mobilizing the peasants of Kasaragod taluk. Although the economic grievances of the peasantry played an important role in the mobilisation, nationalism as an ideology considerably followed by them.

The Kotakkat Karshaka Sangham

In 1935 the Kotakkat Karshaka Sangham⁽³⁾ was formed. This was the first unit of the Karshaka Sangham in Kasaragod taluk and also in South Canara District as a whole. The influence of the Abhinava Bharath Yuvak Sangham and the Samyukta Karshaka Sangham of Karivellur contributed the organisation⁽⁴⁾ of the Kotakkat Karshaka Sangham. It was organised to resist the eviction of a tenant named Pariyaran Kunhiraman Nambiar by the landlord Neelamana of Puttilot.

1. A. K. Poduval, *Keralathile Karshaka Prasthanathinte Oru Legu Charithram (Mal)*, (Thiruvananthapuram, 1969), p. 25.

2. K. K. N. Kurup, *The Kayyur Riot, (Calicut, 1978)*, p. 9, See also A. K. Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakadha, (Mal)*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1980), p. 82.

3. *Kotakkat (1939-2004), Kotakkat Sammalana Souvenir, (Kotakkat, 2004)*, p. 54.

4. *Ibid*, p. 54.

Peasant leaders like A. V. Kunhambu, K. A. Keraleeyan and T. S. Tirumumb attended the meeting. Payyattakkun Nair and E. Narayanan Master were elected as the President and Secretary of the Sangha. The villages of Krivellur, Vellur, Pilicode, Peralam and Cheruvathur were included in the Kotakkat Karshaka Sangham. Karshaka Sangham units were consequently formed in Kayyur, Madikai, Pullur, Rawaneshwarm etc. In 1935 a special conference of peasants was convened⁽¹⁾ at Karivellur, presided by A. K. Gopalan. This was the first conference attended by the peasants in Kasaragod taluk.

The organisational work among the peasant was a crucial task. For centuries⁽²⁾ the peasants suffered insults and injuries by the landlords. The tenants were afraid of their landlords to co-operate with Karshaka Sangham's activities. No body dare to attend the meeting or to give any financial help to the sangham. The peasant leaders used the religious and temple festivals of every region for gathering the peasants and politicalising them in national and socialist ideology. The ideological base of the movement was laid through study classes organised by the peasant leaders.

The peasantry of the region was suffered mainly by economic grievances and it played one of the major reasons for the mobilization of the peasantry. The leaders of the peasantry⁽³⁾ came mainly from the middle class peasants and teachers. They enjoyed considerable freedom and were not entirely depended on the landlords. Thus they could give necessary leadership to the peasants. The rich peasants who belong to the high caste Hindus

1. K. K. N. Kurup, *The Kayyur Riot, (Calicut, 1978), p. 50.*

2. *Ibid, p. 11.*

3. V. V. Kunhikrishnan, *Tenancy Legislation In Malabar, 1880-1970, (New Delhi, 1993), p.106.*

also joined in the movement and turned as the leaders of the peasant organisations.

The Karshaka Sangham opposed caste system. The Sangham made its effort to organise the peasantry irrespective of caste restrictions. The activists of the sangham, who belonged to the upper castes made frequent visits to the houses of peasants especially to the lower castes. This caste restrictions did not prevent the peasants and workers from uniting for a common purpose.

Indebtedness of the ryots and harsh treatment by the landlords drove all classes of peasants to the field of the sangham. The Sangham was conscious of the grievances of the different classes of the peasants including the agricultural labourers. Karshaka Sangham effectively utilised the prevailing discontent among the peasants and their opposition to the caste orthodoxy, landlords and the government. The progressive literature of the times and popular songs and dramas gave them a message of unity.

The Karshaka Sangham had formulated different programmes to mobilize the peasantry. The peasants of Malabar organised a 'hunger-jatha'⁽¹⁾ under the leadership of A. K. Gopalan from Malabar to Madras in July 1936, to present a memorial to government regarding the poverty of the people. P. K. Narayanan Nambiar⁽²⁾ of Nileshtar was included as the member of the jatha of 32 members.

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1. A. K. Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakadha (Mal)*, (Thiruvananthapuram, 1980), p.93-96, see also, A. K. Poduval, *Keralathile Karshakaprasthanathinte Oru Legu Charithram*, (Thiruvananthapuram, 1980), p. 33.
 2. A. K. Poduval, *Keralathile Karshakaprasthanathinte Oru Legu Charithram*, (Thiruvananthapuram, 1980), p. 33.

The first meeting of the Chirakkal Taluk Karshaka Sangham was held at Parassinikadavu in November 1936. This was attended by peasants of Malabar and Kasaragod taluk. The conference decided to organise an All Malabar Karshaka Sangham. After the Parassinikadavu conference peasant meetings were held at various parts of Kasaragod taluk like Bovikkara, Perla, Mulleria, Bader and Manjeshwar. The first week of September 1936 was observed as Kisan week through out Malabar and Kasaragod and resolutions were passed on the basis of the Kisan Charter. This was followed by "no tax campaign" as the beginning of organised peasant struggles.

The All India Kisan Sabha was organised⁽¹⁾ at Lacknow on 11th April 1936. The founders were Swami Sahajananda, Karyananda, Muzafar Ahamed, Acharya Narendradev, Rahul Sankrityayan and Indulal Yujnik. The organisation was an anti-imperialist front of all leftist political group, from progressive congressmen to Communists. The object⁽²⁾ of Kisan Movement was to secure complete freedom from economic exploitation and achievement of full economic and political power for the peasant and workers and all over the exploited classes.

With in eight months after the formation of the All India Kisan Sabha, the National Congress had its annual conference at Faizapur. The Indian National Congress adopted its agrarian programme at the Faizapur session⁽³⁾ of the Indian National Congress and the political solidarity of the two organisations were declared.

1. K. K. N. Kurup, *The Kayyur Riot, (Calicut, 1978), p. 10.*

2. *Ibid, p. 10, See also A. K. Poduval, Keralathile Karshakaprasthanathinte Oru Legu Charithram, (Thiruvananthapuram, 1980), p. 36-37.*

3. R. Palme Dutt, *India Today, (Calcutta, 1986), p. 276.*

The All Malabar Karshaka Sangham was organised⁽¹⁾ in 1937 with Narayanan Nair as the president and K. A. Keraleeyan as the Secretary. In 1937, the Indian Communist leaders like S. V. Ghate had organised a nucleus⁽²⁾ of Communist group in Kerala consisting of P. Krishan Pillai, E. M. S. Namboodiripad, N. C. Sekhar and K. Damodaran.

In the provincial election of 1937 Congress won in the Madras Province with the support of the peasants and workers organisations. The ministry was formed under C. Rajagopalachari. The peasant had great expectations from the Congress Ministry, because as a continuation of the Faizapur session of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) in 1936, they included agrarian programmes in their election manifesto.

But the ministry failed to prove any relief to the peasants other than the mere passing of the Agriculture Debt Relief Act. Their betrayal in the part of the congress leadership disappointed the leftist and alienated the entire body of the peasantry which soon came to realise that any improvement in this condition could not be possible through the government but through their organisational strength. This paved a new turn in the history of the peasant movement in Malabar and also Kasaragod. They resorted to organise massive and militant struggles against the landlords and also against the government.

Kasaragod Taluk Karshaka Sangham

The formation of the Kasragod Taluk Karshaka Sangham was mainly due to the leadership given by K. A. Keraleeyan, A. V. Kunhambu, V. V. Kunhambu,

1. C. Achutamenon, *Kissan Patana Pusthakam*, (Trissur, 1960), p. 259.

2. E. M. S. Namboodiripad, *How I Became A Communist*, (Thiruvananthapuram, 1976), P. 211.

Vishnu Bharatheeyan, T. S. Tirumumb, N. S. Namboodiri and K. Madhavan⁽¹⁾. The first conference of the Taluk Karshaka Sangham was convened in April 1937 at Kottachery, Kanhangad.

It was presided over by K. P. R. Gopalan. He vehemently attacked the system of the 'akramapirivukal (illegal exactions), eviction and non-issue of payment of rent. He explained the miseries of the agricultural labourers and adiyens or slaves. He warned the landlords against continuance of these practices. He also pointed out that there were 17 villages which were exempted from payment of debt according to the Debt Relief Act of 1938. A. K. Gopalan, Vishnu Bharateeyan and Keraleeyan were important speakers. K. Madhavan moved a resolution for extension of Malabar Tenancy Act to Kasaragod which was opposed by the Hindu, Muslim landlords. But A. C. Kannan Nair, Kodoth Narayanan Nair and Barrister M. K. Nambiar, belonged to the landlord class supported this resolution.

The other major resolutions⁽²⁾ were

1. To give permanent occupancy right to tenants including chalageni tenants
2. To fix one-fourth of the produce as rent keeping aside seed and other expenses.
3. To seek the tax exception for the low income groups and to levy gradual tax.
4. To reduce or write off 50 per cent of the debt and allow the balance to be paid in two installments with interests not exceeding 13 percent and
5. To provide for issuing receipt for payment of rent.

1. K. K. N. Kurup, *The Kayyur Riot, (Calicut, 1978), p. 31.*

2. T. N. Ramakrishnan, *Reforms and Agricultural Development, A Case Study of Kasaragod District, Unpublished PhD. Thesis, Mangalore University, p. 87, See also A. K. Gopalan, In the Cause of the People (Bombay, 1971), p. 168.*

One of the important aspects of Malabar and Kasaragod was that the congress and Karshaka Sangham organised joint meetings and the speeches were made exhorting the peasants and anti landlord movements. The congress leaders like K. Kelappan appealed the public to extend help and co-operation for peasant movements.

A joint agitation was started by the Congress, Congress-Socialists and the Karshaka Sangham for joining Kasaragod taluk with Malabar District. The president of that politically oriented movement was M. K. Nambiar. A conference regarding this agitation was convened at Nileshwar in April 1938. It was presided over by Abdul Rahiman Sahib, the prominent KPCC leader and inaugurated by Minister Kongattil Raman Menon. In that conference the eminent peasant leader K. Madhavan, moved a resolution demanding permanent occupancy right to the tenants in this region. Some of members of the Gandhi Sangham⁽¹⁾ (followers of Gandhian ideology) belonging to landed aristocracy objected the introduction of the resolution. However the, resolution was passed as the congress socialist like Kodoth Narayanan Nambiar and others supported it. These supporters themselves belonged to landlord families. Thus this conference became a landmark regarding the tenancy problems in Kasaragod taluk.

The agrarian movements associated with the nationalist movements became more intensified⁽²⁾ in Hosdurg sub-taluk during the end of 1938. The activities undertaken by the Karshaka Sangha and Abhinava Bharat Yuvak

1. K. Madhavan, *Oru Gandhiyan Communistinte Ormakal (Autobiography, Mal)*, (Thiruvananthapuram, 2002), p. 96-97.

2. K. K. N. Kurup, *The Kayyur Riot, (Calicut, 1978)*, p. 32.

Sangham were attaining good results in this area. It succeeded in attaining unity among the working class and promoting strong national sentiments among them. They started night classes in different parts of the area as a part of creating ideological basis for the movement.

A joint conference⁽¹⁾ of the Yuvak Sangham and the Karshaka Sangham was held on October 1938 at Kovval in Cheruvathur. Some of the members of the Gandhi Sangham demonstrated with black flags in front of the conference. But they were threatened by the members of Karshaka Sangha and forced them to run away.

The second conference of the Akhila Malabar Kisan Sangham, which was held at Calicut, decided to start two jathas from Karivellur and Kanjicode to submit a memorandum to the District Collector of Malabar. As a counter part of these activities of the Malabar Kisan Sangham, the Kasaragod Taluk Kisan Sangham organised a jatha consisting of 130 members to Mangalore. The march was started from Olavara, the southern part of the Kasaragod taluk to Mangalore for presenting a memorandum to the District Collector. This jatha was under the leadership of T. S. Tirumumbu, president of the Kasaragod taluk Karshaka Sangham. The jatha was seen off by A. V. Kunhambu and K. A. Keraleeyan the leaders of Malabar Karshaka Sangham. Koyyan Kannan was the treasure and K. Madhavan was the pilot, for arranging food and accommodation for its members.

The jatha was given reception in Cheruvathur, Nileshtar, Kottacheri, Uduma, Chittari, Madiyan, Bellekoth, Pullur, Rawaneshwaram and Perumbala.

The members of the jatha shouted the slogan

1. K. K. N. Kurup, *The Kayyur Riot, (Calicut, 1978), p. 32.*

Down with imperialism,
Down with landlordism,
No criminal extortions,
Land for peasants.

At Kasaragod the jatha was received by M. Umesh Rao, the president of South Canara District Congress Committee. The memorial was submitted on December 1938. The memorialists wanted the prohibition of illegal extortions and demanded for the extension of the proposal tenancy legislation to Kasaragod Taluk. They also demanded for separation of Kasaragod taluk from South Canara and its amalgamation with Malabar on account of the linguistic problems faced by the Malayalees who formed 72 per cent of the population of the taluk. They also demanded records to tenants to prove their claim of possession and issue of receipts for rents to the tenants.

After submitting the memorandum the members of the jatha held a public meeting in Mangalore , organised by various trade unions. S. N. Holla presided over the meeting and T.S.Tirumumb, P. C. K. Adiyodi, N. S. Namboodiri, E. Narayanan Namboodiri, E. Narayanan Nambiar and N. K. Kuttan all from Hosdurg sub taluk spoke on the occasion and exhorted the workers and peasants to unite and organise for their common end to free themselves from the exploitation of landlords and imperialism. The jatha created a sense of awareness among the people of the miseries and hardships of peasants. The most intensifying fact of the jatha was that most members of the jatha were from high castes and relatives of landed families.

The receipt of the memorandum made rapid response of the authori-

ties. The District Collector of South Canara sent the report to the Madras Government, and issued a public leaflet, a 'Red Notice'⁽¹⁾ setting the people against landlords and for abandoning the policy of non-violence.

Kotakkat Conference

It was decided to conduct the second annual conference of the Abhinava Bharat Youvak Sangham on 14th January 1938 and the fourth annual conference of the Kasaragod Taluk Karshaka Sangham on 15th January 1938 at Kotakkat. Separate reception committees were organised for this purpose. E. Narayanan was the president and T. V. Sankaran was the secretary of the reception committee of Yuvak Sangham and T. S. Tirumumbu and P. C. Kunhikrishanan Adiyodi were the president and secretary of the Karshaka Sangham committee respectively. Koyyan Kannan was the treasurer of both of the reception committees.

A. Kameshwara Rao of Andhra presided over⁽²⁾ the Yuvak Sangham Conference on 14th January and it was inaugurated by Mohammed Abdul Rahiman Sahib, MLA. N. G. Ranga, the general secretary of the All India Kisan Sabha presided over the conference of the Karshaka Sangham and was inaugurated by Moidu Moulavi eminent K. P. C. C. leader on 15th January.

The planning and organisation of the conference made a new chapter in the history of the peasant in the district of South Canara. The conference was turned into as great festival of the region. The peasant and workers had given a memorial reception to N. G. Ranga when he arrived the near by railway station at Cheruvathur. One of the unique features of the conference

1. *Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for Second Half of December, 1938.*

2. *K. K. N. Kurup, The Kayyur Riot, (Calicut, 1978), p. 33.*

was that, they collected all the materials for food through house to house campaign and carried head loads of vegetables and rice. A common feast was arranged in the occasion for all participants. This had its significance in a rural atmosphere where caste formalities had been strictly observed so far and interdining was not permitted. Therefore the conference broke⁽¹⁾ the barriers of caste and tradition and declared the solidarity of the working class. Thus, this conference became a landmark for uniting the rural population under the Karshaka Sangham and eventually the Communist movement through its fight against caste system.

Women conference, which was arranged in this occasion was regarded as an important event connected with the conference. The women belong to the working class, peasant and even aristocratic families participated in the meeting in hundreds. Previously women were not permitted to cover their breast. The women participants attended the conference violating the long standing custom by wearing blouses. The most important result of the conference was that it inculcated a new spirit of confidence among the peasantry on their fight against landlordism, caste system and colonialism.

Karshaka Sangham continued its struggles against landlords and also against the imperial government. With this purpose the Karshaka Sangham units were strengthened in all parts of Kasaragod taluk. Sangham intensified its activities by leading jathas to the landlords of respective areas and presenting grievances and demands of peasants before them. These jathas inspired the rural population against the landlordism and a large number of peasantry participated.

1. K. K. N. Kurup, *The Kayyur Riot, (Calicut, 1978), p. 33.*

One of such jathas⁽¹⁾ had gone to the illam of Ilaneer Madam Keshavananda Bharti, the prominent landlord of the taluk. More than five hundred people participated in the jatha from Muliari, Perubalam etc. A. K. Gopalan had led the jatha and it put forward the demand to give receipt for their payment, before the landlord and at once the demand was admitted on the spot.

Massive and militant jathas were undertaken through out Malabar and Kasaragod taluk. According to reports⁽²⁾ received from the District Magistrate of South Canara, the Kasaragod Taluk Peasant Association and Malabar Socialists have been asking people not to pay land revenue and at the time of attachment and distraint to cause as much obstruction as possible to the authorities.

The District Magistrate of Malabar reports⁽³⁾ a no rent campaign which had carried on for some time in that district, was achieving considerable success and that in the absence of any original opposition in some parts undermining the authority. He feared that, the landlords were not able to collect their rents and it would effect seriously land revenue collections which was going to start from the coming month. There was a similar agitation reported from the southern part of South Canara, where activities of the peasant union had led to some disturbances. The government was considering some action to counter this development.

Apart from this Karshaka Sangham adopted social boycott to those landlords who tried to suppress the peasants. Previously the social boycott

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1. *Andalat, Rekhayillatha Charithram, (Thiruvananthapuram, 1987), p. 59.*
 2. *Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for Second Half of October, 1938.*
 3. *Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for Second Half of November, 1938.*

was a weapon used by the landlord against the tenant who was disliked by him. So through the social boycott, the sangham effectively prevented the villagers from supporting the landlords. Thus, the Karshaka Sangham emerged as a powerful organ to oppose the domination of the landlords.

Alarmed by these agitations taking place, the Collector of South Canara asked the people to report to the potail (the village head man) any action of social boycott or violence or the activities of the peasant organisation. The headman in turn was ordered to send daily report to the nearest police station regarding such cases. Mr. Vellodi⁽¹⁾ the Collector of South Canara visited the Kasaragod taluk to appraise the situation. The collector of Malabar also visited the northern parts of Malabar towards the end of 1938. The peasantry considered the government action as a conspiracy to suppress the peasant movement.

Apart from the peasant struggles labour unrest also developed in the district. In 1940 a strike of the weavers and factory workers were organised under the leadership of the South Canara District Weavers Union, in Marnanikattee and Kankanady factory. This strike resulted in so many violent incidents. The strike was organised under the leadership of S. N. Holla, Malinga Shetty, Venkappa, Laxmuana Kottari, Keshava Kamath, Sabastian D'Souza and others. The police registered so many cases and fourteen persons were sentenced for imprisonment from one to six months and also fined as penalty. Through arbitration the strike was settled and the arbitrators sent a request

1. *Mathrubhumi Daily, Calicut, 22nd December, 1938 and 27th December, 1938.*

for the withdrawal of all the cases charged connected with the weavers strike. The government had withdrawn⁽¹⁾ only three cases out of six pending cases and was not ready for the revision of punishment in the disposed cases.

The Communist leaders tried to organise the labourers in various parts of Mangalore. But the government had taken harsh measures against them. A number of Communist leaders had been arrested either with a view to detention under Rule 826 of the Defense of India⁽²⁾ Rules or where possible for prosecution for some specific offence.

Struggles During the Second World War

The second world war broke out on 1st September 1939 and it created an intensified ideological struggle between the left and right wings inside the congress. The leftists stood⁽³⁾ for an unconditional resistance to a inherently unjust war and they considered it an occasion for the independence of India from the British. The 'rightist' group of congress men openly criticised⁽⁴⁾ the leftist controlled KPCC and formed a separate organisation called Kerala Gandhi Seva Sangham, with K. Kelappan as its leader. The war situation created scarcity of food grains which paved for black-marketing of essential commodities. Thus the life of the millions were on the verge of starvation.

A crucial and secret meeting of some 90 prominent workers of Kerala

1. G. O. No. 4280, Dated 21st October 1940, Home Department, M. S. Series.

2. Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for First Half of June, 1941.

3. K. K. N. Kurup, *Modern Kerala, Studies In Social And Agrarian Relations*, (Delhi, 1998), p. 2.

4. K. G. Vasantha Madhava, *Trends In Karnataka Historical Research*, (History Department, University of Calicut, 1996), p. 22.

Congress Socialist Party met at Pinarayi in Tellichery to consider the formation⁽¹⁾ of the Communist Party in December 1939. They decided the formation of the Communist Party and on 28th January 1940, the formation of the party was declared.

The government introduced strict vigilance against the Communists and Congress Socialists. The government even decided to detain and examine the postal articles of Communist and Socialist leaders of the Madras Presidency. The direction⁽²⁾ states that in the interest of public safety and tranquility of Madras Presidency, the Governor in council directed under section 26(1) of the India post office Act 1898, that all postal articles addressed to or emanating from persons should be intercepted in the course of transmission by these post and detained and delivered to the Superintendent of Police Special Branch CID, Madras for his examination. Among the names enclosed the active congress socialist and important political labour agitator of South Canara District, Kamala Devi Chattopadhyya was included. It also included the names of E. M. S. Namboodiripad, P. Krishna Pillai, S. V. Ghate, Rash Behari Bose, K. Damodaran etc.

The movement gave rise to tensions between the peasants and landlords which was well reflected in report⁽³⁾ of Malabar Tenancy Committee.

Relations between landlords and tenants in this area have long become strained and we consider that they should be put in proper

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1. K. K. N. Kurup, *Modern Kerala, Studies In Social And Agrarian Relations*, (Delhi, 1998), p. 3.
 2. *Selections from confidential Files Relating to Inception of Correspondance Political Personalities (1936-1946)*, p. 7.
 3. *Report of the Malabar Tenancy Committee, 1940, chapter 9, p. 621.*

footing as soon as possible.

On account of these agitations and representations, the Malabar Tenancy Committee proposed⁽¹⁾ the extension of the legislation to include all villages, south of the Chandragiri river and two villages Bedadka and Bandadka in the north of Kasaragod taluk. This was a heavy blow to the vested interests of the landlords who resisted the extension of the act and was an achievement for the peasants of Kasaragod taluk.

Hoarding and black marking during the period of second world war created great misery in the life of millions of people who were on the verge of starvation. The activities of the peasant organisation reached at the grass root level of the society. So the hostility between the landlords and peasants were further intensified.

Kayyur Riot

The militant role⁽²⁾ of the Karshaka Sangham under the Communist Marxist-Leninist ideology contributed to the Kayyur Riot. Most of the people of Kayyur village lived on agriculture. Many of them were illiterate peasants and agricultural labourers.

The anti repression day observed on 15th September 1940 culminated violent activists in Morazha and Mattannur of Malabar District. So police resorted to continuous repression against the Communists and the leaders of peasant organisation and they were compelled to go underground. The village unit of congress as well as Karshaka Sangham was founded⁽³⁾ in April 1937. T. V. Kunhambu, K. P. Vellunga, P. T. Ambadi Kunhi, T. V. Alias, K. V.

1. *Report of the Malabar Tenancy Committee, 1940, chapter 9, p. 670.*

2. *Mathrubhumi Daily, Calicut, 11th May 1941.*

3. *K. K. N. Kurup, The Kayyur Riot, (Calicut, 1978), p. 39.*

Kunhiraman and T. Pokkayi were the leaders of the Kayyur Karshaka Sangham and P. M. Kannan Panikar was the secretary and Malayauthu Veluthambadi was the President⁽¹⁾ of the Kayyur unit of the Sangham. This unit became a powerful organ of the Sangham and no landlord was dared to evict even under the decree of a court.

The villagers of the Kayyur opposed the traditional practice of the landlord who was the trustee of the Kayyur shrine of taking the donations to the shrine. They demanded to spend it for the temple alone.

When the Revenue Divisional Officer of Puttur⁽²⁾, halted at Cheruvathur for collection towards war fund the Karshaka Sangham made a big demonstration before him shouting slogan against imperialism and war.

After the violence of the anti repression day the Sangham was banned and the landlords again found an occasion to take repressive measures against their tenants and members of the Sangham. A secret meeting was organised at Kayyur which was attended by P. Sundarayya. The meeting decided to open two Communist cells, one at Kayyur and T. V. Kunhambu and the other at Kookkot under P. T. Ambadi.

On 12th March 1941 the Communists in Kayyur organised a demonstration at Kayyur against the landlord and government and also its wartime activities they shouted following slogans⁽³⁾.

Let British rule perish,

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1. K. Madhavan, *Oru Gandhayan Communistinte Ormakal (Autobiography, Mal)*, (Thiruvananthapuram, 2002), p. 126.
 2. K. K. N. Kurup, *The Kayyur Riot, (Calicut, 1978)*, p. 41.
 3. K. K. N. Kurup, *Agrarian Struggles in Kerala, (Thiruvananthapuram, 1989)*, p. 5.

Let landlordism perish,
 Let peasants succeed,
 Let Revolution succeed,
 Let Soviet Rule Triumph,
 Do not pay rent,
 Do not join the Army,
 Do not contribute the war fund.

They also demanded the release of the prisoners connected with the Morazha and Mattanur cases . The revenue inspector who was at Kayyur happened to see⁽¹⁾ the jatha while he was returning to Nileshtar. He noted down the names, of the leaders and the next day he reported to the authorities. The Hosdurg police charged a case against the leaders of the jatha under the Defense of India Rules and the District Magistrate issued a warrant of arrest against the leader of the Communist cell of Kayyur.

On 26th March 1941 a police party arrived⁽²⁾ in Kayyur at 3 AM to arrest the accused. While really in Kayyur they unleashed a reign of terror and arrested T. V. Kunhambu, and T. V. Kunhiraman the two accused in the case and they were taken to Hosdurg. By 27th morning the news spread and the party workers and the villagers in the surrounding area decided to hold a protest meeting and demonstration on 28th afternoon at Pookandom in Kayyur. On 28th March people assembled⁽³⁾ at Pookandam about 1 PM and marched to Cheriya kara showing slogans like

Inquilab Zindabad,

1. V. V. Kunhambu, *Kayyur Samaracharathram (Thiruvananthapuram, 1974)*, p. 67.

2. *Ibid*, p. 64, See also K. K. N. Kurup, *Kayyur Ryot (Calicut 1978)*, p. 44.

3. K. K. N. Kurup, *The Kayyur Riot, (Calicut, 1978)*, p. 45, See also V. V. Kunhambu, *Kayyur Samaracharathram (Thiruvananthapuram, 1974)*, p. 66, 67, 68.

British Rule perish and
Let Landlordism Perish and
Let Soviet Rule Triumph.

They saw the police constable Subbaraya from Chandra police station, who took the leading role in the lathicharge and the arrest of two workers while the march was returning. The youngsters in the procession demanded him to join the jatha and hold the flag. He refused initially but was compelled to join the jatha and hold the flag. The constable tried to escape, when the jatha reached Edathil Kadavu, he broke the flag stick and beat one Palayi Kottan who was just in-front and ran away along the foot path. At that time, Potavara Kunhabu Nair accompanied by five or six persons came from the opposite direction. Seeing the constable followed by the volunteers, Kunhabu Nair tried to stop him. There was a hillock on one side and river on the other. So he was forced to jump into the water with the hope of swimming across the river. The mob pelted with stones and he was drowned.

The fortnightly reports⁽¹⁾ states that, there had been a serious disturbance in South Canara District when the Karshaka Sangham organised an attack on police constable which had resulted in his death. After the crime had committed all those who had taken part fled to the surrendering jungle and it had been necessary to call out the reserve police and three platoons of the M.S.P. to come out and the jungle on search of the culprits, so far as 34 had

1. *Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for the First Half of April, 1941.*

been arrested.

The days of Terror

An armed police contingent left⁽¹⁾ Nileshwar at 4.30 AM, on 30th March by a country boat for Kayyur. Temporary police camps were organised in different centers of Hosdurg sub-taluk. The government decided⁽²⁾ to increase the police strength in South Canara. The British government reports⁽³⁾ about the reign of terror and the days of terror continued for several weeks in Kayyur and also near by villages. As a part of political motive the authorities wished to utilize the occasion to suppress the Communist and Karshaka Sangham activities in the sub-taluk.

A non-official resolution⁽⁴⁾ was brought before the District Board of South Canara by C. K. Raghavan Nambiar against the police excesses. The South Canara District Board had appointed an enquiry committee⁽⁵⁾ consisting of two right wing congress men and an English businessman, an influential Muslim leader and one other to make an enquiry to these allegations. The government had ordered the District Magistrate to take up enquiry by himself and did not await the action of the committee, whose existence had no legal status or sanction.

South Canara District committee of Congress organised a public meeting⁽⁶⁾ at Mangalore on 10th May 1941 to convey the public about the

1. V. V. Kunhambu, *Kayyur Samaracharathram (Thiruvananthapuram, 1974)*, p. 69.

2. *Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for Second Half of July, 1941.*

3. *Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for First Half of May, 1941.*

4. K. K. N. Kurup, *The Kayyur Riot, (Calicut, 1978)*, p. 48.

5. *Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for First Half of May, 1941.*

6. *Mathrubhumi Daily, Calicut, 11th May 1941.*

situation prevailed on Kayyur and also Kasaragod taluk as a whole. It was presided by T. Ranga Rao. The meeting marked strong protest over the so called atrocities of the M.S.P. in the taluk and demanded to call back the M.S.P. to Malabar.

All these developments put an end to the atrocities of the police and finally the special police was withdrawn from the villages by the government. Sixty one persons were accused in the charge sheet. The government appointed Special First Class Magistrate at Mangalore to register the case against the accused. It was argued that the M. B. Shankar Rao, the special Magistrate had been quite partial in his trial⁽¹⁾.

After the preliminary trial the case was committed on 27th September to the Sessions Court, Mangalore. The trial by the Sessions Judge commenced only 1st December. The Sessions Judge found (2nd February 1942) Madathil Appu, (1st accused) Potavara Kunhambu Nair, (13th accused) Koyithattil Chiruvandan, (31st accused) Choorikkadan Krishanan Nair (32nd accused) and Avokar or Aboobaker (51st accused) as volunteers belonging to the inner group who acted in concert and participated in the murder by dragging, beating and throwing the constable in to the river and pelting him with stones. He found them alone guilty⁽²⁾ of murder under section 302 and sentenced them to be hanged by the neck till they died.

Out of five persons who were sentenced to death Choorikkatan Krishann Nair was exempted from death sentence considering he as a minor (at that

1. V. V. Kunhambu, *Kayyur Samaracharathram (Thiruvananthapuram, 1974)*, p. 70.

2. K. K. N. Kurup, *The Kayyur Riot, (Calicut, 1978)*, p. 58.

time he was 17 year old) 8 persons were punished for 5 years of rigorous imprisonment, seven were punished for two years of rigorous imprisonment, two were sent to senior certificate school for three years and 38 persons were acquitted⁽¹⁾. Appeal given by the accused was rejected by the High Court.

On 26th July 1942 the ban order enforced on the Communist Party was lifted by the government. A meeting convened at Calicut Town Hall, requested the government to show clemency in the Kayyur Case. Petitions of mercy were also forwarded to the government by the close relatives of the condemned prisoners. Through the jail authorities, the prisoners submitted joint mercy petitions to the Governor and the Governor General.

It was the period of the Quit India Movement, thus the political atmosphere was crucial. The Governor General refused to interfere in it. Appeal before the Privy Council was also rejected. On 16th October, Mohan Kumaramangalam⁽²⁾, the council for the Kayyur prisoners, filed a petition before the government for special leave for appeal. They obtained the free service of D. N. Pritt, the renounced Council Lawyer to present their case before the Judicial Committee. V.K. Krishna Menon assisted them. However, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council rejected the appeal.

The report of 4th March from the Judicial Committee came before the Kings Bench, at the court of Buckingham Palace, the highest court of criminal justice in the British Empire on 11th March and it was dismissed. On 12th March Mohan Kumaramangalam again filed petition before the Provincial Government and the Governor General on behalf of the Kayyur prisoners. Again on 15th March,

1. K. K. N. Kurup, *The Kayyur Riot, (Calicut, 1978), p. 98-106.*

2. *Ibid, p. 67-68.*

he filed another petition before the provincial government as the counsels for the petition in London had asked to file a mercy petition before the crown.

The Government rejected the mercy petition on 12th and 15th March filed by Mohan Kumaramangalam. The order for execution was received on 26th March in the jail. At 6 AM, on 21st March everything was ready for the execution of the death sentence passed on the four brave sons of Kayyur. They walked to the gallows with firm steps shouting slogans⁽¹⁾.

Inquilab Zindabad

Communist Party Zindabad

Let imperialism Perish and

Let Landlordism perish.

The Kayyur riot was a significant episode in the history of the peasant struggles and the Communist movements in South Canara in particular and India as a whole. The British government used all its repressive measures after the Kayyur riot in order to arrest the accused. But actually they were afraid of the rising tide of the Communist ideology in these areas and decided to curb it by using all sort of repression.

Harvesting of Crops Struggles or Vilakoith Struggles

The activities of the Karshaka Sangham suffered a lot due to the arrest of the peasant leaders and the banning of Karshaka Sangham in the area in March 1941. As a result of this ban a new peasant union called Kisan Sangham was organised in Malabar with E. Kannan as the president and P. Narayanan Nair as the Secretary, to take up relief works especially among the peasantry of Malabar and Kasaragod.

1. K. K. N. Kurup, *The Kayyur Riot, (Calicut, 1978)*, p. 70.

In South Canara⁽¹⁾ there was some fear of a shortage of rice during the coming monsoon and the collector had appealed the government on the question for a special shipment of the rice to the port of Mangalore before the monsoon sets in. District Relief Committee for food and famine were constituted by the peasant organisation and decided to assess the surplus paddy with each landlord in the village. It created a public opinion to procure surplus paddy and compelled the government to distribute the same at a fair price. The Kisan Sangham demanded the introduction of informal rationing.

Thus the second world war had created great sufferings to the people. Hoarding and black marketing were common. The landlords had resorted to all sort of repression against the peasantry. Thus the peasant organisation resorted new method of agitation against the landlords and the British. Thus they started the Vilakoith Struggle or the struggle of harvesting the crops.

Thimiri Harvest

The first harvest struggle⁽²⁾ in Thimiri was in February 1941. C. P. Gopalan, the landlord tried to evict his tenant Kutirummal Appu. Appu gave a complaint to the Karshaka Sangha and the Sangham workers assisted him for the harvest. A case was registered against six persons, but it was rejected. Again, after the harvest when the tenant tried to sow the field the landlord opposed but the tenant, succeeded with the help of the Sangham.

In the history of Kasaragod taluk the women⁽³⁾ were accused and

1. *Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for First Half of April, 1941.*
2. *Kasaragod, Charithravum Samoothavum (Mal), (ed), Kasaragod District Panchayath, 2001, p. 372, Andlat, Rekhayillatha Charitram, (Mal), (Thiruvananthapuram, 1986), p. 113.*
3. *Ibid, p. 371-372.*

charge sheeted for the first time in the Thimiri harvest case which was held in 1948, out of 28 accused 8 were women. The Communist and peasant leader Unniyatan Narayanan Nair was in Jail as detinue prisoner. In his wife's house there was only four ladies. Unnikrishnan Tirumumb tried to capture the crops which they harvested. Sangham resisted the activities and Unnikrishnan Tirumumb failed to capture the crops.

Palai Harvest

This agitation⁽¹⁾ was in February 1942. Alyala Valappil Kunhikrishnan Nambiar or Vellur Kunhikrishnan Nambiar was the landlord and the tenants were Tandalath Ambadi and Kovvalil Ambadi. The landlord had secured a court order to harvest, the lands of these tenants because of rent arrears. When the landlord started the harvest, the Sangham workers protested and harvested the crops. Landlord filed a petition against ten sangham workers.

Madikai Harvest

The Madikai harvest was on⁽²⁾ 26th January 1942. The landlord, Echikkanam Kelu Potail evicted his tenant Vayakodan Kannan without any reason. The land was sowed first by the landlord then by the tenant. But all other activities of cultivation was done by the landlord. But the Sangham decided to harvest. Because of fright Kannan was not ready to assist the Sangham, but the Sangham harvested. A case was registered against 21 persons.

These sorts of struggles were organised by the Karshaka Sangham in many parts of Kasaragod taluk. In Alayi⁽³⁾, Kukkala Valappil Kottan Koottayikaran was the tenant and Kakkat Tekkayillath Vasudeva Pattari was the landlord. By

1. *Kasaragod, Charithravum Samoohavum (Mal)*, (ed), Kasaragod District Panchayath, 2001, p. 371-72.

2. *Narippu, The History of Madikkai Grama Panchayath, (Mal)*, (Madikkai, 2004), p. 128, See aslo *Kasaragod, Charithravum Samoohavum (Mal)*, (ed), Kasaragod District Panchayath, 2001, p. 372.

3. *Ibid*, p. 129.

influencing the landlord, Koran Nair had taken the land through Kuzhikanadharam. But under the leadership of the Sangham, the peasant regained the land. In Udinur, C. M. Kunhikannan Nair was the landlord of that area and he tried to evict his tenant Kumhambu Nair. The land was given to another person to cultivate. When the time of harvest approached, the Sangham harvested the crops.

At Perumbala, Mayin Chemmanad was the prominent landlord⁽¹⁾ and he tried to evict his tenant P. Koman Nair. Karshaka Sangham interfered and harvested the crops. In Kannan Vayal of present Pallikara Panchayath of Kasaragod Mukkutil Kunhambu Nair of periya was the landlord. He tried to evict his tenant, Kuliyan Marathinkal Kannan Nair. Sangham interfered and harvested the crops. In Bollore, the landlord Erial Vazhunnor tried to evict four of his tenants. Bammatakotan Kannan Maniyani was one of them. So with the help of Sangham he sowed the land. The agitation was a success and the landlord did not try to evict the other three tenants. In Attenganam, Olakkara Kelu Potail⁽²⁾ was the landlord and Onakkan Kannan was the tenant. The land which Kannan was cultivating had given to another person for cultivation. When the time of harvest was appeared the Sangham harvested the crops. Landlord of Muzhakoth⁽³⁾ at Cheruvathur, Kannankulath Ambadi was the tenant. The landlord enhanced the rent, which was four times greater than normal rate and was evicted through a court order. No body was ready to take the land for cultivation, because of the resistance of the Sangham. At last Ambadi started cultivation with out paying the enhanced rent.

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1. *Kasaragod, Charithravum Samoothavum (Mal), (ed), Kasaragod District Panchayath, 2001, p. 372,*
 2. *Ibid, p. 372.*
 3. *Andlat, Rekhayillatha Charitram, (Mal), (Thiruvananthapuram, 1986), p. 121. Ibid, p. 121-122.*

Agrarian conflict in the post war period

The post war crisis had completely torn the rural life⁽¹⁾ in to acute poverty, agony and distress; thus millions of people faced scarcity of food and reached at the verge of starvation. The purchasing power of the rural population was considerably deteriorated. Hoarding and black marketing were common. So the post war crisis spread to social unrest not only among the peasants and workers but also among the people as a whole. Thus post war period marked a new turn in the history of the peasant struggles in South Canara District.

In all parts of South Canara the condition of the peasants and workers were worst. The capitalists and the landlords tried to make a good fortune out of the situation. The landlords introduced more repressive measures. Thus the political and economic condition were very much favourable for the advancement of the peasants and workers. The Collector reported⁽²⁾ that in South Canara District the Communists were reported to be increasing their hold on labour in Mangalore and Hosdurg areas. At the same time the Collector⁽³⁾ also reported that the Communist influence in the Kasaragod area was being counter acted successfully by the Congress propaganda. The circumstances developed during the post war period was favourable for the advancement of the peasant organisations in South Canara District as well as in Kasaragod taluk.

In April 1945 a Raitha Sangha (peasant organisation) was founded⁽⁴⁾ at

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1. K. K. N. Kurup, *Agrarian Struggles In Kerala (Thiruvananthapuram, 1989)*, p. 11.
 2. *Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for Second Half of April, 1945.*
 3. *Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for Second Half of May, 1945.*
 4. *Joshi G. V. Dasina Kannada Jilleta Raith Horattar (Mangalore University, 1989, p. 10.*

Bantwal of South Canara district. This was the first peasant organisation, formed in South Canara District other than Kasaragod taluk. The prominent leaders were the freedom fighters and Communist leaders like B. V. Kakkillaya, M. H. Krishnappa, S. N. Holla, A. Krishna Shetty and Ammu Shetty. The Chalageni tenants took membership in Raitha Sangha. They organised meetings near the settlement of the landlords.

The Raitha Sangha did not put forward any radical demands, in its initial stages. They demanded receipts of the rent paid, so that they could have some records of their land or to get some documents for their dealings. The landlords objected to it. The Sangham started struggles for securing this relief. The peasants objected the eviction or forcible harvest. Some times, there were clashes between the peasants and landlords. Especially in Bantwal taluk, there were many clashes of this type. In the initial stage, the movement did not gather enough strength because all the important leaders were imprisoned⁽¹⁾ for a period of six years.

Many of the Congress leaders of the South Canara District were landlords, merchants, tile factory owners etc. They wanted to safeguard their own class interests, so they never supported the peasant organisation.

It was reported⁽²⁾ that the antagonism between the Communists and the Congress was increasing in South Canara District. The Magistrate reported that the feelings between the two parties continue to be very strained.

1. *Panduraga Nayak, Land Reforms in Dakshina Kannada District, Unpublished MPhil Thesis, Mangalore University, 1991, p. 63-64.*

2. *Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for First Half of January, 1946.*

peasants as a part of the Green leaves and fire wood struggle or the so called 'tolum virakum' agitation in 1946.

The local landlords⁽¹⁾ like Tazhakkatmana and Kuttamath Kunniyur owned large areas of dry land on Cheemeni and Thimiri villages. The peasantry residing in the surrounding villages collected fire wood, thatching grass, green leaves etc, from the above land for domestic use and agriculture. Many people made this collection as an occupation. George Thomas Kottukappalli, a capitalist planter of Travancore, got 6036 acres of land for lease from these landlord families in 1942 on a mere payment of rent for starting a cashew plantation.

After receiving the estate, George Thomas Kottukappalli did not permit the peasantry to enter and collect materials from the area which they enjoyed as a traditional right. They were also denied the collection of materials from the government waste lands situated in the surrounding areas of the estate. These sorts of lands were also monopolised by the estate management especially in Kotakkat village.

The estate management had adopted all sorts of atrocities⁽²⁾ towards the peasantry particularly upon the ladies who had gone for collection of materials. In this circumstance the Karshaka Sangham decided to mobilise people to protect their traditional rights. Thus the agitation was started⁽³⁾ on 15th November 1946. The peasants from surrounding villages like Cheruvathur, Thimiri, Kotakkat, Klayicode, Kayyur etc. participated in this agitation.

1. *Kasaragod, Charithravum Samoohavum (Mal)*, (ed), *Kasaragod District Panchayath*, 2001, p. 378.

2. *Kotakkat, (1939-2004), Kotakkat Conference Souvenir*, (Kotakkat, 2004), p. 121.

3. *K. Madhavan, Oru Gandhiyan Communistinte Ormakal (Autobiography, Mal)*, (Thiruvananthapuram, 2002), p. 182.

The peasant leader K. A. Keraleeyan stayed at Cheruvathur and gave leadership to the agitation.

The peasantry trespassed into the estate and forcefully collected the fire wood, leaves etc. The trespassers consisted of both men and women. The police interfered in this struggle and unleashed all types of oppressive measures against the peasantry, but the peasantry enthusiastically participated in the agitation. Women took part in the agitation actively. Among them Chattichi Paru, Marathi parvethi, Edatam Veetil Madhavi, Meethale Veetil Lakshmi, Vannathi Cheria, M. V. Chariya etc were prominent. An interesting marching song composed by K. A. Keraleeyan was recited by the activists of the Kisan Sangham. Some of the lines were⁽¹⁾

We will procure leaves and fire wood.
 Even if the god of death comes.
 The forest is like an ocean,
 And planted and nurtured by none.
 The sickles that we carry in our hands,
 Are not for reaping leaves alone!

Before the sub divisional Magistrate at Puttur, the police charged a case⁽²⁾ against T. S. Tirumumb, C. Krishnan Nair, T. K. Chandan, Unniyatan Narayanan Nair. T. K. Kammaran and Nappayil Kunhambu.

Because of the strong protest of the peasantry against the estate, the management realised that, it was difficult to get hired labour for the estate from the local peasants. Thus, they came forward for compromise and restored many of the traditional rights of the peasantry. The management

1. K. K. N. Kurup, *Agrarian Struggles In Kerala (Thiruvananthapuram, 1989)*, p. 38, See also *Kasaragod, Charithravum Samoohavum (Mal)*, (ed), Kasaragod District Panchayath, 2001, p. 379.

2. *Ibid*, p. 38.

withdraw the case against the peasant leaders. This was one example of unity and self-determination on the part of the peasantry under the Sangham's leadership against landlordism and imperialism.

Madikkai intimidation and revival of court cases

Even after the Madikai crop's harvest agitation the landlord of that area, Achikkanan Janmi continued his repression towards the peasants. The peasant ladies collected leaves from the forest areas to make compost and for cooking. But the landlord compelled them to put the leaves first in his own fields and then only they were permitted to take the leaves for their needs. On the other side the police took all sorts of measures to suppress the peasantry.

A. K. Gopalan reached Madikai for collecting funds⁽¹⁾ for the party news paper *Deshabhimani*, in October 1946. The police received the news of A. K. Gopalan's arrival at Madikai. So two policemen followed him when he had gone house house for the collection of funds. He was not able to tolerate this and intimidated them for this vigilance. As per the report of the policemen more police constables were sent to Madikai. The peasantry under the leadership of A. K. Gopalan led a procession against the police. Then a case was charged⁽²⁾ against him and K. Madhavan, Ganapati Kammath, K. R. Kunhikannan and others. The case was withdrawn after independence.

At the same time another case⁽³⁾ was charged against K. Madhavan, Ganapati Kamath and others assuming that they constituted a parallel or rival

1. *Narrippu, The History of Madikkai Grama Panchayath, (Mal), (Madikkai, 2004), p. 130. See also K. K. N. Kurup, Agrarian Struggles In Kerala (Thiruvananthapuram, 1989), p. 38.*

2. *Ibid, p. 38.*

3. *K. Madhavan, Oru Gandhayan Communistinte Ormakal (Autobiography, Mal), (Thiruvananthapuram, 2002), p. 192-193.*

court in Madikai and tried local cases in which K. Madhavan acted as judge and Kammath as prosecutor. The case was tried by the First Class Magistrate, Kasaragod and ended in their discharge, with the exception of K. Madhavan, who had absconded. At last he was arrested in connection with the same case and he had to spend the night in police custody when India celebrated the day of independence.

The Karivellur Incident

The Communist Party observed 13th October 1946 as anti-repression day through out Malabar and Kasaragod. Post war sufferings accompanied by hoarding and black marketing increased the miseries of the people. So a meeting of the Communist Party was held at Calicut. It was decided to implement the agitation against black marketing and also to detect surplus food grains available in the areas. The Kisan Sangham organised various demonstrations against hoarding and black marketing.

Rama Varma Valiya Raja of Chirakkal was one of the absentee landlords of Karivellur village. He procured nearly 10000 seers of paddy from his tenants and kept it in the granary at Kuniyan. It was the period of scarcity of food grain and famine. The Raja obtained a permit on 4th December 1946 to transport paddy from Karivellur, a deficit area. The Kisan Sangham represented the Raja for handing over the entire quantity of paddy for distribution to the villagers at a fair price mainly because it was a deficit area, but the Raja did not agree.

On 20th December 1946, the Raja tried to remove the paddy with police protection. A big crowd resisted the transportation of paddy. This

resulted in the police firing and death of two Sangham volunteers, Thitil Kannan and Keeneri Kunhikannan.

Following this incident there was great oppression in Karivellur and surrounding areas including the Southern part of the Kasaragod taluk. In the militant action of the Sangham at Karivellur, Kisan Volunteers from Cheruvathur, Pilicode, Kayyur and Nileshwar had participated and out of the 75 accused⁽¹⁾ 32 were from the Kasaragod taluk. This shows the involvement of Kisan Sangham of Kasaragod in the Karivellur incident, even though Karivellur belonged to the Chirakkal taluk of the Malabar District.

Militancy and Repression

On 5th August 1946, through a resolution known as "Forward to Final Struggle" the Communist Party stated⁽²⁾ that the India freedom movement had entered in its last phase. The working class strikes, the Royal Indian Navy revolt and the peasant uprisings in different parts of India had heralded a period of mighty battle which might lead to the end of the imperialist feudal reign in India and the dawn of Indian freedom.

The Quit India Movement had paved for rapid uprising in Malabar and Kasaragod taluk. This invited immediate attention of the government to the problems of maintenance of law and order. Thus on 23rd January 1947, the government of Madras promulgated the Madras Maintenance of Public order ordinance⁽³⁾. This was for preventive detention, imposition of collective fines, control and

1. T. N. Ramakrishnan, *Reforms and Agricultural Development, A Case Study of Kasaragod District, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Mangalore University, p. 60.*

2. *Peoples Age, Vol. V, No. 4, 11th August 1946, Quoted in Agrarian Relations In Kerala, K. K. N. Kurup, (Thiruvananthapuram, 1989), p. 18.*

3. *G. O. No. 66, Dated 4th June 1947, (Legal).*

certain other purposes. Vast powers were given to executive authority against the individuals. Under the provision of this ordinance the government started repression against the Communists.

Thus Communist leaders of Malabar and South Canara were arrested and sent to Vellur Central Jail. S. N. Holla, B. V. Kakkillaya, K. P. Kesava Kammath, Haridas Maniyani, N. K. Kottan, K. T. Kunhiraman Nambiar, N. S. Namboodiri and Shantarama Pai of South Canara District⁽¹⁾ were arrested and put in to jail. The Communists filed a Habeaus Corpus writ petition before the High Court of Madras, but it was rejected.

The Fortnightly reported⁽²⁾ that the food situation continued to give certain amount of anxiety to the news papers. The swadesamitram urged the Government to formulate short term proposals for increasing agricultural production and to take action in regard to the Kisan troubles.

Culcutta Thesis

The general conference of the Communist Party was held at Culcutta from 28th February to 6th March 1948. Under these circumstances, the party decided to involve through armed revolt with Guerilla tactics and suggested⁽³⁾, "Telungana Model" every where in India to capture power and establish Peoples Democratic Republic. After adopting such a revolutionary programme the leaders and peasant activists went under ground.

From South Canara District, T. S. Tirumumb and P. Ambu Nair were the two delegates who attended the Culcutta party congress. K. Madhavan was

1. K. K. N. Kurup, *Agrarian Struggles In Kerala (Thiruvananthapuram, 1989)*, p. 44, See also *Mathrubhumi Daily, Calicut, 24th & 25th January, 1947.*
2. *Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for Second Half of February, 1948.*
3. K. K. N. Kurup, *Agrarian Struggles In Kerala (Thiruvananthapuram, 1989)*, p. 56.

also a delegate but he was detained by the party for under ground activities. After their return a secret meeting was organised at Ravaneshwara which was attended by one hundred representatives of the party to discuss the implementation of the Culcutta thesis.

Accordingly they decided to approach the land owning houses and to take paddy forcefully by the mobilisation of the peasantry. They also decided to give the market price to the landlord for the paddy. Thus the paddy purchasing struggle or the paddy lifting struggle was started in Kasaragod taluk by the Communist Party. The Communist propaganda⁽¹⁾ in the districts of Malabar and South Canara was concentrated on the decontrol policy of the government and they made full use of the fact that there was some local shortage of food grains.

Because of the suppression act introduced by the Madras Government, the Communists of the district went underground. Thus it was reported⁽²⁾ that in South Canara District considerable improvement had been reported in the labour situation as a result of the disappearance of the Communist leaders from the labour field. The situation was rather bad in Malabar, South Canara and Krishna Districts.

Considering the Communist activities in South Canara the government had taken harsh measures. The Inspector General of Police, Madras, reported⁽³⁾ to the Chief Secretary that in South Canara the Communists had organised a 'Peace Brigade' of about 55 volunteers in Mangalore where they were being

1. *Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for Second Half of February, 1948.*

2. *Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for First Half of April, 1948.*

3. *Inspector General Of Police of Madras, Report to The Chief Secretary, The Special Criminal Investigation Department Madras, 161/M Dated, 5-2-1948, p. 4.*

trained in physical drill and marching exercises. Some police officers were the target of attack by the Communists. It was thus seen that the Communists were pursuing a policy of unrest among labourers and Kisans rendering the problem of maintaining law and order difficult.

In view of the above activities it was considered that deterrent action⁽¹⁾ was necessary against the Communists. A list of important Communists of South Canara District to be detained was enclosed. They were T. Subrahmanyam Tirumumbu, S. N. Holla and B. V. Kakkillaya. It was also very essential that their party organ "Deshabhimani" "prayasakti" and "Janasakti" should be banned.

Immediately, on the receipt of the report the Chief Secretary took measures to arrest the Communists. He sent a cipher telegram⁽²⁾ to all District Magistrates to take immediate action against the Communists. Orders had been issued⁽³⁾ for the detention of important Communist's in all districts, but many of them had gone under ground.

Paddy Procurement Struggle

In the post-war period food shortage and economic crisis were deepened, the peasants organised Paddy Procurement Struggle or the so called 'paddy purchasing' from principal landlords, with a view to prevent hoarding and black marketing. Batches of peasants and Communists volunteers went from place to place for forceful purchase. The paddy so taken was distributed among the poor villagers. The granaries of Ilanir Madam in Kasaragod,

1. *Inspector General Of Police of Madras, Report to The Chief Secretary, The Special Criminal Investigation Department Madras, 161/M Dated, 5-2-1948, p. 4.*

2. *Cypher Telegram, No. 397/S, Dated 31st March 1948.*

3. *Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for Second Half of April, 1948.*

Kundilayur in Pullur, Kakkaothayar In Madikkai, Karinthalam Raman in Karinthalam. Kottayil Raghavan Nambiar in East Eleri, Vishnu Bhasmarithiya in Klayikkode, Puthilot Neelamana Embranthiri, Kanhirappalli Illam, Alakkantan Raman and Kunnath Illam In Kotakkat were opened by the peasants for distribution of paddy.

According to official reports⁽¹⁾ that in South Canara the Communists had been organising peasant raids and peasant marches, mode of attack being, collect men, women, children on the promise of getting them rice and to take them to the house of landlords who were reputed to have some paddy and to take delivery of the paddy by threatening the landholders with violence.

Batches of peasants and Communists armed with available weapons went for forceful purchase of paddy. Many reactionary landlords registered their protest by not accepting any payment and some landlords received the payment and also filed case against the agitators. The paddies so taken were distributed among the poor villagers at a fair price. Slogans⁽²⁾ like, 'Telangana way, our way' and 'land to the tiller and power to the people' were shouted by the volunteers.

Karindalam Procurement Struggle

Peasants under the leadership of T. S. Tirumumb marched in to the house of the landlord Karindalam Raman. When the rationing system was ended by the government the landlord utilised the situation for black marketing. Considering the situation the landlord had given ten para of paddy. The

1. *Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for Second Half of April, 1948.*

2. *P. Radhakrishnan, Peasant Struggles, Land Reforms and Social Change (New Delhi), 1989, p. 103.*

agitators had given him the market rate but he was not ready to accept that. The agitators distributed the paddy to the poor peasants.

A case was registered⁽¹⁾ against 54 persons. T. S. Tirumumb, N. Ganapati Kammath, C. Krishnan Nair and Choorikkadan Krishnan Nair were among the accused. No body was punished in the case. The peasants from Nileshtar, Cheemeni, Pilicode, Kinannur, Thimiri, Kayyur, Kuttamath, Mozhakom etc. participated in the agitation.

Madikai Procurement

The peasant Marched to the house of the landlord Kokkothayar of Madikai. Understanding the intention of the volunteers he opened his granary and given paddy. The agitators gave him 2 annas per seer. But a case was registered⁽²⁾ against person like K. Madhavan, Madikai Kunhikannan, P. Ambu Nair and others.

The volunteers prevented⁽³⁾ the transfer of paddy from Alayi of Madikai to the landlord of Nileshtar. The agitators captured the paddy and gave 2 annas per seer. The paddy was distributed to the poor peasants. A case was registered against six persons.

Putukai Procurement

Narayana Kanathil was the landlord in Putukai, near Madikai. When he tried for black marketing⁽⁴⁾ of paddy, Sangham, protested. Sangham purchased paddy and gave 12 annas per one para and distributed the paddy to the peasants. N. G. Kamath was the leader of the agitation.

1. *Kasaragod, Charithravum Samoothavum (Mal), (ed), Kasaragod District Panchayath, 2001, p. 380.*

2. *Ibid, p. 381.*

3. *Narrippu, The History of Madikkai Grama Panchayath, (Mal), (Madikkai, 2004), p. 132.*

4. *Ibid, p. 132.*

Raveneshwasram Procurement

Peasants marched to the Kundilayar's house under the leadership of P. Ambu Nair and M. Haridas. They told the landlord about the sufferings of the people and the intention of their march. The landlord had given⁽¹⁾ them 30 para of paddy and received the market price. The agitators distributed the paddy to the peasants. The paddy which received was not sufficient for distribution. So they had gone to the house of another landlord Maniyan Pattar. He was forced to give paddy. The police registered a case against 20 persons and resorted to repression.

Similar type of agitations were held at Madikai Udinur, Kuttamath and East Eleri. At Madikai, the Sangham decided to purchase the surplus paddy of the Keekkankod Illam. But the police resorted to repression. In Udinur they captured the paddy of the landlord called Ibrahim Kunhi and distributed it among the poor peasants. When Koran Nair, a tenant was taking his rent of paddy to the landlord, Nilamana Namboodiri of Kotakkat it was prevented by the Sangham workers. At last the landlord received the market price and settled. In East Eleri, the peasants marched to the house of the landlord Kottayil Kunhambu Nair and procured paddy and distributed to the peasants.

The fortnightly reports⁽²⁾ stated that a body of Communists who were hiding in the forests on the borders of South Canara, Coorg and Malabar were tackled by the MSP detachment as a result of which half a dozen Communists were killed and large part of the property of in the dacoiters were recovered in addition to guns and Communist literature.

1. *Kasaragod, Charithravum Samooahavum (Mal), (ed), Kasaragod District Panchayath, 2001, p. 381.*

2. *Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for First Half of May, 1948.*

From south Canara, it was reported that⁽¹⁾ bands of persons calling them selves Congress volunteers were going to villages in Hosdurg sub taluk saying that they were looking for Communists. The Congress volunteers started searching the Communists from the secret places. Many of them actually acted as the agents of landlords and police.

S. N. Holla, one of the peasant leader and one of the most wanted Communists of South Canara was arrested but he was rescued⁽²⁾ by a large group of Communists while he was taken to jail by train at Manjeshwar. The official report states⁽³⁾ that an important Communist of South Canara District, who had been arrested and was being taken to the jail was suddenly rescued and carried away⁽⁴⁾ by large party of Communists who overpowered the escort constables in the train.

Some Communists of Kuttamath, village of South Canara District forcibly harvested and removed paddy crops which had been attached by the civil court⁽⁴⁾. There were sixteen cases relating to paddy procurement from the Kasaragod taluk before the special court, Mangalore. The oppressive measures continued against the Communists in all parts of the district by the British Government. Thus, under these circumstances, one of the prominent Communist leaders of South Canara T. S. Tirumumbu decided to resign from the Communist Party. While he was arrested at Cheruvathur he handed over the resignation letter to the police and he had even given a detailed account of the activities of the party to the police.

1. *Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for Second Half of May, 1948.*

2. *K. K. N. Kurup, A. C. Kannan Nair Oru Patanam (Mal), Diary Dated, 21st may 1948, (Thiruvananthapuram, 1985), p. 161.*

3. *Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for Second Half of May, 1948.*

4. *Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for Second Half of September, 1948.*

The Congress leadership initiated lecture series⁽¹⁾ against Communism in Malabar and Kasaragod under the leadership of K. Kelappan, and others like Pamban Madhavan, Tayat Sankaran and Vishnu Bharatheeyan. In addition to this drive⁽²⁾ against the Communists over hundred arrests were made, during the fortnight both for specific offences and for subversive activities. Under these circumstances the Government decided to ban the Communist Party. It was stated that⁽³⁾

when most of the active Communists were arrested and kept in the jail, and law and order were maintained under "shoot at sight" orders in most of the districts of the government of Madras decided to ban the CPI and its feeder association in this province with effect from 27th September 1949.

The Communist Party and its feeder associations functioned under ground during the period of ban. The economic condition prevailed during this period was favourable for this. Indebtedness, rack-renting, oppression by the landlords was accompanied by hoarding and black marketing. Thus the agrarian scenario became more crucial. So the rural population had more sufferings and acute poverty. This rural mass supported the Communists for their under ground activities, even though the government unleashed a reign of terror.

The Congress continued the propaganda against the Communists and spy work against them. This created tensions in the rural areas between these

1. K. K. N. Kurup, *Agrarian Struggles In Kerala (Thiruvananthapuram, 1989)*, p. 70.

2. *Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for First Half of April, 1949.*

3. *USS Files, no. 110/49, Dated 16th December 1949.*

two parties. In Klayikod of Kasaragod taluk, a pandal constructed by the Congress for its meeting was burnt by the local Communists in April 1950. The fortnightly reports⁽¹⁾ that in South Canara District about 40 to 50 Communists suddenly attacked the organisers of village political conference in Mozhakoth village and set on fire the pandal erected for this purpose.

A procession was led by one Balakrishnan Nambiar shouting Communist slogans on 29th April in Muliya Village. Another procession was reported from Perumbala village. A platoon of MSP had been posted and adequate precautions were taken. Thus even though the party was kept under ban its activities continued in a changed form because it had deep rooted influence in the rural population.

The Communist Party engaged struggles during the years 1950 and 1951 against the ban. The party adopted constitutional methods on the basis of the new constitution. The situation created⁽²⁾ by the judgment (the Supreme Court and the Madras High Court) on cases regarding the detainees was reviewed by the government. These judgments partially restored the civil rights. Good number of detainees were released and by the end of 1951 a situation of normally was being restored.

The Malabar Kisan Council came in to existence with effect from 26th July 1951 with eminent leaders like K. A. Keraleeyan and A. V. Kunhambu. Very soon 79 local Kisan units were organised. The agitations of the peasantry were centered around the following demands⁽³⁾.

1. *Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for First Half of May, 1950.*

2. *K. K. N. Kurup, Agrarian Struggles In Kerala (Thiruvananthapuram, 1989), p. 93-95.*

3. *Ibid, p. 108.*

1. The Pattam (cash payment for garden land) and rent should be made one half of the existing payment.
2. Hut-dwellers should be given fixity of tenure.
3. Rent arrears should be cancelled.
4. Rent should be paid either in cash or kind.
5. Waste land should be given for cultivation with out rent.
6. The pepper rent should be made one for 10 trees or one year for 10 years.
7. The tenancy legislation should be extended to Kasaragod taluk.

Even though Kisan Sangham was deep rooted in almost all parts of Kasaragod taluk the Kodom village was taken aloof. In 1952, a Kisan Sangham unit was founded⁽¹⁾ at Kodom with Narayan Nair the president and C. Shankaran the Secretary. The Communist Party decided to conduct a public meeting at Kodom, but the landlord opposed. The police interfered and prohibited public meeting by proclaiming Rule 144 in Kodom. But Sangham leaders like T. C. Narayanan Nambiar MLA, K. Madhavan, Kodoth Narayanan Nair, K. M. Kumaran and V. Kunhiraman violated the prohibition and entered Kadakam. They were arrested and remanded. Afterwards the Sangham became more powerful in Kadakam, convened public meeting and the case was withdrawn by the government.

The South Canara District Raitha Sangha (Peasant organisation) was organised⁽²⁾ in February 1952. B. V. Kakkillaya was the first president of the organisation. The Raitha Sangha put forward three main demands

1. *Kasaragod, Charithravum Samoohavum (Mal), (ed), Kasaragod District Panchayath, 2001, p. 382.*
 2. *Joshi G. V., Dakshina Kannada Jilleya Raith Horattar (Mangalore University, 1989), p. 10.*

1. The tenants should not be evicted. Those who were cultivating the land should become the permanent cultivator of the land.
2. The Raitha Sangha demanded that rent should be reduced to one fifth of the gross produce.
3. Receipt for the rent.

The tenants of Udupi and Bandwal joined the movement with expectation of getting receipt for their payment of rent. The Raitha Sangha organised meetings and jathas in different villages. The landlords tried to suppress the attempts of the ryots with violence and goondaism.

The Karnataka Prantha Raitha Sangha was organised⁽¹⁾ in 1954. Venkidagiri Appa was the president and B. V. Kakkillaya was the secretary of the Sangha. The Sangha put forward the following major demands⁽²⁾.

1. To give security of Tenure to the tenants
2. The eviction of tenants should be prohibited
3. Reduction of rent.
4. Rent should be based on the land revenue and not the produce.
5. Payment of receipt for the rent.

Owing to the ferocity of the movement the Madras Government announced a law to help the tenants. Thus the Madras cultivating Tenants protection Act, 1955 prohibited eviction of tenants in South Canara.

The Raitha Sangha also organised the toddy tappers. They demanded to permit them, toddy tapping for making jaggery and the sale of toddy. The

1. Interview With B. V. Kakkillaya On August 28th 2005, His Residence At Mangalore.

2. *Ibid.*

toddy tappers started their struggles with the support of the Raitha Sangha and the government permitted tapping for jaggiri purpose.

A memorable satyagraha, the Mulki Satyagraha took place on 1955-56 at Mulki a place between Mangalore and Udupi, the exact place was called Chithapur. This was against eviction of a tenant named, Chinna Poojari. The prominent leaders of the movement were B. V. Kakkillaya, M. H. Krishnappa, Krishna Shetty, Sanjeev Rai, Koragappa Rai, Virappa Saliya, Vishwatha Nayak, K. V. Rao, Ram Nayak, Abraham Karkade and others. The volunteers from different parts came in jathas to Mulki. The working class of the district shouted slogan "Mulki Chalho". The police and goondas of landlords unleashed repression on the satyagrahi's. The satyagrahi's failed to resist and mobilise more peasants against the repression. Chinna poojari lost his land. But this satyagraha paved the way for the development of political consciousness among the peasants and the working class. There was also struggle against eviction in Bantwal taluk. Era and Balakpul were the particular place, where the struggle took place.

The economic exploitation of the colonial rule impoverished the peasantry and the rural population started resistance movements against British rule. Thus massive and militant peasant movements took place in Kasaragod taluk of South Canara District in 1930's with the influence of the Malabar experience. Similarly the Communist Party had strong holds in this taluk to co-ordinate and led the struggles. The Communists and the peasants fought

against caste system and landlordism on one hand and colonialism on the other. But in other parts of the district excluding the Kasaragod taluk, the formation of the peasant organisations started only in 1945 onwards and the spread of the peasant organisations were also very slow. The peasant movements were actually weak before independence in this area. Thus we can observe a contrast between the peasant movements in Kasaragod taluk of South Canara District and other parts of the district.

C H A P T E R - V

TENANCY LEGISLATION

Land reform was one of the objectives declared by the Indian National Movement to mobilise the rural population in the main stream of the freedom struggle. "Land to the tiller" is the slogan of land reforms, but the tenant who cultivates the land by the sweat of his brow or aspirations of life, sharing either the crop or paying a fixed rent to the landlord was unlikely to achieve⁽¹⁾ this goal. Resistance was bound to face for any such attempts in a feudalistic society like India. That is why the agrarian relations based on land ownership, land control and use of land continue with slight change in almost all Indian states even today. The success of the tenancy reform is the result of an increase in the awareness of the tenants brought by the tenancy movement. Thus wherever powerful tenancy movements were organised, backed by political ideology, the slogan "land to the tiller" was realised.

1. *Abdul Aziz And Sudhir A. Krishna (ed), Land Reforms In India, Kamataka, (New Delhi, 1977), p. 21.*

Pre-independence and post-independence period marked agrarian discontent in various parts of India. Many provinces of British India passed tenancy legislation which resulted in temporary relief to certain classes of the peasantry. Our constitution itself proclaims the significance of land reform through the inclusion of the four corner stones-justice, liberty, equality and fraternity-in the preamble of the Indian constitution and land reform acts had become imperative on the part of the state governments. The first five year plan recommended security of tenure for tenants subject to the landlord's rights to resume a limited area for personal cultivation. It was also suggested that there was advantage in the government establishing direct contact with tenants or the abolition of intermediaries and also recommended that the rent should not exceed one-fourth or one-fifth of the produce.

Politically, economically and socially the peasantry were very weak to recognise their rights and also to insist on the rights. Various tenancy laws passed by the states contain loopholes and these loopholes were exploited by the landowners with the help of the bureaucrats. Hence, it was noted that the tenancy legislation implemented during the first five year plan failed miserably. Damle who studied the tenancy legislation in South Canara District, expressed that⁽¹⁾

"the avowed purpose of such tenancy legislation had been to give protection to tenants against from their lease-holdings. But the inherent weakness of these tenancy legislation was the provision that provided the landlords with power to resume their leased out lands for personal cultivation, which had a detrimental effect on the actual existence of tenants".

1. C. B. Damle, "Impact Of Tenancy Legislation And Changing Agrarian Relations; A Case Study Of Dakshina Kannada District", *Social Scientist*, Vol. 17, Nos. 11-12 November-December, 1989, p. 84.

The post war period had resulted in abnormal rise in the prices of the agricultural products and this eventually led to hoarding and black marketing. Rack-renting, indebtedness and large scale of eviction were the peculiar features of the period. This created crisis in the agrarian structure resulting in powerful conflicts. Under the leadership of the Communist Party, the workers and the peasants started militant agitations in many parts of the district.

The government appointed Raghavendra Rao as the special officer⁽¹⁾ to investigate the land tenure system in the ryotwari areas of the Madras Presidency in 1946. He studied the land tenure system of the ryotwari areas and recommended that⁽²⁾ the conditions of the small peasants proprietors should be improved by ensuring fair rent and freedom of eviction.

As per the recommendation of the committee and the pressure from the agrarian classes, the government resorted to certain measures to protect the tenants from eviction, which was the powerful weapon in the hand of the landlords. Thus the government introduced Madras Ryot and Tenants Protection Act of 1946⁽³⁾. This act was to provide a temporary protection of certain classes of tenants and ryots in the province of Madras. The Communists were actively engaged in organising the tenants for bargaining their rights with the landlords in various parts of Madras state, particularly in Malabar, Tanjore and in parts of South Canara. The Madras Tenants and Ryots

1. G. O. No. 403, Revenue, Madras Government, dt. 22nd June, 1946.

2. Report Of The Special Officer On Land Tenure In The Ryotwari Areas Of the Madras Province, August, 1947, (Madras, 1961), p. 3-9.

3. V. V. Kunhikrishnan, *Tenancy Legislation In Malabar, 1880-1970*, (New Delhi, 1993), p. 110.

Protection Act⁽¹⁾ was enforced in 1949. The act contained the following provisions. No tenant of any private land in an estate shall be liable to be evicted by his landlord in pursuance decree or order for ejection and no holding of a ryot shall be liable to be sold or brought to sale in pursuance of a decree of order or other proceedings, for recovery of rent. In 1950 the Government enacted the Madras Agriculturists Relief (Amendment) Act⁽²⁾. It provided that no creditor should be required to refund any sum which has been paid to or realised by him before the commencement of the Act.

The Madras Estates Land (Reduction of rent) Act of 1951 provided that⁽³⁾, the amount of rent paid by a ryot before the commencement of this act of fasli 1357 or for any subsequent fasli, was in excess of the rent should be adjusted towards the rent payable by him to the holder for any subsequent fasli. The Madras Indebted Agriculturists (Temporary Relief) Act of 1954, provided⁽⁴⁾ Temporary relief to indebted agriculturists. The agriculturists, who had borrowed or added to their debts during the years of drought and may, if freed for a time from the pressure of creditor, be enabled to rehabilitate themselves.

On 27th February 1954, the South Canara Cultivating Tenants Protection Act had received the assent of the President of India. It was originally intended to provide protection from eviction to the cultivating tenants in the district. It was to be in force for a year. The major defect of the Act was

1. *The Madras Code, Vol. 4, Unrepealed Madras Acts, Law Department (Madras, 1961), p. 42.*

2. *Ibid, p. 214.*

3. *Ibid, p. 399.*

4. *Ibid, p. 454.*

that, it did not contain any specific provision to prevent the landlord from evicting the tenants. The Act provided the provision that the tenant could deposit the rent in the Civil Court or if the rent be payable in kind, its market value on the date of deposit. This provision was important to help the tenants to gain documentary evidence instead of the receipt of rent from the landlords, who were not ready to issue receipts. The prominent demerit of the Act was that it did not even specify the maximum rent payable by the tenant.

The Madras Cultivating Tenants Protection Act, 1955 received the assent of the President on 24th September 1955. It incorporated the main provision of the South Kanara Cultivating Tenants Protection Act 1954, that the tenant could deposit rent in the Civil Court. The Act provided protection from eviction to cultivating tenants in certain areas of the state of Madras. No cultivating tenants shall be evicted from his holding or any part there of, during the continuance of this Act or at the instance of his landlord, whether in execution of a decree or order of a court or other wise. Receipt for payment of revenue was legally enforceable by the tenants. The salient features of the Act were that the landlord could not evict the tenant cultivating land, but he could get only half the extent of the land under tenancy leased for self-cultivation leaving the remaining half to the tenant. The Act ended in failure because the Government did not take any measure to prevent eviction. The tenant was not required to return the land to the landlord who had over 13 acres of wet land or an income tax payee. Rent could not constitute over 33-40 percent of the crop share.

Further, the South Canara Cultivating Tenants Protection Act was repealed through the introduction of the Madras Cultivating Tenants Protection (Amendment) Act of 1956⁽¹⁾. Notwithstanding such repeal, all proceedings taken under the South Canara Cultivating Tenants Protection Act and which were pending on the date of coming in to force of the act should be disposed of by the court before such proceedings were pending as if that Act had not been passed.

The Act gave right to the landlords to resume land for personal cultivation. The personal cultivation was so easily defined in the act as it could be easily misused by the landlords. The Act also contained the provision that the landlord could evict his tenant, in case the tenants neglected land or took to any activity which could destroy the fertility of the soil.

The Madras cultivating Tenants (Payment of Fair Rent) Act 1956⁽²⁾ was passed and came in to force on the 1st October 1956. According to the provisions of the act fair rent was determined as

1. In the case of wet land, 40 per cent of the normal gross produce or its value in money.
2. In the case of wet land where the irrigation was supplemented by lifting water 35 per cent of the normal gross produce or its value in money.
3. In the case of any other class of land $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent of the normal gross produce or its value in money.

Notwithstanding any neglect or failure on the part of the cultivating

1. *The Madras Code, Vol. 4, Unrepealed Madras Acts, Law Department (Madras, 1961), p. 674.*

2. *Ibid, P. 686.*

tenant to raise any crop, the land owner should be entitled to collect fair rent. The fair rent in respect of any land might be paid either in cash or in kind or partly in cash and partly in kind in accordance with the terms of the contract between the landowner and the cultivating tenants.

Even though these acts were introduced to protect the tenants from eviction or of fair rent, they did not provide a safeguard to the tenants. Vast majority of the Chalageni tenants did not have any documentary evidence to prove their tenancy right. Thus the tenants did not get legal protection from eviction. Indebtedness and eviction continued in South Canara District. The landlords made use of the loopholes in the acts for their vested interest.

Land Legislation after the formation of the Linguistic states

As a part of the reorganisation of the states, new linguistic states came in to existence and on 1st November 1956. Kasaragod which existed as a part of South Canara District was amalgamated with Kerala State and South Canara or Dakshina Kannada District became a part of the Karnataka or Mysore state. After the formation of these states, Kerala and Karnataka enacted their own land reforms acts according to the political conditions prevailed in each states. Thus, there emerged differences in the nature of the land reforms and its implementation in each States. So in order to understand the tenancy legislation of the district, it is necessary to study the tenancy legislation of these two states and to make a comparative study of the nature of the tenancy legislation and its impact up on the agrarian relations.

Land Reforms in Karnataka

Till independence there was no specific laws in land leasing practices. However after independence it might have received a set back with the introduction of the Madras Prevention of Ejectment Act of 1954. As stated above, the Madras Cultivating Tenants Protection Act of 1955, prohibited eviction of tenants in South Canara District for one year. This Act was amended in 1956 extending the period of stay of ejectment from one year to three years also making the act applicable all over the state except in areas where Malabar Tenancy Act of 1929 was in force.

This amendment also conferred⁽¹⁾ on the landlord the right to resume for personal cultivation half the extent of the land leased to a tenant provided that the extent of land held by him on 1st October 1956 did not exceed 13.3 acres of wet land or its equivalent on the basis that one acre of wet land was equal to 1½ acres of garden land or 3 acres of dry land. The right of resumption was subject to the further condition that it should be limited to such an extent as would, along with the extent already held by the landlord either as owner or as tenant or both, would makeup an extent of five acres of wet land⁽²⁾. The payment of Fair Rent Act of 1956 attempted to rationalize the rent payable to the landlords.

The second stage of the peasant struggle started in the district after the formation of the Dakshina Kannada District. In this stage⁽³⁾ the Raitha Sanghas under the leadership of the Communists and the Praja Socialist Party

1. *Report Of The Mysore Tenancy Agricultural Land Laws Committee, (Bangalore, 1958), p. 11.*

2. *Ibid, p. 11.*

3. *Joshi G. V. Dasina Kannada Jilleta Raith Horattar (Mangalore University, 1989, p. 13.*

(PSP) were in the forefront of the peasant agitations.

The large scale evictions of tenants were an important feature of the agrarian structure of the district during the period between 1951 and 1957. Thus the number of the tenants in Dakshina Kannada District was sharply declined⁽¹⁾ from 589017 in 1951 to 490571 in 1957. During the short period around one lakh of tenants were evicted. Though the Raitha Sangha resorted to agitations against this eviction in several parts of the district, it failed miserably to resist the large scale eviction. It was easy for the landlords in the district to establish their right of resumption because they were residing in the very villages in which their leased out lands were situated. For the same reason it was easy for them to get the support of revenue and police departments for evicting their tenants.

Kondady movement⁽²⁾ was an important agitation against eviction. The peasants under the leadership of Baikadi Sheenappa Shetty, U.S. Nayak and Devis Luis of P.S.P led the struggle. In November 1956 the peasants began agitation against eviction of Gowramma, a poor tenant in Kondady of Udipi taluk, by the landlord. This agitation continued for 17 days and thousands of peasants participated in the agitation. At last the landlord was forced to hand over the land to the tenant Gowramma. This Kondady agitation paved the way to create a new enthusiasm among the agitating peasantry against landlordism.

The State Government of Mysore appointed the Mysore Tenancy

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1. C. V. Damle, *Land Reforms And Changing Agrarian Relations In Dakshina Kannada District, Karnataka, Ph.D. Thesis, University Of Pune, Quoted In Land Reforms In Dakshina Kannada District By Panduranga Nayak, unpublished MPhil Thesis, Mangalore University, 1991, p. 68.*
 2. Joshi G. V. *Dasina Kannada Jilleta Raith Horattar (Mangalore University, 1989, p. 16.*

Agricultural Land Laws Committee on 10th May 1957. The committee was authorised to examine the existing laws and practices in regard to the land tenancy in several areas of the state and consistent with recommendation of the Planning Commission suggested suitable measures for regulating land tenures⁽¹⁾. It also authorised to examine whether it was feasible to have a common tenancy law in the new state of Mysore.

The measures suggested⁽²⁾ towards the end shall cover the matters like, fixity of rent, security of tenure, right of resumption of land by landlords for personal cultivation, right of purchase by tenants and payment of compensation to landlords, ceiling extent of landholding, fixing the extent of basic or economic and family holdings and specifying the areas to which they apply, prohibition of land ownership as a source of income by persons who were not themselves cultivators or by those who did not reside either in the village in which the land was situated or on the farms, matters relating to the assumption and management or acquisition of lands by government, acquisition of land from persons who own the land in a village but who were neither agriculturists nor residents of the village and restraint on alienation of land in favour of non-agriculturists.

B. D. Jatti⁽³⁾ was the chairman of the committee consisting of eleven members and the committee submitted its report on 10th September 1957. The committee expressed the opinion that the agricultural economy of the state largely approaches the ideal of peasant proprietorship. The major

1. *Report Of The Mysore Tenancy Agricultural Land Laws Committee, (Bangalore, 1958), p. 1.*

2. *Ibid, p. 1,2.*

3. *Ibid, , p. 42.*

recommendations of the committee were⁽¹⁾

1. Small holders owing not more than a family holding may also be allowed to lease out land.
2. Small holding (owning not more than a family holding) whose total income from all sources including the rent of the land in question does not exceed Rs 1200 would have the benefit of this exemption.
3. In the case of existing leases a limited right of resumption to the owner, the lease continuing in respect of the resumable area as long as the right of resumption subsists.
4. All leases to be made in future should be in writing and a copy should be filed with the prescribed authority unless registered under the Indian Registration Act.
5. The owner who owns less than a basic holding may resume the entire area for personal cultivation. A person who holds land exceeding a basic holding but less than a family holding should be permitted to resume for personal cultivation one-half of the area held by the tenant but in no event less than a basic holding.
6. The leases should run indefinitely and terminable only if the owner requires the land for personal cultivation and the usual conditions for the resumption of land for personal cultivation were fulfilled.
7. The fair rent in respect of all lands, other than lands with assured irrigation might be fixed at one-fifth of the gross produce, the landlord paying the assessment and other government dues.

1. *Report Of The Mysore Tenancy Agricultural Land Laws Committee, (Bangalore, 1958), p. 46, 47, 51, 57, 63. 65*

8. The ownership of all non-resumable area might vest in government from a notified date subject to government paying compensation to the owner. Tenants will acquire ownership rights on payment of the compensation paid by government. The Government should take over the responsibility to pay compensation and recovering the same from tenants in installments.
9. The government pay the compensation in a lump sum immediately in the case of persons from whom less than a basic holding had been taken over.

Even though the Jatti Committee had submitted its report in a short period, Government delayed the tenancy legislation in order to safeguard the interest of the land owning class who continued eviction. Thus, the peasant organisations started agitations against eviction and for the speedy enactment of a land reform act. The peasants under the leadership of P. S. P. in the district organised meetings to condemn the delay and the indirect support given by the Government for the eviction of the tenants. Kashimale Shakar Poojari of Vittal was the tenant of Laxman Sen. The tenant was evicted by the landlord and a case was charged against him. It was reported that the police co-operated with the landlord in harassing the tenant. Many such incidents of eviction with the support of the police were reported from the district.

In 1958 the Raitha Sangha started campaign for the immediate enactment of the land reform legislation. As a part of this the Sangha organised jathas in each districts and these jathas marched to Bangalore. In South Canara

District M.H. Krishnappa, Janardana Nayak and Veerppa Saliya took leadership of the march.

The meeting of the peasants were organised in Upttage village of Udipi taluk on 20th November 1958. They discussed the draw backs of the Jatti Committee Report and formulated their suggestions and submitted to the government in April 1959. Puttur, Vittla, Belthagadi and Udipi became the centers of the peasant activists.

The eviction and atrocities resulted in the peasant agitations including meetings and rallies. They repeated the demand for land to the tiller and speedy enactment of the tenancy legislation. In many places the agitations resulted in open clashes between the landlord and the peasantry. Criminal acts like burning of the tenant houses, forcible harvest of the tenants crops and the use of goonda elements against the tenants were common during this period. These happenings became important matters of discussion and criticism during the meetings and rallies.

The proposed Land Reform Act exempted the tea, coffee, coconut and arecanut plantations. So the peasantry decided to oppose the proposal and organised mass propaganda to include the plantation areas in the scope of the tenancy legislation.

In April 1959 the peasants organised rallies at Puttur, Belthagady, Udipi and Vittal. In Puttur, K. Monappa Shetty took the leadership and in Belthagady, P. M. Rajendra was the leader. P. Sheena Naik and B. N. Ramayya Setty presided over the rallies in Udipi and Vittal respectively. In all these rallies the peasants demanded the reduction of rent, prohibition of eviction and the

immediate enactment of the progressive land reform law. It urged the peasants to unite and agitate for land reform act.

Following the recommendation of the Jatti Committee a bill was formulated in 1961, known as the Karnataka Land Reforms Act, 1961. The Bill became an Act in 1965 following the president's assent to it. The major provisions of the Karnataka land reforms Act 1961 were as follows⁽¹⁾.

1. For the first time leasing out land was banned, though certain types of landlords, like those serving in the defense forces and in the merchant navy, legal minors, ie, persons under 18 years of age, unmarried women, widows, persons suffering from physical or mental disability and small holders were exempted from this ban.
2. Since direct sale of land found to be unfavourable to the tenants interests, the Act stipulated that the transfer of ownership should be effected by first vesting the land in the government and then returning to the tenant.
3. The Act determined the rent payable under leases in the numerous cases where leasing was exempted. The rent, was determined at 25 percent for land with assured irrigation and 20 percent for unirrigated land.
4. The Act provided for resumption of land only in very special circumstances, such as when it was required for non-agricultural purpose, on bonafide personal cultivation by the land owners, when the tenant did not pay rent, caused damage to it, sublet it unauthorisedly or failed to

1. *Abdul Aziz And Sudhir A. Krishna (ed), Land Reforms In India, Karnataka, (New Delhi, 1977), p. 51, 98, 182, 183.*

cultivate it for over two years.

5. The ceiling for each family of 5 members was fixed at 27 standard acre which was extremely liberal both in terms of the ceiling fixed concessions given and exemptions provided. The Act made provision for each additional family member and was allowed 6 standard acre up to a maximum of 54 standard acres for the entire family. The term 'standard acre' referred to 1 acre of first class irrigated land which was adjudged to be equivalent to about 8 acre of dry land in an area with rainfall of less than 25 inches a year.

6. The tenant could secure ownership over non-resumable land by filing declarations to the Tribunals constituted under the Act. The tenants dispossessed of land before the 10th September 1957, could, within one year of the commencement of the Act, apply to the Tribunal for the restoration of their tenancies. But there was an overriding provision that Tribunal should not restore tenancies if on the appointed day the land was used for non-agricultural purpose, or if it was leased out to some other tenants or if it was satisfied that eviction or surrender had taken place in accordance with the law.

The Land Reform Act, 1961 had its own loopholes. The landowner could resume up to half of the extent of leased land as per the records but, practically any extent of land for personal cultivation. The landlord seeking resumption had to apply to the tribunal in theory, the tribunal was required to enquire in to all cases for surrender of land by the tenant to the landlords to

ensure that no coercion had been used and of the surrendered land the landlord got only the extent he would have obtained in the event of resumption and the balance went to the government.

The landowner of all non-resumable land was conferred on the persons cultivating it as tenants by a notification from the state government declaring that with effect from a prescribed date all the land specified stood vested in the government. There after, the cultivating tenants were registered as owners of the land. But in practice, generally the officials belonging to the tribunal took part on the side of the landlords and in many cases the tenants lost their land.

Struggle against eviction continued during this period also. In 1961 a militant struggle was held at Narikambo in Bantwal taluk. It was a struggle against eviction organised by the Raitha Sangha. Narikambo Venkitta Rao was the landlord and his goondas murdered a peasant. Thus the open clashes between the goondas of landlords and the peasants were common in the district.

In 1968 at Amagali in Coondapoor taluk the Raitha Sangha organised a struggle against eviction under the leadership of B. Ramachandra Rao and Karkkada. This struggle turned as direct fight between the landlord and the peasants. As a part of the struggle the Sangha organised a public meeting at Basarur. When the meeting was going on the goondas of the landlord attacked and it turned in to direct fighting.

The 1961 Act created discontent among the tenants of this district and started agitations demanding for new land reforms for the protection of the

tenants. Between 1965-1971 peasants unions were formed in Udipi, Mulki, Coondapura and other places of Dakshina Kannada District. It was not easy for the poor peasants to resist successfully the efforts of landlords to evict them because of the widespread landlordism, the support of the revenue and police departments to the landlords and the fundamental defects of the Madras Legislations and subsequently the 1961 Act.

In the assembly election in 1967 some Communist and peasant leaders, including B. V. Kakkillaya, became the members in the Legislative Assembly of Karnataka. They tried to present their slogan that ploughing men should be the owner of the land or 'land to the tiller' in the legislative assembly. It is stated that during the 1967 election the Congress Socialists fought a powerful election campaign in which they pointed out that the 1961 Act was passed by the Congress Party only to strengthen the position of the land owning class. Peasant rallies were conducted on 20th September 1970 at Mangalore and Bantwal and demanded the amendment of the Act of 1961. Mammoth peasants conferences were organised on 26th February 1972 in Bhadragiri village of Udipi taluk and they demanded abolition of landlordism in the district⁽¹⁾.

The problems of the tenants in the District had been highlighted by the Socialist leaders on the floor of the Karnataka Legislative Assembly during the early 1970's. Thus, it witnessed so many debates prior to the enactment of the Karnataka Land Reform (Amendment) Act, 1974. Some of those debates were as follows.

H. V. Koujalgi, the then Minister for Revenue stated that in the Karnataka

1. *Panduraga Nayak, Land Reforms in Dakshina Kannada District, Unpublished MPhil Thesis, Mangalore University, 1991, p. 80.*

State Assembly, in order to avoid delay in granting land to the landless tenants local consultative committees had been formed and they had been requested to dispose all land within the four months. This was against the question raised by the A R Badari Narayana the M L A of Shimoga⁽¹⁾.

To the question of M. Nagappa, MLA from Raichur, H. V. Koujalgi, the Minister for Revenue answered that the government had granted 141085 acres of land during the period from 1962-1969 in the Karnataka State and in South Canara it was 68.37 acres⁽²⁾. H. V. Patil, the member of Karnataka Legislative Assembly had criticised the government, during the six years they had been able to distribute only 141085 acres and still there was about 15-20 lakhs areas of land available for distribution. He expressed that the officers were deliberately delaying the grant of lands. Thus it shows the inefficiency of the government and the betrayal of the government to deceive the people⁽³⁾.

The Governor of Mysore in his address to the State Assembly on 25th March 1972 had stated that a national policy providing for lower ceiling on agricultural holdings had been enunciated, based on the recommendations on the Central Land Reforms Committee. In the light of these recommendations, the land reform laws in the state was proposed to be amended suitably. The work of bringing up the record of rights up to-date and the issue of patta books will be speeded up. It was also proposed to lower the ceiling for the grand of land under unauthorised occupation to eligible persons. So that the

1. *Karnataka Legislative Assembly debates, 8th session Vol. 28, 12th October, 1970 to 19th October 1970, p. 284.*

2. *Karnataka Legislative Assembly debates 8th session, Vol. 27, 21st September, 1970 to 29th September, 1970, p. 250-251.*

3. *Ibid, p. 253.*

encroachments would be eliminated from excess arrears which could then become available for distribution to land less persons and poor farmers⁽¹⁾.

Answering to the question of Mallikarjun Kharze, MLA from Gurmitkal, the then Chief Minister, D Devaraj Urs stated that between first January 1971 to 12th January 1972, 157 murders had occurred in the Karnataka State connected with the land disputes⁽²⁾.

P. A. Pawasha MLA from Uchagaon raised the question to the Karnataka State Legislative Assembly that whether there were any instance of eviction of tenants on the ground of non-payment of rent and surrender of lands after the coming into force of the Mysore Land Reforms Act, 1961. The then, Revenue Minister N Hutchamasthy answered, yes, to the question and also remarked that for non-payment of rent 113 acres of land were evicted and as a result of voluntary surrender there was 19037 acres of land⁽³⁾.

M. S. Krishnan MLA, from Malleswaram constituency, criticised the government for its failure to tackle the problems of agricultural workers by non-fixation of a minimum living wage, giving them sites and materials for the construction of house⁽⁴⁾.

C. M. Arumugham, MLA from Kolar gold fields criticised that the government had miserably failed to cater to the needs of the agriculturists and landless persons in the state. The Revenue Department had virtually lost its importance and it was turned as a department of collection. He also expressed

1. *Karnataka Legislative Assembly debates first session vol. 1 24th March, 1972 to 29th March 1972, p. 37-38.*

2. *Karnataka Legislative Assembly debated Vol. 8th, 28th November 1972, p. 72.*

3. *Karnataka Legislative Assembly Debates vol. 8, 28th November 1972.*

4. *Karnataka Legislative Assembly Debates 3rd session vol. 10 16th February 1973 to 21st February 1973, p. 276.*

the opinion that the Revenue Minister would destroy the agrarian structure, not by introducing land reforms to benefit one and all living in rural areas⁽¹⁾.

C M Arumugham also remarked that every day the meeting was going on but, there was no progress in drafting the Land Reform (Amendment) Bill. There was so much delay and the committee's works had not been progressed. There were vested interests and they wanted to prevent the bill being passed. He stated, that this was the reason while the land reform bill had not been able to get through and the Government was not able to place it before the house⁽²⁾.

The failure of the Government in implementing the Land Reform Act was criticised in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly on 26th April 1973 by Damodar Moolky, M.L.A. of Moodabidri constituency, though they had been promising land reforms for many decades⁽³⁾. He appealed to the Government to give protection to all the tenants and he further brought to the notice of the Assembly that the peasants were being exploited by the rich landlords who were also acting as money lenders. Hence⁽⁴⁾ he requested the government to make arrangements to give loans to the peasants at comparatively low rate of interest. Thus these discussions and peasants agitations acquired significance in the district and eventually led to the enactment of a tenant oriented, land legislation.

The Karnataka Land Reform Act 1974, was formed bearing the common

1. *Karnataka Legislative Assembly Debates 3rd session, vol. 15, 25th April 1973 to 3rd May 1973, p. 201.*

2. *Ibid, p. 205.*

3. *Mysore Legislative Assembly debate Vol. 15, Part 26 April 1973, p. 198-199.*

4. *Ibid, p. 198-199.*

guidelines put forward by the Chief Minister's conference⁽¹⁾ of 1973, which held detailed discussions on the common guidelines with regard to the ceiling limit, unit of ceiling application, exemption and the way in which surplus land would be distributed. A comprehensive bill was drafted and referred to a Joint Select Committee of Karnataka Legislature under the chairmanship of the then Revenue Minister Kudidal Manjappa in 1971. The Committee organised a workshop at Mysore and a seminar in Mysore University with a view to eliciting inputs. Taking in to consideration, the recommendation of the committee, the Government of Karnataka passed the Land Reforms (Amendment) Act in 1973 and this received the assent of the President in March 1974. The Karnataka Land Reform Act, 1961 was comprehensively amended and brought in to force with effective from first March 1974.

It is important to mention one of the aspects of the Joint Select Committee. It was composed of radicals among the Congress (I) members, Communists and Socialist Party legislators and even the academic component of the university seminar consisted of radical academicians⁽²⁾. As a result certain radical provisions were included in the proposed legislation. For example, the land ceiling limit was proposed to 10 standard acre⁽³⁾, practically no exemptions to special categories were provided to institutions such as religious and educational institutions and plantations and orchards from the ceiling provisions. Even those with an annual income of Rs. 12,000 from non-agricultural sources and living 16 km away from the site of the land cultivated were

1. Abdul Aziz And Sudhir A. Krishna (ed), *Land Reforms In India, Karnataka*, (New Delhi, 1977), p. 52.

2. *Ibid*, p. 53, 54.

3. *The Chief Ministers Conference in 1973 put forward the guideline that the ceiling limit with in the range of 10 to 18 acre for land with assured irrigation and capable of yielding atleast two crops a year.*

not to be allowed to own and cultivate land.

But even before the bill went through the legislative process, the radical provisions included were dropped. This was because of interference and pressure of the land owning bureaucrats such as big land owners, sugar factories, coffee planters and religious and educational institutions. Thus the basic theme of the land ceiling⁽¹⁾ was changed and non-agricultural income, and distance criteria were dropped to safe guard the interest of the privileged class. Even though the ceiling limit was retained at 10 standard acre for a family with five members, a provision of 2 standard acre for every member in excess of five, but in no case was the ceiling area to exceed 20 standard acre. In the case of religious and educational institutions, the ceiling fixed was 20 standard acre and 50 standard acre in the case of sugar factories. Various types of plantations were exempted from the provision of the ceiling on land holding.

The major provisions of the Karnataka Land Reforms (Amendment) Act, 1974 are following:

- 1) All lands held by or in the possession of tenants were vested with the State Government.
- 2) A soldier or a seaman was entitled to resume land to the extent of the ceiling area whether his tenant is a protected tenant or not. The Act removed the provision in the 1961 Act that enabled the small landlords, widows and minors to create tenancy.

1. Abdul Aziz And Sudhir A. Krishna (ed), *Land Reforms In India, Karnataka*, (New Delhi, 1977), p. 54.

- 3) Dwelling units occupied by agricultural labourers were taken over by the Government and handed to the occupant.
- 4) Ceiling area for the individual was 10 units. In the case of a family consisting of more than 5 members, the ceiling area shall be 10 units plus an additional extent of two units for every member in excess of 5, so however that the ceiling area shall not exceed 20 units in aggregate.
- 5) All lands held by a person in excess was of the ceiling area, were to be taken over by the Government and compensation paid to the land loser.
- 6) Acquisition of agricultural land by persons earning an annual income over Rs. 1200, sources other than agriculture was prohibited by the Act.
- 7) The Act defined tenant as belonging to the category of permanent and protected tenancies or ordinary tenants provided, they cultivate lands personally.
- 8) A Tribunal was constituted in each Taluk, by the Government through notification, for the purpose of the Act. Assistant Commissioner of the Revenue Subdivision, having the jurisdiction over the taluk or an Assistant Commissioner specially appointed for the purpose of this Act was the Chairman of the Tribunal. Four others were nominated by the State Government, of whom at least one shall be a member of the State Legislature. The Tahsildar shall be the Secretary of the Tribunal. No legal practitioner shall be allowed to appear

in any proceedings before the Tribunal.

- 9) The Act prevented, for a period of fifteen years from the date of acquiring occupancy rights, any transfer of land by sale, gift, exchange or assignment. Any such transfer could be declared null and void by the Tahsildar who was empowered to issue a declaration forfeiting the land to the Government.
- 10) The rent recovery suits filed on or after 2nd October 1965 and still pending were to be decided in terms of the 1974 Act which fixed rent at ten times the aggregate of the assessment on the leased land. This rate was much lower than that fixed by the 1961 Act. The Act made provision for helping the tenants who were in arrears of rent in terms of the 1961 Act.
- 11) The Act provided compensation to the landlord, while taking his land. The owners of dry land could receive 200 times of the land revenue and the owners of irrigated land could receive 150 times land revenue plus 150 times of the truncated water rate applicable to the class of land involved.
- 12) The tenants could file declarations or applications before the Tribunals and the last date was originally 31st December, 1974. Later it was extended up to June 30, 1979. It permitted informal tenants to file declarations for getting ownership rights. The Act intended to enable the sub-tenants also to claim occupancy rights.
- 13) Every person who was deemed to have land in excess of the ceiling limit was expected under law to file a declaration before the

specified time limit, failing which was liable to penalty. The Tribunal would determine the surplus land on the basis of an examination of the records direct the landowner to surrender the surplus. Under the provision of the Act, the surplus land vesting with the Government was to be transferred to the dispossessed and displaced tenants, landless agricultural labourers and released bonded labourers subject to the condition that 50 per cent of such land should be granted to persons belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

In order to facilitate speedy implementation of the Reform Act, land tribunals were formed one in each taluk and 176 tribunals were setup in the entire state. Speedy disposal of cases by the tribunals had resulted in a flow of writ petitions before the High Court of Karnataka, about 50,000 being filed. The High Court had no power to interfere to decide the cases, thus it simply recommended the cases to the tribunals along with its observations. Thus an observation⁽¹⁾ was made by the High Court in W. P. No. 28441/1981 that the disposal of the case by the tribunal was unsatisfactory. This observation is one of the examples of the credibility of the land tribunals.

A few peasant leaders were the members of the Land Tribunals. Important among them⁽²⁾ were B. V. Kakkillaya from Bantwal, Baikady Sheenappa Shetty from Udipi, Ammembala Balappa from Bantwal, Veerappa Moily from

1. *Abdul Aziz And Sudhir A. Krishna (ed), Land Reforms In India, Karnataka, (New Delhi, 1977), p. 126.*

2. *Panduranga Nayak, Land Reforms In Dakshina Kannada District, Unpublished MPhil Thesis, Mangalore University, 1991, p. 110.*

Karkala and Bhaskar Shetty from Kapu.

The observation made by the High Court and the criticism leveled against the land tribunals had resulted in the amendment of the act and made the provision of appeal in 1986. Land Reforms Appellate Authorities were formed⁽¹⁾ at least one in each district. The appeal lay to a two member Appellate Authority consisting of a Civil Judge and an officer of the rank of Deputy Commissioner constituted under section 116A. By using this opportunity several landlords approached the High Court with writ petitions.

The confirmation of occupancy right (section 38) in favour of agricultural labourers in the house he had constructed on the land of others (he had no land of his own and constituted house in the place of the landlord) came in to effect from 1st January 1979. Thus agricultural labourers were permitted to enjoy not exceeding 5 cent of land. But the land tribunal was the competent authority to decide the case. It is stated that out of 25937 applications for the occupancy right over houses of agricultural labourers 25492 applications were disposed⁽²⁾ in Karnataka state and 15530 applications were disposed of in favour of the applicants and 9974 applications were rejected. Thus 33 per cent applications were rejected by the Land Tribunals as on 31st August 1987.

The official records of the Karnataka Government, states that Karnataka had a prominent position as one of the few states that took the land reforms and policies seriously⁽³⁾, not only by enacting appropriate law, but also by implementing it with great vigor and transparency. The implementation of

1. *Abdul Aziz And Sudhir A. Krishna (ed), Land Reforms In India, Karnataka, (New Delhi, 1977), p. 126.*

2. *Ibid, p. 128.*

3. *Ibid, p. 17.*

the land reform Act reveals that in Karnataka State as a whole, 59.7 per cent applications were granted⁽¹⁾ occupancy right. The maximum number of occupancy right was granted in Uttara Kamataka District (81.8 percent) and Dakshina Kannada District (77.7 per cent). At the same time the achievement was very poor in Kodagu District (2.9 per cent), Gulbarga District (18.0 percent) and Raichur District (22.0 per cent) of the Karnataka state.

The above facts reveal that, even though the official arguments about the advantages of the tenancy legislation are high in practice, the state was able to achieve very little. There were many factors for the poor implementation of the land reforms in Karnataka as a whole and Dakshina Kannada in particular.

The achievement of the land legislation and land ceiling in Dakshina Kannada District had contributed very little in changing existing agrarian relations. Gopal Iyer, while observing the land legislation in Karnataka expressed that in Dakshina Kannada District whatever land had been declared surplus was dry land of the worst quality and very difficult to put under cultivation. This opinion reveals the pitiable condition of the tenancy after the post-land reform period in the district. More over, the land acquired and distributed under the land ceiling Act was of low quality.

The success of the land reform was the result of an increase in the awareness of tenants brought about by the peasant movement. Dakshina Kannada District occupies the second place in the implementation of land

1. Abdul Aziz And Sudhir A. Krishna (ed), *Land Reforms In India, Karnataka*, (New Delhi, 1977), p. 84.

legislation in Karnataka State due to the emergence of the Raitha Sangha. The Raitha-Sanghas backed by the leftist parties (CPI (M) and CPI) had contributed much in this direction. They tried to mobilise the rural peasantry including the tenants and agricultural labourers. They tried to educate the weaker section and engaged agitation against the challenge of the landlords. It resulted in violent clashes between the peasants and the landlords who were supported by the police. The forceful eviction was a common feature in Dakshina Kannada District. The peasantry under the leadership of the Raitha Sangha resisted the forceful eviction and burning of houses, physical violence such as assaults and even murders. These incidents reached their climax especially after the implementation of the 1974 Act.

In some parts of Dakshina Kannada District the landlords acted cunningly and behaved generously and helped their tenants to file declaration⁽¹⁾ for occupancy rights before the land tribunals. In many cases these landlords managed to make mutual agreement and take half of the tenanted land. In such cases the pretension was it for self cultivation and retains the unclaimed land in his land. Thus the landlord employed diplomatic strategy to prevent involvement of the tenants with the Raitha Sanghas and there by to avoid the spread of communism in his village. This new technique was adopted by the landlords in many parts of the district with some success. On the other hand the Raitha Sanghas and the communists failed to adopt a new strategy against these landlords.

1. C. B. Damle, "Impact Of Tenancy Legislation And Changing Agrarian Relations; A Case Study Of Dakshina Kannada District", *Social Scientist*, Vol. 17, Nos. 11-12 November-December, 1989, p. 89.

The enactment of the Act 1974 also paved the way for open clashes between the peasants and the landlords in many parts of the district. The Raitha Sanghas played an active role in organising and fighting against the atrocities caused by the landlords. Certain examples of these sort of agitations were worth mentioning.

A large meeting of the peasants was held⁽¹⁾ at Karnataka on 5th May 1974. Some landlords secured injunctions from courts against the tenants from cultivating leased lands. The large numbers of peasants were not in a position to enter in to a legal fighting because of their ignorance and backward financial condition.

The Raitha Sangha took this issue to create public awareness. The leaders like B. V. Kakkillaya, S. V. Velankar, M. Ramappa and V. V. Upadhyaya (All belonged to CPI), strongly criticised this⁽²⁾ practice of the landlords. Even then the atrocities of the landlords continued including the burning of houses. The landlords burned the houses of the poor peasants named Mahabala Hegde and Koraga Poojary. So the leaders also demanded an enquiry in to the cases of burning of the peasant houses.

The report of Aruna reveals that the landlords even used the natural calamities as an opportunity to evict the tenants⁽³⁾. When in 1974, the flood affected some parts of the district, the peasants were forced to vacate their lands and houses and had gone to temporary shelters. When they returned after the flood, the landlords prevented them from rebuilding houses on their

1. *Panduranga Nayak, Land Reforms In Dakshina Kannada District, MPhil Thesis, Mangalore University, 1991, p. 112.*

2. *Aruna, Published by V. N. Sreenivasa Bhat, Mangalore, Vol. 28, No. 19, May 12, 1974, p. 2.*

3. *Ibid, p. 2.*

land. Thus the landlords indulged in inhuman activities for eviction. Raitha Sangha organised meetings in various parts of the district to condemn the activity of the landlords. This would not make any change in the attitude of the landlords.

Aruna's report also reveals that the police had given support to the landlords for eviction of the tenants and thus the tenants were tortured with the atrocities of the police on one hand and the landlords on the other. Aruna reports that⁽¹⁾ Thukara Moily of Durga village of Karkala taluk had given a complaint to the District Police Superintendent. In it, he stated that when his landlord, D. Ananth Bhat tried to evict him the police officers of Karkala did not give protection to him, even though he had got an injunction from the Munsiff Court. Infuriated police officers of Karkala called the tenant to the police station on 26th September 1974 and threatened to arrest him if he complained, against the landlord. After that on 1st October the landlord's goondas, accompanied by some policeman, entered the land of the tenant and destroyed the crops. This incident shows that the landlords were backed by the police for eviction even against the court order.

In October 1974, the landlord of Byrampally village of Udipi taluk prevented the harvesting of the crops of his tenant named Perke, Padmanabha Naik. All the cultivations were done by the tenant and he was threatened with eviction. But the Raitha Sangha and the Communist Party had given assistance⁽²⁾ to Padmanabha Naik, the tenant. Around 80 volunteers of the Sangha went to assist him under the leadership of B. K. Krishnayya Shetty and

1. Aruna, *Published by V. N. Sreenivasa Bhat, Mangalore, Vol. 28, No. 40, October 6, 1974, p. 2.*

2. *Ibid, Vol. 28, No. 42, October 20, 1974, p. 2.*

harvested the crops.

In Anjaru village of Udipi taluk Aranthabettu Namu Naik and Paddu Naik were threatened by their landlord from harvesting the crops in October 1974. But the Raitha Sangha of Udipi taluk decided to assist the tenants for harvest. Thus 300 volunteers of the sangham went to harvest. When the harvesting was started the police interfered and at last the police was forced to settle the matter.

A meeting of the Raitha Sangha was organised at Athrady and Badagabettu village of Udipi taluk in October 1975. It was presided over by N. Krishnamurthi Achar at Athrady meeting and Narayana Bhat at Badagabettu meeting. They discussed the harassment of the poor peasants by the landlords with the support of the police and decided to organise the peasants against this and also urged the government to take steps against the harassment.

The landlord had control over the ignorant peasants and in many cases they were misled by the landlords. The landlords had given false promises and the innocent peasants believed it and abstained from filing declaration to the tribunals. Instances of exploitation of the blind faith was reported from the district. There were also an instances of the production of improper declarations by the tenants under the influence of the landlords⁽¹⁾. In short vested interests of the landlords had misguided the tenants in filing their declarations.

The Raitha Sangha of Bantwal decided to help the farmers in view of the above in filing the declarations incorrectly. So they made suitable arrangements at the Bantwal taluk Raitha Sangha Office. Similar arrangements

were also made in Vittal, Mangalore, Udipi and Karkala taluks.

The peasant's organised meetings in different parts of the district to create awareness in the effective implementation of the land reform act. The meeting urged the peasants to file their declaration and make use of the reform favourable to them. Such a meeting was held⁽¹⁾ on 18th July 1974 at Kankady of Mangalore taluk. Ramappa Suvara presided over the meeting and Simpson Soans was the Speaker. Another meeting was held⁽²⁾ at Kodavee at Bajal village of Mangalore taluk on 21st July 1974. It was presided over by P. M. N. Murthy. He also presided over a meeting of the peasants held at Ullal. On 6th September 1975 a meeting of peasants was held at Irvathur village of Karkala taluk. It was presided over by B. Sreenivasa Rao and B. Viswanatha Naik, the secretary of the Bantwal Raitha Sangha, was the important speaker. These meetings urged the peasants the need for their unity and motivated them to file declarations without fail.

However, the disposals of the petitions by land tribunals were in favour of the tenants. According to the official statistical reports⁽³⁾ by August 1987, 99.9 per cent applications had been disposed by the land tribunals and in 136880 out of 176237, i.e.77.7% cases, the tribunal judgments had been in favour of the tenants. It was an illusory image of the success of the tenancy legislation, but far away from reality. In 1957 there were actually 490571 tenants in the district⁽⁴⁾, but by 1987, the beneficiaries under the tenancy law

1. Aruna, Published by V. N. Sreenivasa Bhat, Mangalore, Vol. 28, No. 28, July 28, 1974, p. 2.

2. *Ibid*, p. 2.

3. C. B. Damle, "Impact Of Tenancy Legislation And Changing Agrarian Relations; A Case Study Of Dakshina Kannada District", *Social Scientist*, Vol. 17, Nos. 11-12 November-December, 1989, p. 88., see also Abdul Aziz And Sudhir A. Krishna (ed), *Land Reforms In India, Karnataka*, (New Delhi, 1977), p. 132.

4. *Ibid*, p. 84.

were only 136880 and hence the real success of the implementation of the tenancy law in Dakshina Kannada District was as low as 27.2 percent only. Damle explains two reasons⁽¹⁾ for the rapid decrease. Firstly, the tenants should be able to purchase the leased-in-land from the landlord and was then converted in to land holders. A few mulageni tenants were able to purchase land and the number was limited. But the vast majority of the tenants belonged to the Chalageni or tenants-at-will. The economic conditions of the tenants were weak, so they were not in a position to purchase the land. The second assumption is important and valid, that the tenants had been evicted in large scale from the leased holdings. As opined by a scholar⁽²⁾ the problem of tenancy was not only significant in Karnataka state but also the potentialities of agrarian social change were sabotaged by the tactics of power politics and bureaucratic lethargy. Thus, the actual rate of the implementation of tenancy legislation in Dakshina Kannada District was very poor.

The implementation of the act failed to eliminate the inequality existing in the agrarian structure. The officials of the implementing agency utterly failed to recover the surplus land nor its proper distribution for fulfilling the objectives put forward by the national movement and the objectives of the five year plans. Out of 2178 declarations received⁽³⁾ under land ceiling provisions of the Act, 2171 (ie 99.7%) declarations were disposed

1. C. B. Damle, "Impact Of Tenancy Legislation And Changing Agrarian Relations; A Case Study Of Dakshina Kannada District", *Social Scientist*, Vol. 17, Nos. 11-12 November-December, 1989, p. 88.
2. *Ibid*, p. 84.
3. Abdul Aziz And Sudhir A. Krishna (ed), *Land Reforms In India, Karnataka*, (New Delhi, 1977), p. 167.

of by 31st August 1987. Of these, only in 26 cases (ie 1.2%) was surplus land determined. On the other hand the process of land redistribution has also been fairly slow, since out of the 3,248 acre determined as surplus land in the district, only 636 acre. (19.6%) has been redistributed⁽¹⁾. Thus the recovery of surplus land from the land owners and the redistribution to the tenant was also a failure.

One of the reasons for this was that the landlords were not ready to file their declaration honestly. The land tribunals relied primarily on the cases filed by the landowners. Very little administrative efforts were taken to identify land concealed by large landowners. The main reason for the failure was due to the absence of pressure from the needy. This exposes the inherent weakness of the left oriented peasant organisations in the district.

While examining the response of the Act, 1974, majority of the tribunal decisions were taken in favor of the tenants (77.67%). It is important to note the fact that a large number of marginal holdings measure below an acre, through the redistribution of surplus land. According to the official report, in 1980-81 of 1,61,271 holdings in the district 86,639 (53.7%) holdings were less than one hector⁽²⁾. This kind of increase in tiny holdings was due to the population growth and the partition of land holdings of the beneficiaries of land reforms. Since the holdings are not economically viable, majority of these marginal holders have taken up wage labour in agricultural or non-agricultural sector.

In the Karnataka State some of the large landowners in possession⁽³⁾ of

1. *Abdul Aziz And Sudhir A. Krishna (ed), Land Reforms In India, Karnataka, (New Delhi, 1977), p. 167.*

2. *Ibid, p. 167.*

3. *Ibid, p. 116.*

over 50 acres have been netted with in the ceiling surplus cases, indicating partial effectiveness in implementation. The common method of circumvention adopted by the ceiling surplus owners were declaring minor sons as major sons, setting up collusive tenancy, conversion of agricultural land in to non-agricultural land and plantation, partition of land and diverse on paper, contracting more than one marriage on paper and so on. The pending cases are related with the large owners.

These aspects reveal that the landowners are helped by implementing authority and hence prevented the proper implementation of the act. Only 57.56 per cent of the area declared surplus had been taken in to possession in the Karnataka State and there is a considerable gap between the area taken in to possession and distributed⁽¹⁾; 26.28 per cent of the area taken in to possession is yet to be distributed. At the state level, 1.42 lakh acres remain under litigation, constituting 52 per cent of the area declared as surplus.

Through the Amendment Act, 1986, provision of appeal was granted. This resulted in a flow of appeal by the landlords. The chief intention behind the filing of appeal was to prolong the decision and gain verdict in favour of them against the poor and illiterate peasants. They used threat, force and all sorts of harassment against the tenants for eviction. On the contrary the peasant has no means to fight the legal battle against the landlords who were economically rich and politically influential.

From the early period itself the land of the district was concentrated in the hands of the high castes especially, the Brahmin, Bunts and the Jains.

1. *Abdul Aziz And Sudhir A. Krishna (ed), Land Reforms In India, Karnataka, (New Delhi, 1977), p. 117.*

This kind of caste based structure of the agrarian relations continued during the British period. It was accelerated particularly during the economic depression of 1929-34 and the second world war, 1939-45⁽¹⁾. The caste supremacy over the land monopoly remained as such on the eve of the implementation of the land reforms. Two main reasons were attributed to this⁽²⁾, one was that prior to the implementation of the land reform legislation, the landlords resorted to large scale eviction of tenants, who came primarily from the middle castes. And, secondly after the eviction of tenants the land brought in to market and large parts of the buyers belonged to the upper castes.

To retain the monopoly over the land, the landlords resorted to all tactics including the use of superstitious beliefs of the poor peasants. Basically the peasants were illiterate⁽³⁾ and lived with all sort of superstitions. They also spread rumors and misgivings about land reforms in such a way that the tenants were scared and cared more for their survival than for land. The land owned class propagated that the land reform act was against the interest of the peasants, they were protected by the land lords. Doctors, bureaucrats, lawyers, upper class traders, businessman, bank employers etc belonged to landlord class or the elite class. The poor tenants had to depend occasionally on these elite class for getting modern sophisticated services. It was therefore quite natural that many had developed a second thought before claiming

1. C. B. Damle, "Impact Of Tenancy Legislation And Changing Agrarian Relations; A Case Study Of Dakshina Kannada District", *Social Scientist*, Vol. 17, Nos. 11-12 November-December, 1989, p. 85.
2. Abdul Aziz And Sudhir A. Krishna (ed), *Land Reforms In India, Karnataka*, (New Delhi, 1977), p. 164.
3. POLI, *A Commemorative Value For Canara*, (ed), Published By District Commissioner, D K District, Mangalore, p. 94.

occupancy right over their tenanted land. In many cases the tenancy records were forcibly taken and destroyed by the landlords. Under these circumstances, several tenants did not show much interest in acquiring occupancy rights on payment of a price to the government, but preferred to continue as tenants provided they were assured of their tenurial security and regulated rent.

The major objective of land reform legislation was the eradication of the economic and social inequalities which prevailed for centuries. But the land reform legislation in the Dakshina Kannada District failed to achieve this. The Act, 1974 included many progressive provisions for re-structuring the agrarian relations. But it became unfruitful when the implementing official's attitude was hostile. The foul play of the power politics with the landed aristocracy caused the failure of effective implementation. The peasant organisations especially leftist Raitha Sanghas backed by the Communist movements failed to use adequate pressure for effective implementation of the reform.

The Act, 1974 was intended to enable the tenants to acquire ownership rights. But as stated earlier, between 1951 to 1957, 98444 tenants were evicted. The numbers of tenants were sharply declined⁽¹⁾ from 490571 in 1957 to 70591 in 1974. However, it did not make any effective provision for rehabilitating those tenants who were already dispossessed of land before 24th March 1974.

The Act, 1974 did not make any provision for helping agricultural labourers. But in a special section of the Act in January 1979, provided the

1. Joshi G. V. *Dasina Kannada Jiljeta Raith Horattar (Mangalore University, 1989, p. 12.*

provision that an agricultural labour residing in a dwelling house in a land not belonging to the dwelling house and the adjacent site around it, which was limited to one twenty an acre. Since this provision was made as late as January 1979, the time limit for filing declaration was too short. Thus many agricultural labourers failed to take advantages of it.

Thus the Land Reform Act, 1974 failed to confer benefits to a large number of agricultural labourers. In many parts of the district they remained as unorganized. Up to 1987 they have filed only⁽¹⁾ 14306 applications for dwelling sites. This was a very small number comparing with the number of tenants. Of these 14306 applications 33 per cent were rejected by the tribunals.

Land reform in Kasaragod

On account of various agitations and representations of the people of Kasaragod taluk, the Malabar Tenancy Committee proposed the extension of the legislation to include⁽²⁾ all the villages, south of Chandragiri river and two villages, Badiadka and Badaadukka. Thus even though Kasaragod formed a part of South Canara District, all the later tenancy acts introduced in Malabar covered Kasaragod taluk also.

The Malabar Tenancy Committee submitted its report in December, 1940. Among the three leftist members of the committee, E. M. S. Namboodiripad, Mohamed Abdul Rahiman Seheb and E. Kannan had appended their dissenting minutes⁽³⁾. E. M. S. Namboobiripad focused the evils of landlordism and demanded its abolition. The committee did not propose the

1. Joshi G. V. *Dasina Kannada Jiljeta Raith Horattar (Mangalore University, 1989, p. 12.*

2. *Report of the Malabar Tenancy Committee, 1940, chapter 11, p. 670.*

3. V. V. Kunhikrishnan, *Tenancy Legislation In Malabar, 1880-1970, (New Delhi, 1993), p. 100.*

reduction of the existing rent rates. The interests of the landlords and Mulagenidar were represented in the committee, but the interests of the chalagenidar was not adequately represented as far as the Kasaragod taluk was concerned. Though the committee consisted of majority of Congressmen, the report was not satisfactory even to the Congress. When the final report was submitted, the Congress Ministry was not in office, because it resigned with the out break of the second world war in 1939.

The 1940's marked militant peasant unrest backed by the Communists in Malabar and Kasaragod. A tenancy subcommittee was constituted by the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (K.P.C.C.) in April 1947, to suggest⁽¹⁾ the amendments in the Tenancy Act of 1929. The KPCC sub committee recommended that a tenant who had been ousted from or had surrendered possession of his holding, since 14th July 1937 (date of assumption of office by the first Congress Ministry in Madras) shall, on application, be granted re-delivery of possession subject to certain limitation and arrears of rent accrued prior to the particular date (2 years before the commencement of 1946 Tenants Protection Act) to be wiped off.

As per the recommendations⁽²⁾ of the sub committee the KPCC drafted a tenancy bill in August 1948, in response to the wishes of the Malabar Kisan Congress. Thus due to the development of unrest among the peasantry, the drafted proposal of the tenancy bill by the K. P. C. C. and on the basis of the recommendations of the tenancy committee of 1940, the Malabar Tenancy Act 1929 was further amended in 1951.

1. V. V. Kunhikrishnan, *Tenancy Legislation In Malabar, 1880-1970*, (New Delhi, 1993), p. 116.

2. *Ibid*, p. 113.

The Malabar Tenancy (Amendment) Act 1951 made it extendable to 52 villages of South Canara but due to the opposition of the landlords of South Canara, it was reduced⁽¹⁾ to 33 villages. The tenants criticised that the act supported the major interests of the landlords. The act fixed the fair rent at 5:5 between the tenants and landlords. The original amendment bill introduced in 1950 provided, for security of the tenure to the cultivators. But due to the pressure of the landlord class, it held forth only qualified fixity when it finally enacted the legislation. In effect the new amendment served only as an invitation to the landlords to get their tenants evicted on various pretexts⁽²⁾.

Massive agitation was launched against the implementation of the act by the Malabar peasants. In May 1952 the Malabar Karshaka Sangham organised a conference at Kottayam taluk. Similar types of conferences were held in different taluks of Malabar and Kasaragod as a protest against the Act. The legislators of Malabar and South Canara met the Chief Minister of Madras on 13th May 1952. The Malabar Kudiyan special conference at Calicut was convened by the Kisan Sangham, presided over by K. P. R. Gopalan. It gave a call to observe 15th January 1953 as Token Satyagraha Day. It also resolved to take out a Kisan Jatha to Malabar to present a massive petition.

The government decided to amend⁽³⁾ the Malabar Tenancy (Amendment) Act, 1951 in 1954. The Act contained provisions for⁽⁴⁾ the fixation of fair

1. V. V. Kunhikrishnan, *Tenancy Legislation In Malabar, 1880-1970*, (New Delhi, 1993), p. 116.

2. *Ibid*, p. 119.

3. *The Madras Code, Vol. 4, Unrepealed Madras Acts, Law Department (Madras, 1961)*, p. 458.

4. P. Radhakrishnan, *Peasant Struggles, Land Reforms and Social Changes (New Delhi)*, 1989, p. 105.

rent, qualified fixity of tenure, curbing the landlord's right to eviction, protecting the rights of homestead tenants and abolition of the practice of depositing one year's rent as advance by the verumpattam tenants or the chalageni tenants.

The MLA's of Malabar belonging to the Communist Party and the Praja Socialist Party joined together in appealing the government of Madras for effecting⁽¹⁾ a thorough amendment to the Tenancy Act 1951. Because of the powerful opposition the government of Madras was forced to suspend certain provisions of the act.

The 11th All India Conference of the Kisan Sabha was held⁽²⁾ in Kannur, at Kayyur Nagar from April 23rd to 27th of 1953. It was presided over by Indulal Yajnik, the president of the Kisan Sabha. It marked a revived spirit of the peasantry of Malabar and Kasaragod. A special conference of the Malabar Kisan Sabha was held at Calicut. A delegation consisting of K. P. R. Gopalan, K. A. Keraleeyan and C. M. K. Nambisan went to Madras to submit a memorandum⁽³⁾ to the government which was signed by one a half lakh peasants.

In 1956, the Malabar Karshaka Sangham was reorganized as Kerala Karshaka Sangham and its first state conference was held at Shornur in December, 1956. The conference passed important resolutions such as⁽⁴⁾ demanding ceiling on land holding, distribution of waste land to the land less, stoppage of all evictions and cancellation of all agricultural debts etc.

1. V. V. Kunhikrishnan, *Tenancy Legislation In Malabar, 1880-1970*, (New Delhi, 1993), p. 116.

2. A. K. Poduval, *Keralathile Karshaka Prasthanathinte Oru Legu Charithram (Mal)*, (Thiruvananthapuram, 1969), p. 104-105.

3. *Ibid*, p. 108.

4. V. V. Kunhikrishnan, *Tenancy Legislation In Malabar, 1880-1970*, (New Delhi, 1993), p. 137.

Legislations after the formation of Kerala State.

With the formation of Kerala State and the amalgamation of Kasaragod taluk with the Kerala State, the peasant struggles and land reforms in Kasaragod taluk and Malabar entered in to a new phase.

Because of the new trend developed in the political scenario of Kerala caused by the peasants and workers agitations the Communist ministry was elevated to power in the first general election in Kerala in 1957. E M S Namboodiripad was elected as the Chief Minister and he assumed office on 5th April 1957. With in a few days after assuming office, on 11th April 1957, through an ordinance (later enacted as Kerala stay of Eviction Proceedings Act of 1957) stayed all eviction and allied proceedings against all categories of tenants and preventing courts from accepting fresh eviction suits.

The second conference of the Kerala Karshaka Sangham was held⁽¹⁾ at Kaladi on 19th and 20th October 1957. The then Chief Minister E. M. S. Namboodiripad, Revenue Minister K. R. Gouri, Law Minister V. R. Krishna Aiyer, A. K. Gopalan and others attended the conference. This conference appealed to the government to enact a progressive agrarian law in Kerala at the earliest.

With in two months of the Kaladi conference the government of Kerala introduced the Agrarian Relations Bill on 18th December 1957 in the Kerala Legislative Assembly. The main object of the bill was the implementation through constitutional means, the basic slogan of the peasant organisation and

1. A. K. Poduval, *Keralathile Karshaka Prasthanathinte Oru Legu Charithram (Mal)*, (Thiruvananthapuram, 1969), p. 127, see also A. K. Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakadha, (Mal)*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1980), p. 302.

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also the national movement that was "land to the tiller". The Bill was intended to achieve the abolition of the tenancy system, introduction of ceiling in land holding and distribution of the surplus land and enjoyment of the right of ownership over the house stead's by hut-dwellers. One of the important provision of the Bill was the fixity of tenure to all types of tenants including crop-sharers, fugitive cultivators and hut dwellers. The ceiling of ownership in land was proposed to 15 acre per family. The tenants were given right to purchase ownership by paying an amount not more than sixteen times, of the fair rent payable to the landlord.

The introduction of the Kerala Agrarian Relations Bill (KARB) resulted in unprecedented opposition from the landed aristocracy with the support of the communal forces. The KARB and the Kerala Education Act introduced by the first Kerala Government were highly progressive. The orthodox section of the Kerala Population could not tolerate the progressive reforms and the existence of the communist government. The government declared⁽¹⁾ its police policy and made it clear that the government would not use the police to suppress the workers and peasants agitation and would not use police to protect the lands of the landlords. This was a new turn in the history of Kerala. This infuriated the aristocrats and communal forces to turn against the government.

A rapid political polarization emerged in Kerala. The Communist Party and peasants started to mobilise the people to protect the new bill introduced in the legislature. The Congress Party and the Praja Socialist Party

1. A. K. Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakadha, (Mal), Thiruvananthapuram, 1980*, p. 258.

(PSP) with the support of the landed aristocracy and the communal forces started counter mobilisation against the KARB. This resulted in conflicts in the political scene of Kerala.

On 29th March, the Kayyur Martyrs day in 1958 a mass demonstration was organised⁽¹⁾ at Thiruvananthapuram. A. K. Gopalan, E. M. S. Namboodiripad, A. Prasad Rao, K. A. Keeraleyan, A. V. Kunhambu and others attended in the demonstration in order to mobilise people to support the KARB was the objective. In May 1958 a special conference of the Kerala Karshaka Sangham was organised at Moovattupuzha. The conference discussed the bill and suggested certain amendments. When the bill was in the select committee the Kerala Karshaka Sangham organised conference of its representatives in each district to discuss the draft bill and prepare amendment.

The Nair Service Society (NSS) under the leadership of Mannath Padmanabhan requested the government to consider the faults and injustice of the bill. A meeting⁽²⁾ of the Yoga Kshema Sabha at Kottayam in February 1958 demanded the right to resume for self-cultivation of lands with in ceiling limit fixed and to compensation at the market price for the lands taken over.

A conference of the Bishops was held at Bangalore in December 1958. The conference discussed the material and spiritual methods to overthrow the ministry. The Congress Party and the Praja Socialist Party (PSP) organised joint agitations⁽³⁾ involving protest marches, meetings, hartals and satyagrahas.

1. P. Radhakrishnan, *Peasant Struggles, Land Reforms and Social Changes (New Delhi), 1989, p. 115.*

2. *Ibid, p. 119.*

3. *Ibid, p. 124.*

It was important to mention the trend inside the Congress Party on land reform legislation. The Nagapur session of the Congress held in January 1959 passed a resolution for providing ceiling on holdings and also called for the completion of land reform by the end of 1959. Same way the Government of India (led by the congress party) gave ample directions⁽¹⁾ to the states to go ahead with land reforms. The very purpose of land reforms was to put an end to the landed aristocracy. Many of the Congress leaders belonged to the part of landed aristocracy, so they never came forward to fulfill the resolution of the party and at the same time opposed the land reforms introduced in Kerala. The Congress took on the side of the landed aristocracy and the communal forces and struggled against the KARB which became a model to Indian land reforms.

The third annual conference of the Kerala Karshaka Sangham was held in March 1959 at Perumtalmanna. It expressed anxiety in the slow legislation of the KARB and demanded passing the bill as amended by the select committee in the next assembly session itself.

As a part of opposition against the KARB, the land owners associations or the Janmi Sanghas began its work in different parts of Kerala. Small Land-owners Associations were also founded. They organised conventions, meetings and demonstrations against the proposed Bill. They Passed resolutions, submitted memorandum, petitions, press releases and submitted evidence before the select committee. Gradually mass protest and mobilisation of the

1. V. V. Kunhikrishnan, *Tenancy Legislation In Malabar, 1880-1970*, (New Delhi, 1993), p. 136.

people against the government started in Kerala. Thus it culminated in a period of political agitation called "the liberation struggle". It gained more support from Travancore than other parts of Kerala.

The state assembly passed the KARB in July 1959. Because of the liberation struggle under the leadership of the leftwing of Kerala, finally on 31st July 1959 the Kerala Ministry was dismissed by the President of India. The fall of the ministry was undoubtedly a great loss to the peasantry.

To protest the KARB, which was sent to the President of India for his assent, the Kerala Karshaka Sangham organised a Long March from Kasaragod to Thiruvananthapuram from 29th June to 24th July 1960, under the leadership of A. K. Gopalan. On 25th July he submitted a memorandum to the government. The Karshaka Sangham units through out the state observed this day as the Kerala Agrarian Relations Bill Memorandum Day.

In August 1960 the KARB was returned by the President recommending further modification. The new Congress - PSP coalition government was quick to grab⁽¹⁾ the opportunity and passed the Kerala Agrarian Relations Act 1960 (KAR Act). It revised the core of the KARB, to safe guard the wide range interest of the landlord class. The President's assent was received on 21st January 1961 and came in to existence from 15th February 1961.

Even though the KARB was revised the new Act retained the main body⁽²⁾ of the KARB due to the pressure from the peasantry. The act did

1. P. Radhakrishnan, *Peasant Struggles, Land Reforms and Social Changes (New Delhi), 1989, p. 132, see also, V. V. Kunhikrishnan, Tenancy Legislation In Malabar, 1880-1970, (New Delhi, 1993), p. 142, 143.*

2. V. V. Kunhikrishnan, *Tenancy Legislation In Malabar, 1880-1970, (New Delhi, 1993), p. 142, 143.*

not provide provision for rehabilitating the tenants who had been evicted after the formation of the Kerala State. It provided the inclusion of the provision for eviction of the tenants with in plantation areas and it redefined 'small holder' as one with rights on less than 10 areas of double crop paddy land. But possessing only less than 5 acres the lands belong to religious charitable or educational institutions of public nature and public trusts were exempted from the provisions of the act and the political representation provided in the land boards and land tribunals.

The Supreme Court and the High Court of Kerala struck down several provisions of the Act in a Judgment on 5th December 1961 on certain writ petitions filed against the act from Kasaragod area. The Supreme Court also declared the act as unconstitutional in its application in the ryotwari lands in Kasaragod and Hosdurg taluks. So the government enacted the Kerala Ryotwari Tenants Kudikidappukars Protection Act in 1962 for the tenants of the Kasaragod and Hosdurg taluks.

From 27th November 1961 to 6th January 1962 Kerala Karshaka Sangham organised state wide agitation⁽¹⁾. It began with picketing of all the Collectorates, but later included picketing of taluk offices, jathas and demonstrations. A. K. Gopalan led a jatha from Kottiyur to Thiruvananthapuram for picketing the secretariat. The jatha started from Kottiyur on 4th December 1961. The Kerala State Karshaka Thozhilali Union (KSKTU) had declared⁽²⁾ a

1. P. Radhakrishnan, *Peasant Struggles, Land Reforms and Social Changes* (New Delhi), 1989, p. 136.

2. A. K. Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakadha, (Mal), Thiruvananthapuram, 1980*, p. 323, 324.

general strike on December 16. The Government made negotiations and conceded many of the demands of Karshaka Sangham and the agitation which continued for 41 days was withdrawn.

The new organisation named 'Karshaka Niyama Raksha Samithi' was formed⁽¹⁾ to press the government for the protection of the KAR Act. Its members organised satyagraha at district Collectorates for securing its demand. The Government introduced a new bill named The Kerala Land Relation Bill in the assembly on 20th September 1963. The Karshaka Niyama Raksha Samiti volunteers observed the day as black day with mass picketing and satyagraha in the state.

In October 1963 the Karshaka Sangham under the leadership of A. K. Gopalan, Pandalam Madhavan Pillai and others organised⁽²⁾ picketing and demonstration in front of the Secretariat at Thiruvananthapuram. The main demand was the withdrawal of the Bill and the inclusion of the KARA in the 9th schedule. The copies of the newly drafted bill were publically burnt on the day, when they observed the Kerala Land Reforms Bill burning day, in the same month. The black flag demonstrating protest against the bill and burning publically the effigy of the Revenue Minister P. T. Chaco.

Despite of the opposition the Kerala Legislative Assembly passed the Bill on 4th December 1963. The task of implementation of the Act was left to bureaucrats because of the imposition of the Presidents rule for 2 years, due to the down fall of the ministry. This continuing political insta-

1. V. V. Kunhikrishnan, *Tenancy Legislation In Malabar, 1880-1970*, (New Delhi, 1993), p. 144.

2. P. Radhakrishnan, *Peasant Struggles, Land Reforms and Social Changes* (New Delhi), 1989, p. 138.

bility in the state and the low priority the government who introduced the bill did not get the chance to implement the Act. So the CPI(M) and its peasant organisations namely Kerala Karshaka Sangham and Kerala Karshaka Tozhilali Union started agitations for proper implementation of the Act. A mass convention of peasants and agricultural labourers were held at Alappay in December 1963. Then a delegate conference was held, presided over by A. K. Gopalan, E. M. S. Namboodiripad, P. Sundaraya and others. The conference demanded the immediate implementation of the new Act. The conference decided to organise campaigns including public meeting jathas, rally's through out the state and a state wide land grab agitation from January to May 1970.

The conference focused agitation for occupancy of Kudikidappu land. There were serious delay on the part of the government to recover the surplus land and its distributions to landless. So the CPI(M) decided to establish the rights of the cultivating tenants as owners of their leased lands and accelerating the acquisition of surplus land and distribution. As a part of this the party organised a mass convention at Cochin in May 1972, presided over by A. K. Gopalan. The convention decided to start agitation⁽¹⁾ for identification of the surplus land and government waste lands and establishing people right on them. Thus the CPI(M) organised a mass agitation for 80 days during May-August 1972 and 47 days during November-December 1972. So the mass agitation organised by the CPI(M) and its organs had resulted the effective relation of the reforms in Kerala.

1. P. Radhakrishnan, *Peasant Struggles, Land Reforms and Social Changes (New Delhi)*, 1989, p. 150.

After the collapse of the CPI(M) led coalition ministry, a new government was formed led by CPI and C. Achuta Menon became the Chief Minister. The Kerala Land Reforms Act of 1969 was brought in to force from the 1st January 1970 and was implemented by the ministry.

The act abolished tenancy and landlordism in Kerala. The transfer of ownership rights to the cultivating tenants, they were expected to pay a nominal sum of purchase price to satisfy the constitutional provision. It gave options to the hut dwellers or Kudikidappukars to purchase three cents in a city or major municipality, 5 cents in municipality and 10 cents in a panchayath. For these land owners get a price of 25% of the market value and the third scheme was to take possession of the surplus land by government after imposing ceiling limit and distribute such surplus land among the landless agricultural labourers. Through this provision on the amendment Act, Kerala became the first state in India which abolished land monopoly and absentees landlordism with effect from 1st January 1970.

The act gave option to the hut dwellers to purchase his homestead from the land owners on easy terms. The act reduced the ceiling limit to 20 acres for a family of 5 members and it empowered the government to take possession of surplus land by ceiling laws and distribute it among the landless agricultural labourers. The act confirmed full ownership to the cultivating tenants and ceiling on land holdings and distribute of surplus lands after take over.

The Act 1969 proposed that all transactions of the surplus land as per the Act 1963 should be annulled. On the other hand many land-

lords had retained the surplus land by making false documents and the government was not ready to distribute the surplus land to the landless people.

On a review of the process of the implementation of the Kerala Land Reform Act, 1963, as amended was considered necessary that certain amendments should be made in the Act for the speedy and smooth implementation⁽¹⁾ of its provisions. As the Legislative Assembly was not on session, an ordinance for the purpose was promulgated on the 1st day of February 1971 and published in the Gazette as ordinance No. 4 of 1971, the Bill seeks to replace the ordinance by an Act of the Legislature opportunity has also been taken to make certain other amendments which were found necessary for the implementation of the Act.

The object and reason for the amendment was the persistent demands⁽²⁾ from various political parties in the state and the public in general for popular participation of the implementation of the Kerala Land Reforms Act 1963, especially the ceiling provisions thereof. Experience in the working of the Act had also revealed that popular participation is essential for the speedy and effective implementation of the Act.

It has also become necessary to plug certain loopholes in certain provisions of the Act, which had come to notice during its implementation. Village committees are proposed to be constituted for helping the implementation of the provisions of the Act regarding assignment of landlords and

1. *The Madras Code, Vol. 4, Unrepealed Madras Acts, Law Department (Madras, 1961), p. 260.*

2. *Ibid, p. 261.*

intermediaries right to the cultivating tenants⁽¹⁾. Taluk and Boards have been also proposed for the purpose of decentralisation of the functions of the Land Board in the implementation of the ceiling provisions. A Land Reforms Review Board is also sought to be constituted with power to give necessary guidelines to the various authorities and officers implementing the Act.

While communicating the assent of the President to the Kerala Land Reforms (Amendment) Bill 1971, the Government of India had suggested to the insertion of a provision enabling the state government to notify the socially and economically backward classes for the purpose of an assignment of excess lands might be made in the Act. The Government of India had also desired that⁽²⁾ the explanation to subsection (1) of section 85 of the Act should be modified in order to avoid any possibility of families or adult unmarried persons who did not hold lands exceeding the ceiling area specified in the Kerala Agrarian Relations Bill, 1957 being penalised for transferring their lands during the period mentioned in the explanation. Through this Act, for the first time the whole of the country people's courts were created⁽³⁾ by investing judicial powers.

Each village, committees were constituted with six non-official members, village officer as its convener and a chairman elected by the committee and Taluk Land Board was consisted⁽⁴⁾ of a judicial officer not below the rank of Deputy Collector as chairman and not more than six non official members.

1. *The Madras Code, Vol. 4, Unrepealed Madras Acts, Law Department (Madras, 1961), p. 261.*

2. *Ibid, p. 262.*

3. *V. V. Kunhikrishnan, Tenancy Legislation In Malabar, 1880-1970, (New Delhi, 1993), p. 157.*

4. *P. Radhakrishnan, Peasant Struggles, Land Reforms and Social Changes (New Delhi), 1989, p. 156.*

The land reform Board consisted of the minister in charge of Land Reforms as Chairman, the Land Board Chairman as convener and six non-official members. During the 1975-76 when the implementation of the Act at its peak, the government further strengthened the machinery by increasing the number of these full fledged tribunals.

Through the Kerala Land Reforms (Amendment) Act 17 of 1972, introduced after the excess land agitation of 1972, the government deleted the second and forth exemptions of the 1964 Act with effect from 16 August 1968 itself. The agitations organised⁽¹⁾ by the Karshaka Sangham and CPI(M) after 1st January 1970 had helped the hutment dwellers assert their right. The tenant cultivators were earlier in the forefront for land reform.

The Kerala Land Reforms Act 1969 was put in to effect from 1st January 1970 was virtually over by 31st March 1982. During this period⁽²⁾ the implementing authority had disposed of 99.8 per cent of the total applications for assignment of ownership rights to the cultivating tenants, 99.1 per cent of the total applications for purchase of Kudikidappus and 97.2 per cent of the total land ceiling returns. They had also issued certificate of purchase in 99.2 per cent of allowed disposals for assignment of ownership rights⁽³⁾ and 95 per cent of the allowed disposals for purchase of Kudikidappus.

Thus land to tiller, the long cherished desire of the Indian National

1. V. V. Kunhikrishnan, *Tenancy Legislation In Malabar, 1880-1970*, (New Delhi, 1993), p. 161.

2. P. Radhakrishnan, *Peasant Struggles, Land Reforms and Social Changes* (New Delhi), 1989, p. 163.

3. *Ibid*, p. 163.

Movement and the peasantry in particular was fulfilled in Kerala and Kerala had become a model to the Indian states, which established the social and economic equality to a great extent through the effective implementation of the land reforms. The Communist ministry was dissolved in 1959 mainly because of the introduction of the Kerala Agrarian Relations Bill, 1957. Since the split in the Communist Party the CPI(M) had made a leading role and stood for the speedy and effective implementation of the land reforms in Kerala.

While evaluating the land reforms acts of Kerala and Karnataka it reveals that the enactment of progressive land reform laws and its speedy and effective implementation had equal importance. In both the states the land reform acts had provisions for the acquisition of the surplus land from the landlords and distribution of the land to the landless people. In Kerala the objective was almost achieved but not in Karnataka. Here arises the question, why Kerala was able to achieve the effective implementation of the land reform act ? Why did Karnataka fail ? In Kerala the Communist Party has its strong holds among the workers and the peasants. In Kerala the implementation was keenly mobilised. The peasant organisation was able to develop social and political awareness among the rural population and attain their confidence. Thus the agrarian class responded to the call of the peasant organisation and the Communist Party.

The situation in Karnataka was different. The land monopoly had strong holds in the political structure. The Communist Party of Karnataka was very weak comparing with Communist Party of Kerala. The proper mobilisation of the peasantry for the effective implementation has not taken place in Karnataka and South Canara in particular. The adequate pressure from the needy is essential for the effectiveness of land reforms. In Karnataka because of the organizational weakness of the Communist Party and the peasant organisations resulted in the poor implementation of the land reforms.

CHAPTER - 6

CONCLUSION

In agrarian societies, land is the basis of the rural relationship and various inter-related classes had emerged in the agrarian structure of India. The case of South Canara is also not different. Early rulers, who established their authorities in the district, introduced their policies and methods of revenue collection. As the land revenue was the main source of income of the government, the aim of the revenue policy was the maximum extraction of the land revenue from the cultivators. So the feudalistic exploitation of the economic surplus affected deeply on the rural life and the insecure tenants and the landless labourers under went many hardships.

This study is an attempt to trace the historical evolution of agrarian relations before 1947 and also in the post-independent period, primarily to understand the place of the peasantry in South Canara District, their social structure, the agrarian economy and political system. The peasantry became a driving force for the struggle against imperialism, landlordism and casteism

during the period of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan, the Mysore rulers. He described that¹⁾ many of the cultivators had abandoned their farms due to excessive assessment imposed by Haider Ali and Tipu and the decline of prices of agricultural commodities was due to frequent wars. Munro observed that²⁾ he did not think it proper to deviate widely from the system which he found established, as it was the same as that which existed. He considered³⁾ himself merely as a Collector who was to investigate and report up on the condition of the country, but was to leave it to the Board of Revenue to decide as to the expediency of lowering the assessment. Thus it was amply clear from the above facts that the decision of Munro to continue the excessive land revenue assessment of the Mysore rulers was not a policy of his own, but it was a part of colonial exploitation.

Munro introduced ryotwari land revenue system in Canara after its annexation, in which the ryots directly paid rent to the government for which there was no intermediaries. Thus the settlement was supposed to have been made directly with the person cultivating the land. But, in real sense the system included landlords, rich peasants, poor peasants and landless peasants and the cultivating peasants or the real ryots did not come to the picture. To systematise the pre-colonial agrarian relations of the region for effective exploitation of the economic surplus was the main aim of the company.

In order to make the colonial exploitation more safe, the British relied up on all sorts of government machinery such as the police, the courts, the

1. *Letter's Relating to the Revenue administration of Canara*, (Bombay Education Societies Press, 1866), p. 19-20.

2. *Alexander J. Arbuthnot, The Minutes of Munro*, (Madras, 1886), p. 54.

3. *Ibid*, p. 55.

judiciary, the revenue department, etc. Apart from land revenue, they also introduced the policy of diversification of revenue collection, which came in to force through the monopoly of salt, tobacco, abkari, etc. for the maximum extraction of revenue.

Thus, the establishment of the British rule was accompanied by the colonial economic policies, the new land revenue system, the colonial administrative and judicial systems and the ruin of the handicrafts. So the colonial exploitation resulted⁽¹⁾ in the over crowding of land, transformation of the agrarian structure and impoverishment of the peasantry. In Ryotwari areas the land revenue was unreasonably high and the government itself levied it. This forced the peasants to borrow money from the money lenders and eventually the peasants lost their land. As a result of this, over large areas of the district, the actual cultivators were reduced to the status of tenants-at-will, share croppers and land less labourers, while their lands, crops and cattle passed in to the hands of the landlords, traders, money lenders and rich peasants⁽²⁾.

The assessment of Munro continued for ten years without major complaints, but after that the demand for reduction and remission increased in Canara. This was on account of the discontent among the peasants leading to the out bursts like the Koots rebellions in 1810-11 and 1830-31. Comparing with the uprising of 1810-11, the uprising of 1830-31 was wide spread and well organised. The most important reason⁽³⁾ which made the peasants to

1. Bipan Chandra, *India's Struggle For Independence, 1857-1947*, (New Delhi, 1989), p. 50.

2. *Ibid*, p. 50.

3.. N. Shyam Bhat, *South Kanara*, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 160.

organise themselves and their decision of non-payment of kists was the unbearable and heavy extraction of land revenue by the government. The resistance was started in Bakel and spread to all parts of the North Canara also. The rebellion was suppressed with harsh measures, but the government was forced to grant temporary remissions.

The Koots rebellions were actually a tax rebellion. They opposed the revenue policy of the government and called for non-payment of tax. They mobilised thousands of peasants against land revenue assessment of the British. Non payment of tax was declared⁽¹⁾ as the second stage coincided with the non co-operation movement of Gandhiji in 1921-22. This was the same method of no-tax movement launched in Bardoli Satyagraha (1928, Gujarat) under the leadership of Sardar Vallabhai Patel. Thus the first non payment of tax campaign ever in the history against the British colonialism was put forward by the peasants of South Canara District.

Another important aspect of the Koots rebellions was that it was a non-violent method of agitation. Thus, before it was used by Gandhiji in the nationalist movement against the British, the peasants of South Canara put in to practice the weapon of non violent agitation against the same British colonialism. But revolvers of the Koots were not influenced by any political ideology or the spirit of nationalism. It was a powerful reaction against the colonial exploitation. It exposed the true nature of the colonial revenue policy and administration and became a crucial land mark in the history of the

1. When the non-co-operation movement was going on, on 1st February 1922 Gandhiji announced that he would start mass civil disobedience movement, including non-payment of tax with in seven days. But before starting of the non-payment of tax movement, the non-co-operation movement was withdrawn due to the Chauri Chura incident.

peasant movements of South Canara District.

Kalyana Swami's rebellion (1837) was a reaction of the anti-British attitude among the people. Thousands of people were mobilised under the leadership of Kalyana Swami against the British. The British administration was completely paralysed in Canara and for two weeks Mangalore, which was the headquarters of the district administration, fell in to the hands of Kalyana Swamy. But, the British suppressed the movement relentlessly. As it was a restorative movement, it was similar to the revolts of Veluthambi Dalava of Travancore, Paliyattachan of Kochi and Kerala Varma Pazhashi Raja of Wayanad (Malabar), who also fought against the British Imperialism.

The Second Koots rebellion (1830-31) was an organised mass movement based on non-violent method against the British. But the rebellion of Kalyana Swami was an armed revolt. It was important to notice that after 1837, there was no such movements in South Canara District till the spread of the national movement, even though the land revenue assessment continued to be high. The major reason for this was the British method of suppression on one side and diplomacy on the other. Any kind of 'lawlessness' was suppressed ruthlessly. In the Koot rebellion and Kalyana Swami's revolt, various classes of peasants united together. But gradually the British authorities introduced various methods to prevent such rebellions. The colonial rule was able to develop wide gulf among the various classes of the peasantry who joined together in previous resistance movements. The police and the judiciary always were on the side of the landlords. The British exploited the caste rigidity that prevailed in the district for the effective implementation of the

divide and rule policy. Same way, the police, the military and the judiciary acted as powerful organs of the Government to suppress all sorts of anti-British agitations.

In Malabar land was considered as private property held by the Janmi or landlord. At the same time in South Canara all lands belonged to the government and the government leased the land that was 'lease hold' property to the wargdars (landlords). The English courts held the absolute and unqualified rights of the landlords overland. In South Canara forest and waste lands in the holdings were also assessed. Therefore the colonial exploitation was more intense⁽¹⁾ in South Canara than in Malabar.

The land survey was considered as the essential feature for the revenue assessment in the ryotwari system. But, for more than a century the land revenue assessment was continued in the district without any survey. Thus the inequalities and over assessment were the major features of the land revenue system during this period. The first land survey was completed in 1903. The introduction of the new settlement and assessment caused over burden to the peasantry which turned as a typical example of the exploitation of the economic surplus. In the same way, the resurvey of 1934-35 also increased the financial burden of the peasantry.

The government gave prime importance for security of revenue collection. The landed aristocracy, in practice turned as the intermediaries of actual revenue collectors. When the Government enhanced the land revenue, the landlords in turn transferred their burden upon the peasantry and it

1. K.K.N.Kurup, *Modern Kerala, Studies and Agrarian Relations*, (Delhi, 1998),p 102

resulted in the squeezing of the poor. Besides this, the landlords collected various kinds of illegal extractions and engaged in all sorts of atrocities upon the illiterate peasantry. This in fact caused the impoverishment and deterioration of the peasantry.

With the development of nationalism, organised peasant movements emerged in South Canara. Due to the impact of wider political movements and freedom struggles of Malabar, the peasants were organised in Kasaragod Taluk of South Canara District in the 1930's as it was close to Malabar. Thus in Kasaragod Taluk the peasant unrest were developed as massive and militant movements against landlordism and colonialism than in other parts of South Canara. In other parts of South Canara (excluding Kasaragod Taluk) the peasant movements were weak and it originated only in the 1940's. This poses an important question - Why did the massive and militant movements emerge in Kasaragod Taluk or the Malayalam speaking area? And, why did the peasant movements were weaker in the other parts of South Canara or the Tulu speaking area?

The massive and militant movements in Malabar and other parts of Kerala had influenced the Malayalam speaking area. The 'Abhinava Bharat Yuvak Sangham' (1934) and the 'Samyuktha Karshaka Sangham' (1935) of Karivellur(Malabar District) included the Kotakkat, Pilicode, Cheruvathur and other villages of the Malayalam speaking area. Thus, the influences of the political consciousness of Malabar made its impact upon the peasant organisations in Kasaragod Taluk.

The leadership factor was another major reason for the development

of the peasant movements in its organised character. The able and inspiring leaders of Malabar and other parts of Kerala like E. M. S. Namboodirippad, A. K. Gopalan, P. Krishna Pillai, K. P. R. Gopalan, K. A. Keraleeyan, Vishnu Bharatheeyan, E. K. Nayanar, A. K. Pillai, A. V. Kunhambu and others influenced the mobilisation of the peasantry in the Malayalam speaking area. Ironically, most of these leaders belonged to the upper and middle castes and also related to landlord families. Their leadership and contact created confidence and inspiring spirit among the peasantry of the Malayalam speaking area. They tried to unite the peasantry without any distinction of caste or religion. Their frequent visits to the peasant's houses and interdining had culminated in breaking the traditional customs and the rigidity of the caste, which helped to bring the rural population in the main stream of the national movement.

B. V. Kakkillaya, S. N. Holla, Ammu Shetty, M. H. Krishnappa, Koragappa Rai, Veerappa Saliya, Vishwanath Naik, K. V. Rao and others were the important leaders of the peasant organisation of the Tulu speaking area. Many of them belonged to the upper castes and were relatives of the landlord families. But due to the failure of the leadership to mobilize the rural population, lack of strong ideological basis, organisational weakness of the Raitha Sangha etc., their influence upon the peasantry did not become fruitful like the Malayalam speaking area. So the mobilization of the peasantry against landlordism and imperialism was weaker and slower in the Tulu speaking area.

The above peasant leaders did not have high demands and so they

could not catch the attention of a large number of people. Consequently the people did not find it a useful movement and become the activist's. The Raitha Sanghas demanded just receipt for rent as a documentary evidence. They did not put forward demands like security for tenancy, abolition of landlordism etc. Thus their demands were limited, so the leadership failed to motivate the rural population to fight against landlordism and colonialism.

The Congress units and Kisan units were founded in almost all parts of the Malayalam Speaking area. The Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) was under the leadership of the Congress Socialists during 1934-40. The Congress Socialists took keen interest for the organisation of the peasantry. Gradually the members of the Congress Socialist Party turned in to the Communist Party in 1939. The peasant and the workers organisation became a part of the Communist Party and under the leadership of the Party, massive and militant movements were launched in Malayalam speaking area.

But majority of the Congress leadership of the South Canara District belonged to the landlords, merchants and tile factory owners. They never took interest to organise the peasantry. The Congress Socialist Party of South Canara and the Karnataka Congress Socialist party were founded in 1935. Even though they put forward the socialist ideology, they did not try to mobilise the peasantry. When the Congress Socialist Party of Kerala was transformed in to the Communist Party enmasse, the Karnataka Congress Socialist Party did not transfer like that of Kerala, but a few of them joint the Communist Party.

After the release of the Congress leaders from jail, who participated in the civil disobedience movement, founded reading rooms in their own villages. These reading rooms gradually became centers for inculcating political ideology. This trend of Malabar influenced the Malayalam speaking area profoundly. This laid the ideological basis of Socialism and Communism in the area. Afterwards the Communist leaders organised study classes, including night classes in the Malayalam speaking area. This powerful ideological basis strengthened the party at the grass root level which ultimately resulted in massive and militant movements.

The peasant and Communist leaders of the Tulu speaking area were not able to develop such a strong ideological basis like the Malayalam speaking area. Very strong ideology always keep the movement intact. There were so many reasons for this. Among, them the linguistic difference was focused as an obstacle for the propagation of ideology and unity of peasantry. Tulu, Canarese (Kannada), Konkani, Marathi, Malayalam, Hindustani, Koraga, Bellera, Coorgi(Kodagu), Tamil, Telungu, etc. were the different languages of the people in the Tulu speaking area. However, this argument is not fully correct. The labour class commonly spoke the Tulu language in the region and the linguistic obstacle could not be considered as important. Actually the leaders were not able to organise peasantry through ideological propagation.

In the Tulu speaking area the peasants were organised a little late compared with the Malayalam speaking area. That means, in Malayalam speaking area the peasant organisations emerged in the 1930's, but in the Tulu⁽¹⁾

1. *At Bantwal a Raitha Sangha was formed in April 1945, it was the first peasant organisation founded in the Tulu speaking area, at regional level.*

speaking area it originated only in 1940's. The South Canara District Raitha Sangha was organised in 1952 and the receipt for rent was one among the three major demands put forward by the Sangham. During this time Kisan Sangham in the Malayalam speaking area demanded 'land to the tiller'. Thus there existed a wide gulf between the peasant organisation of these two areas.

It is important to note that the working organisations were formed and they conducted strong strikes in the 1940's in the Tulu speaking area. In 1940's the weavers factory strike in Mangalore was very strong which ended in violent incidents. In 1946 the Beedi worker's and Tile factory workers also had strong strikes in Mangalore. It was stated⁽¹⁾ that the Communists were creating their strong holds among the labourers and the government took initiative to settle labour strikes. A wide spread tile factory workers strike in the question of wages in South Canara was settled⁽²⁾ by the intervention of the local officials concerned. Seeing the spread of Communism in Malabar and other parts of the Madras Presidency the District authorities started to take initiative to settle the strikes through negotiation in order to curb the spread of Communism among the working class.

The Communist Party of South Canara was not able to exploit of the circumstances and to make better co-ordination between the workers and the peasantry against oppression and colonialism.

In Malabar and Kasaragod Taluk the peasants and workers fought against the imperialism, landlordism and casteism simultaneously. The struggle against

1. *Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for Second Half of April, 1945.*

2. *Fortnightly Report (Confidential) for Second Half of January, 1946.*

these three forces which had become the major element for the rapid growth of the peasant and working class movements in the rural areas. It resulted in the unification of the people irrespective of religion, caste and class against the common enemies and finally resulted in the massive and militant movements in Malayalam speaking area.

The caste rigidity that existed in Tulu speaking area had interrupted the advance of the peasant organisation to a certain extent. The land owning class belonging to the high castes had great influence in the social, economic and political structure. The peasants belonged to the middle castes and most of the landless labourers were the untouchables. Untouchability and unapproachability prevailed in South Canara than in Malabar.

Even though the caste systems were instrument in oppressing the lower castes along with landlordism, it was not focussed as a major issue in South Canara District. While comparing the oppression based on caste supremacy in South Canara with Malabar, it was more severe in Malabar than in South Canara. In Malabar, the major portion of the land owning class belonged to the Brahmin caste. But in Tulu speaking area they belonged to Brahmins, Bunts and Jains. Bunts were equal to Nairs of Malabar and they were socially considered as the backward community.

Even though in the Tulu speaking area many communists and peasant leaders emerged from the upper castes, they were not able to make effective influence up on the masses like that of the Malayalam speaking area. Thus the peasant organisation of the Tulu speaking area were comparatively very weak from that of the Malayalam speaking area.

The worship of bhuta or devil in costal Karnataka has been popular. The people in the district indulged in various kinds of rituals and superstitions. The landlords had effectively made use of the ignorance of the people and maintained their power and prestige up on them. The peasantry of the Tulu speaking area had led a life like slaves for centuries. The activities undertaken by the Raitha Sangha for the upliftment of the peasantry from their deplorable condition had not become a success in all parts of the district.

The leaders of Tulu speaking area had tried to organise the chalageni tenants. They did not give much importance to the organisation of landless peasants or the agricultural labourers of the region who belonged to the bottom of the social structure. The leaders of the area were not able to attain the confidence of all sections of the peasantry and to propagate the message of organisation at the grass root level like Malabar and Kasaragod. Thus, the Raitha Sangha was also not able to unite all sections of the peasantry in their struggle against the landlords and colonialism.

The weakness in the organisational level of the Raitha Sangha was another factor for their failure. The Raitha Sangha at Bantwal taluk formed in 1945 had started agitation against the landlords. The landlords came forward to resist the activities of the Raitha Sangha with the support of the police. Thus police arrested peasant leaders and put them in prison. It is very important to note that when the leaders were jailed, no body came forward to assume leadership and continue the struggle. So the activities of the Sangha

were stagnant for six years in the Tulu speaking areas. Thus the landlords and the police were able to prevent the rapid growth of the peasant movements in the area. This was one of the factors that weakened the Raitha Sangha.

After this set back, the activities of Raitha Sangha were reorganised in the Tulu speaking area only with the formation of the South Canara District Raitha Sangha in 1952. Even then the Raitha Sangha was not able to organise its units in village level in all parts of the Tulu speaking area, as it was done in the Malayalam speaking area. After the special conference⁽¹⁾ of the Karshaka Sangham held at Karivellur (Malabar District) in 1935 and with in a period of three years the village units of KPCC and Karshaka Sangham were organised in almost all villages of the Kasaragod taluk. The activities of the Karshaka Sangham spread rapidly with the attainment of confidence of the rural population in the Malayalam speaking area. But in the Tulu speaking area the Raitha Sangha's expansion was very slow. Thus organisational differences of the two sangham's in Malayalam speaking area and Tulu speaking area had affected its effectiveness.

All Malabar, Kisan Sangham and the Trade Union Congress brought the national movement to the grass root level. These organisations inaugurated an era of militant struggles in Malabar and Kasaragod in the 1940's. They made great influence on the peasant organisations of the Kasaragod taluk. Thus Malabar and Kasaragod taluk witnessed a strong anti-feudal and anti-imperialist movements participated by the working class. They were well

1. *This was the first conference attended by the peasants of Kasaragod Taluk and it was presided over by A. K. Gopalan.*

organised by the Communist Party and under its leadership the people organised struggles against poverty and oppression and revolted against landlords and colonialism.

The Kayyur riot of March 1941 was a significant event in the history of the peasant movements in South Canara District. Four young peasant workers were sentenced to death for participating in the riot and they became martyrs. Even though many peasant activists were assassinated by the British through repression, the Kayyur martyrs were the first peasant martyrs in India, who were hanged by the imperialist government. These peasants were illiterates, who entered the nationalist movement as inspired by the nationalist and Communist ideology. Thus a remote village like Kayyur had become a popular place in the history of peasant insurgency.

The post war period resulted in hoarding and black marketing which intensified rural poverty. The Karshaka Sangham resorted to forceful procurement of paddy in Kasaragod taluk. The government began repression against the activities of the Communists and the peasants. Even though the Communists and the peasants faced severe repression from the government, this struggle resulted in the strengthening of the peasant activism in the rural areas.

The Mulki Satyagraha, 1956, in the Tulu speaking area had been one of the events that exposed the weakness of the Raitha Sangha. Forceful eviction was common in the area with the support of the police. This satyagraha was a struggle against such forceful evictions. The landlords, assisted by the

police, used all sorts of repressive measures. Thousands of peasants participated in the struggle. The Raitha Sangha was not able to offer resistance to overcome the repressive measures by the police and the landlords and it ended in failure. This failure was significant as it resulted in more and more eviction by the landlords.

In Kasaragod taluk the agitation, like harvesting of crops, Cheemeni estate struggle, the paddy procurement, the social boycott of the landlords etc, marked the success of the peasantry. This ultimately became a threat to the vested interests of the landlords and created unity, strength and self-confidence among the rural masses under the Kisan Sabha and the Communist Party. The extension of the Malabar Tenancy Act in to many villages of the Kasaragod taluk was a result of the agitations of the peasants in Kasaragod taluk and Malabar.

Even though the land system was highly oppressive and exploitive during the British period, even after the Koots rebellion in 1830-31 and the revolt of Kalyana Swami in 1837, the peasantry could be organised only after the gap of a century. With the emergence of nationalism, political consciousness developed and it resulted in the formation of peasant organisation and the Communist Party in the district. Thus, it created a new turn in the political history and agrarian relations in the Kasaragod taluk of the district because they activated peasant struggles which was powerful, militant and had definite objectives. Thus the struggles against landlordism and imperialism were generated with proper leadership, ideology and political

perspective in the Malayalam speaking area. Though Kasaragod taluk and Tulu speaking area occupied in the same district of South Canara, the Communist Party gained strong holds among the rural population in the Malayalam speaking areas and it failed to establish effective peasant mobilization in the Tulu speaking area.

When the Communist Party came to power in 1957 it showed its commitment towards the rural peasantry by introducing the Kerala Agrarian Relations Bill (K.A.R.B). Kerala was the first state in India, which introduced such a progressive measure. The government was dismissed by the Central Government at the end of the liberation struggle directed mainly against the introduction of the bill. The Kerala Land Reform Act of 1963 was not satisfactory to the peasants. Struggle continued for achieving proper legislation in Kerala. And the CPI(M) coalition government that came to power in 1967, enacted a new tenancy legislation known as the Kerala Land Reforms (Amendment) Act which was finally passed in 1969. This Act effectively abolished landlordism, which is viewed as the culmination of the long and militant peasant struggles.

The Karnataka government appointed the Jatti Committee in 1957 to examine the existing laws and practices and to suggest the common tenancy law and the Karnataka Land Reform Act was enacted in 1961. Prior to the enactment of the Act the landlords of the Dakshina Kannada District resorted to large scale eviction of the tenants. This had to led violent incidents in many parts of the district. The Act provided enough time and scope to the

landlords to resume the leased out land under the guise of personal cultivation. There prevailed a large number of oral and informal tenancy arrangements on land until the Act of 1961 was amended.

The purpose behind⁽¹⁾ the implementation of tenancy legislation was to protect the interests of tenants initially and consequently to eliminate the intermediaries and to confer on the tenants ownership rights on the tenanted land. The so called revolutionary land reform legislation was introduced in the Karnataka State in 1974. But its implementation was a failure considering the objectives of the land reforms. As stated earlier, a large number of tenants were displaced from their leased land. Thus forceful eviction of the tenant and the land transactions were a common feature in the agrarian structure of the Dakshina Kannada District from 1951 to 1974. As a result of the introduction of Madras Prevention of Ejectment Act of 1954 there was a decline in the number of tenants from 5,89,017 in 1951 to 4,90,571 in 1957. Huge number of tenants in this district were tremendously reduced due to the large scale evictions and hence the actual beneficiaries under tenancy laws were only 1,36,880 by the end of 1987⁽²⁾. Thus, a large percentage of the actual tenants were evicted in the district and there numbers were reduced. So the real success rate of the implementation of tenancy law in Dakshina Karnataka District was as low as 27.9 per cent⁽³⁾.

1. C. B. Damle, "Impact Of Tenancy Legislation And Changing Agrarian Relations; A Case Study Of Dakshina Kannada District", *Social Scientist*, Vol. 17, Nos. 11-12 November-December, 1989, p.90

2. *Ibid*, p.90

3. *Ibid*, p.90.

In Kodagu district of the Karnataka state the occupancy right granted to the tenants was only 2.9 per cent⁽¹⁾. This is a typical example of the implementation of the tenancy legislation in the Karnataka state. The effective implementation will be possible only when the needy people are kept vigilant and mobilised for collective strength.

The provision of resumption of land for personal cultivation was an important loophole which turned out as an obstacle in the effective implementation of the Act. Thus, the effective implementation had become a myth in the Dakshina Kannada District in particular and Karnataka State in general.

The land ceiling legislation was not implemented properly, which exposed the major weakness of the Land Reform Act in Karnataka State. The landlords produced false statement before the land tribunals and even partitioned the land to escape from the ceiling limit and on the other hand the revenue authorities did not conduct proper enquires to find out the surplus land. Acquiring surplus land and its proper redistribution were considered as important for the removal of inequalities in the agrarian structure.

In Kerala the peasant organisations and the Communist Party were powerful and they acted as a corrective force in the whole process of the implementation of the act. They checked and pointed out all the loopholes of the act, where as such a force was not there in Karnataka. Thus the political will

1. *Abdul Aziz and Subhir Krishna (ed), Land Reforms In India Karnataka, Promises Kept And Missed, (New Delhi, 1977)p.83.*

on the part of the Communist Party, helped the effective implementation of the Land Reform Act.

In fact the Karnataka situation was different. Even though the Communist parties and the Raitha Sanghas were comparatively weak, they sincerely tried to mobilise the peasantry in the district. They ventilated the grievances of toiling classes and engaged in so many struggles including violent clashes between the landlords and the peasants in the district during 1960's and 1970's. The impact of the act was not uniform every where in the Dakshina Kannada District. Wherever the Raitha Sanghas had strong holds, the peasantry had gained the benefit and in the places where the Raitha Sangha was weak the landlords had benefited.

The villages of the Tulu speaking areas were characterised by the predominance of resident landlords. The resident landlords deliberately prevented the expansion of the Raitha Sangha and the Communist Party in their areas through all means. On one hand the landlords shown mercy towards the tenants to keep the Communists at bay and on the other hand they used repressive measures to curb the Raitha Sangha and the Communists. Further, the landlords were supported by the revenue officials and the police. Thus, in such villages, where the resident landlords were powerful, the peasant movements and the implementation of land reforms were weak to a great extent. On the other hand the peasants movements and reforms were quite successful due to numerical predominance of urban based landlords in certain areas of the state.

Lack of serious efforts to prevent the landlords from evicting the ten-

ants and involvement of the peasant leaders in election politics were some of the limitations of the peasant movements. In spite of these limitations, the fact remains that the peasant movements initiated a process of change in tenant-landlord relationship. It strengthened the bargaining power of tenants vis-a-vis their landlords, to a considerable extent, brought to the forefront the defects of the tenancy legislations, gave expression to the grievances of the poor peasants as and when required and created an atmosphere in many coastal villages necessary for the implementation of the Karnataka Land Reforms Act of 1974. Had there not been peasant movements, there could have been a massive eviction of tenants in the District before the implementation of the Act.

The selfish attitudes shown by certain activists and followers of the Raitha Sangha also affected the implementation. In some parts of the district, after the fight with the landlords under the leadership of the Raitha Sangha the tenants became the owners of the land. After getting the occupancy right, many of them had withdrawn from the organisation to safe guard their property. These new landowners did not participate in the struggle for the rehabilitation of the evicted tenants and it affected the tempo of the peasants struggles.

The Land Reform Legislations enacted in Karnataka state were half hearted and chiefly landlord- oriented. The organisational weakness of the Raitha Sanghas and the Communist Parties in Karnataka resulted in the failure of its effective implementation. However, these movements which acquired significance in the district brought to the forefront the need for a land to the

tiller legislation, in the district.

During the post land legislation period, the social system that developed in Kerala signifies the existence of the leftist government. Various sorts of social security measures were implemented to provide various types of inputs aimed at the development of agriculture and free them from the clutches of the money lenders. There are so many co-operative Banks and Agricultural Development Banks established in Kerala apart from Commercial Banks. These banks provide various sorts of credit facilities to assist the peasants. Same way, the establishment of village offices, the village extension centers in all rural areas, and Krishi Bhavan in each panchayats also provide assistance to the peasants. These kinds of social security measures do not exist in Karnataka. This was one of the major differences between leftist government sponsored legislations in Kerala and a rightist government led measures of Karnataka.

The implementation of land reform Act had made changes in the agrarian relations and the agrarian structure in the Dakshina Kannada District to a great extent. Many of the big estates owned by landlords were either divided among members or partly sold or given to tenants. Many of them became new professionals due to high education. Thus more dependence on agriculture has come to an end. In recent years, Dakshina Kannada District has witnessed considerable migration of rural people to urban areas. Seeking employment in hotels, automobile works etc. many of the landless migrated from rural areas to Urban areas. Apart from this, many of the agricultural areas were converted into residential areas and high building

structures were also constructed.

The influence of the peasant movements of the Malabar, the influence of Communist Party, the leadership factors, the ideological basis, etc had caused the emergence of massive and militant peasant movements in Kasaragod Taluk of the South Kanara District. The peasant movements in Tulu speaking areas were started later and it was weak comparing with the Malayalam speaking area. The organisational character of the Raitha Sangha was also poor. At the same time, the peasant movements forced the government to enact Land Reform Act's in Kerala and Karnataka States. The peasants were freed from the age old customs and practices of landlordism. The traditional exploitation of the tenants by the landlords declined as an impact of the land reform. Legal and illegal extractions were also. Forced labour (free labour) and atrocities by the landlords also had come to an end. Fixation of minimum wages, resulted in the improvement of the condition of the agricultural labourers. Poor peasants and landless labourers attained more freedom and position in the society. Even though, there were variations in the implementation of the Land Reforms Act's in Kasaragod (Kerala State) and the Dakshina Kannada District (Karnataka State), it had made far reaching changes in the political, economic and social structure of these areas.

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GLOSSARY

- Adhikari** : Administrator of Nadu.
- Akramapirivukal** : Illegal extractions, which the peasant subjected to pay to the landlord.
- Aliyasantana** : Inheritance of property through female line or matrilineal system of succession to property.
- Amani** : The collection of revenue direct by government through its village servant without any intervention of village farmers or zamindars. This system was most prevalent in many parts of the Madras Presidency from time immemorial.
- Anna** : Sixteenth part of a rupee.
- Arwar** : Living mortgage or mortgaging land against the loan to the mortgagee, mortgage land with possession.

Arzee	: Petition.
Bahdury Pagoda	: A coin equal in value to four Rupees.
Bijawari	: Extent of land, computed according to the quantity of seed required to sow it.
Chalageni	: System of leasing out land to the under-tenants on a temporary basis.
Fasalugeni	: Land tenure confined to plantation crops like arecanut and cashew.
Fasli	: Revenue year or financial year.
Gramapaddhti	: A tradition, which contains the history of the Brahmin settlement of the Tulu region.
Hasurvani	: An annual tribute to a basketful of vegetables apart from the fixed rental free labour to the landlord.
Hosagame	: Land newly brought under cultivation.
Huzoor	: The Revenue Collector or the place where he resides.
Inam	: Donations of land in the form of inam to temples.
Janmibhogam	: A rent demanded in addition to the false measure which enabled the landlord to collect rent in excess.
Janmis	: An absolute proprietary right on land.
Jatha	: Number of persons moving forward in an orderly way by shouting slogans.
Jummabundy	: The annual settlement of the revenue or

government demand up on the lands of a village,
or of a district, or of a individual ryot.

Jumabundy chitta : Revenue Account.

Karshaka Sangham : Association of peasants.

Kisan : Ryots or tenants.

Kist : Installment of rent.

Kumaki : Forest land situated within the distance of 100
yards from a warg.

Magane : The subdivision of a taluk.

Muladalu : Serfs or bought man or slaves who primarily
served in the agricultural operations.

Mulageni : System of leasing out land to a tenant, on a
permanent and hereditary basis.

Mulawarg : An estate or which its owner has hereditary
proprietary right.

Nadu : A territorial division or region.

Nuri : When paddy rent was being measured a handful
of paddy was put on the side to denote the
number of measures which in added to the share
of the landlord in addition to the rent.

Patta : A registered land holding.

Pattadar : One who holds a lease or engagement for his
lands/a landlord.

Potail : The head man of a village. He collects the rent

from the other ryots and also acts as the village Magistrate.

- Raitha Sangha : Peasant organisation.
- Sastra rate : One by sixth of the gross produce as the government share.
- Shanbogue : Village accountant.
- Shist : A fixed money assessment.
- Tharao : A fixed money assessment.
- Vaidegeni : System of leasing out land to the under tenant for a specified period of time.
- Vasi : A margin to keep up the deficiency in the quantum of grains through drying.
- Vechukanal : Presence, an offering made to the landlord by the tenants before seeing him.

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