

Agrarian Conditions in Coimbatore District: 1800-1947

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Introduction

The peasantry was not homogeneous in class sense. It did not consist of peasant of a single type, in spite of all oppressing merchants, moneylenders and landlords yoke. In as much as in our countryside serf owing society is being eliminated by present day society in so much the peasantry ceases to be class and becomes divided into the rural proletariat and the rural bourgeois (big, middle, petty and very small). In as much as serf owing relationship still exist, in so much the peasantry continues to be a class, i.e., we repeat, a class of serf owing society rather than of bourgeois society.¹ “Lenin’s famous in as much in so much”. Covering the process, dynamic and dialectics of the transition by feudal society to bourgeois one, considering the colonial nature was undoubtedly applicable to India.²

It is true that the entire history of British rule was one of the depeasantisation and pauperization process was not only slowly oppressing, and social differentiation was very painful for the masses. The peasants output was increasingly becoming a commodity. Taxes and a number of measures of imperialism turned the peasants economy into the clutch of the finance capitalism.

Imperialism destroyed situation of the cottage industry connected with farming. A system of semi bourgeois semi feudal private ownership of the land was created. The organization of the enormous plantations made alienated the traditional hill peasantry also. The peasant’s labour power became a commodity. A sect of agricultural workers, field labourers and farm servants evolved enormously. At the same time the method of agricultural production and technology remain in changed. The feudal oppression ruined the peasant holdings, share cropping predominated. In some region rent in kind rather than in money prevailed. The reports of the peasantry rented land on harsh terms developed. All these factors created a differentiation in the agrarian structure. It could not be simplified.

Division of Society.

Differentiation of the peasantry is an age old phenomenon. It refers to hierarchical relations between segments who depend upon cultivation for their livelihood.³ Both Frykenburg and Dharma kumar seems to consider the relationships between land control and social structure functional to the society as a whole despite status distinctions and high income disparities between landlord, peasant and labourer. It does not mean simple a division of society.

Any change in the structure of the peasantry refers to the evolution of agrarian relations vis-à-vis other social relation. Burton stein focuses on relationships between persons and the land as part of a whole. Stavenhagen defines, a set of institutions, norms (both written and un written) and social, political and economic relationships governing the access to use of lands as a productive resources.⁴ Peasants are members of caste and the caste may be one or more important unit of social organization in India than the village.⁵ Whatever the definitions, the economic process and behavior are the deciding factors.⁶

“Trade by Rail and Wire” was being rapidly extended the commercialization of agriculture, often accompanied a process of proletarianisation of the poorer peasantry.⁷ A major factor in the dependence of the agricultural labourer in his employer is the close correspondence of the economic hierarchy with the social hierarchy at the village level.⁸ In India, we observed that the agricultural labourers belongs to untouchable community while the land owners were belongs to upper and middle class people.

Marketing East India Company

There was rapid change in the economy of the dry zone area, Cash cropping, Railway, Marketing networks, Fiscal measures, Moneyed rent were the phenomena in an agrarian society that contributed to the great change in the relations of landed class and tenants.⁹ There was a revolutionary change from customary to contractual rent. In the early days colonial penetration and expansion, the East Indian Company’s efforts at controlling the local money market and to regulate them in the interest of their own long distance trade, left in its wake demonetization and de-commercialization in this region where cash exchange and financial institution had been fairly developed.¹⁰ By creating landlordism, British rule reversed the development of capitalist relations with the mode of production in agriculture and introduced a semi-feudal economy.¹¹ Zamindari themselves abominable as they were, involved two district forms of private property in land. the great desideration of Asiatic Society.¹² The landed wealth obviously concentrated in the hands of the upper class of nobility, landed or commercial.

Zamindaries and Ryotwari

In view of technological backwardness, however, the landed nobility and bureaucratic apparatus of the state.¹³ Commercial forestry had initiated a major transformation in agrarian relations. The use of forest for subsistence was contrasted with the commercial orientation. It is important to recognize that the dependence of the hill peasant on forest resources was institutionalized through a variety of social and cultural mechanisms. Through religion, folklore and tradition, the village communities had drawn a protect ring around the forests.¹⁴ The community management of the forest met the erosion of the social bonds by the capitalist penetration. Tribal labourers forced to involve in the plantations. Tribal peasants turned into peasant and fell in the cash-rent, where from unable to pay the rent met the fact of alienation from land.¹⁵ Large number of them were displaced and subjected.

The ryotwari system accentuated the drift towards greater fragmentation of holdings.¹⁶ On the other side, disputes between Zamindaries and ryotwari filled the courts of the province. It was only towards the end of the 19th century that the Madras High Court started to recognize the permanent occupancy rights of Zamindari tenants.¹⁷

The caste system had its own influence in treating differentiation. It originated and persisted as a form of institutionalized inequality in which ethnically distinct social entities were absorbed into a status and economic hierarchy as ranked endogamous, birth ascribed, kin based occupational groups-kin strata in effect in order to provide land, labourer, rent and taxes for surplus agricultural production organized by and for the benefit of those who acquired their land through the exercise of military, administration and economic power.¹⁸

Landless Labourers

Non elite castes held little control over land and occupation. Exchange of labourer for goods and under the patronage of landed castes, the landless castes lived a hard life. The largest, poorest and most depressed segment of the agrarian society was the landless labourers. Thomas Munro wrote, 'a numerous class of slaves have not the free disposal of their own industry, but are in a peculiar state of servitude.'¹⁹ Except in the case of rich landowners and the upper castes, women of other categories engaged in both the production and marketing of products of agriculture and handicrafts.²⁰ Landless labourers who were attached to the landlords and who were personally independent and worked most of the time in other fields, peasants who had economic holdings but who had one or more of their sons and dependents working for other prosperous peasants were the various types.

Land was abundant at the beginning of the 19th century. Anyone who agreed to pay the land revenue could take up lands from the government and could abundant them with equal ease. And this was in fact what often happened,²¹ whenever a farmer save few rupees then bought a pair of bullocks. The plough does not cost him a rupee, he rents a few acres from the government and commences farming himself, if he is successful, he continues his business, and if he meets with an accident he sells his cattle to pay his rent, and returns to his former employment of common labourer. In such a state of things, it is almost impossible that great landed property can ever be obtained by any one man, unless by fraud or violence.²²

Agricultural labourer

There were well-developed institutional of 'Agricultural labourer' and 'serfdom' in the structure of the agrarian economy. The striking peculiarity of the Indian servitude was its connection with the caste system not only confirmed the economic and social disadvantages of the agricultural laborer. But also gave him some rights to development in economic, others of a social and ritual nature.²³ Until the legal emancipation in 1843, the agrarian bondage continued.

Agricultural indebtedness and land alienation created a group of dispossessed peasantry who turned as under tenants of field labourer. This had happened enormously during the economic crisis of 1929-31. The popular hypothesis was that most of the artisans, who were displaced by the competition from the products of large scale industries of Europe, had joined the ranks of the proletariat.

The overwhelming majority of displaced artisans who had always been part time farmers, then moved to full time farming as under tenants. Handicrafts were destroyed by European competition. Lacking alternative employment in the modern commercial-industrial sectors, displayed handicraftsman, indebted owner-occupier peasants and the labourer force generating by expanding population were forced on to the land.²⁴ Agriculture was burdened with an ever-increasing supply of only particularly employable landless labourer.

The predominance of Zamindar's and planter's exploitation

Poligars who were the proprietors of poliams (in Tamil Palayam) although their tenure was of a feudal type, and thus different from the Zamindars of the circars or government before the settlement, came under the same category after the permanent settlement and exchange sanads and *kabulyats*.²⁵ The poligar estates were treated under Regulation XXV and got 'sanad' or title deeds like all the other Zamindar, (a few called as un settled palayams) got no sanad and were in no way different from the Zamindars.²⁶ Some poligars who were themselves

ryots had engaged all the un cultivable and all the lands in their boundary areas.²⁷

Feudal known as kaniyatchikarar or Mirasdars were mostly entitled as monigar and had an hereditary claim to the soil.²⁸ They made no pretensions whatever to appropriate to themselves the produce of the quarries, mines or fisheries or the waste of their village, the privilege of grazing upon waste was always rented to other ryots. Their property in the soil was designated as 'audheenam'²⁹ and the proprietor was called *Autheenastar*'. This type of landed genetries in Coimbatore was known as kaniyatchikarar and Mirasdars.³⁰

The estates known as mittas were created by the British between 1802 and 1818. Various types of mittadars were there. These titles had generally been sold by the government at auctions, the Mittadars, became dignified. Some were entreprenuners and ex officials as well as from agrarian caste. The zamindari of Kumaramangalam, for instance, had amassed 15 Mittas and became one of the largest estate holders of the regions.³¹

By the end of the 19th century, Zamindar had 75,089 acres and 42 Zamindari villages that is 1.7 per cent of the total acreage.³² There were four estates had 1001 to 5000 acres, five of them possessed 5001 to 10000 acres and two estates had 10001 to 25000 acres of land (the total was 75089 acres).³³

The Anglo Indian government was 'be-friendly' (post-mutiny effect) with the landed groups and the influential land holders. They were liberally endowed with titles and medals at the time of sickness minority or at hard times. Paravipalayam estates was under the court of wards for some times.

The Permanently Settled Estates (1912-13)

Two divisions of permanent settled estates were pollachi taluk and another one was Udumalpet taluk. In Pollachi taluk. In pollachi taluk revenue was collected form peishkush, land cess and miscellaneous revenue. The Paravipalayam zamindar tax was collected sum of Rs.4064 form Peishkush, landcess and Miscellanious. In Udumalpet taluk there were five permanent settled estates they are as follows: 1.Metrathi zamin 2.Jothampatti 3.Thungavi 4.Vedapatti 5.Maivadi. These zamindars were collected tax was Rs.5224 from peishkush, landces, Miscellanious.³⁴

There were two class's viz., Estate holders and holders of land other than Estates i.e., Ryotwari and Mirasi Proprietors. The Estate holders generally known as Zamindars, Poligars, Jagirdars, Mittadars and Inamdars.³⁵ A permanently settled estate, temporarily settled and un settled palayam or Jagir were some three categories. The poligars were only assignees of land revenue. The Zamindar of Udayarpalayam admitted in his written memorandum that he no proprietary right to the soil.³⁶

The extension of cultivation

The Zamindar of Uttukuli was extended the cultivation 7599 acres. Samathur zamindar was extended 4791 acres. Kottampatti zamindar extended the cultivation 4472 acres. Nagaman zamindar was extended the cultivation 4083 acres. Avalappampatti zamindar was extended the cultivation 7598 acres. Poravipalayam zamindar was extended the cultivation 12758 acres. Ramapattanam zamindar was extended the cultivation 6227 acres and the zamindar of Metrathy was extended the cultivation in 6679 acres.³⁷

It was noted that in Kongu region there were four houses of chief, palayakottai Pattakkarar, Kattaiyur Pattakkarar, Puthur Pattakkarar and Samkarantampalayam Pattakkarar. These clan designed chief's exercised greated power in that region. Brenda Beck in her book refers these chief as titled families and as an 'aristocracy'. Their exalted influence continued even in the British Raj also.³⁸ An, the pattarakkarar of palayakottai submitted petition to transportation of fodder for cattle's from Tanjore district. A deputation of ryots including C.V.Venkatraman Ayyangar and V.C. Vellingiri gounder, member of Madras legislative council represented the matter to the collector. The collector got sanction of rupees 50,000 from the commissioner of land revenue and settlement and also allowed to graze freely in the reserved forest.

The Zamindars right over his estate was a share in the produce; the cultivators share generally amounted to 50 per cent of the gross produce. The Zamindari had strong power and the customs were weak, would doubtless made other illegal deduction from the produce and might even extract forced labour.³⁹

Zamindars restored to coercive process in rent collection and the member of suits reached a record level. Alleging that the village officers and estate manager in collecting revenue dues, the estate holders penalized them. In Porvipalayam, the bids at auction in 1933 were almost a third down on the level attained in 1930. Many of the lessess defaulted on even those low amounts, and the estate could collected only 55 per cent.⁴⁰ In 1938, the T.Prakasam, the Revenue minister of the provice conducted an enquiry into the Zamindaries and prepared a report which decreed that the soil belonged to the ryots not the Zamindars and that rents should be reduced to the level they were in 1802.⁴¹ While no other minister supported the cause.

The inamdari system also involved a lighter rate of land revenue although origin and social status the inamdar was far removed from the Zamindar. A special commission was appointed in 1858 to validate title and to enfranchise inams. The holder of a personal inam could then enfranchise it or converted it into his transferable heritable private property by paying on annual quit rent. Madras estate land act (1945) proposal was passed and

established the inamdar rights to kudivaram. Popular sentiments sounded that, the government should seek to persist on turning into the streets a whole class of innumerable small landowners most of whom are at present alienness of the original grantees and several of whom are non Brahmins, while big landlords owing very extensive holdings in the estates and big pattadars in the ryotwari areas were tolerated and encouraged to exploit the landless peasants.⁴² From 1870, the practice of given special compensation for Mirasi Rights was stopped and this was marked the end of the last vestiges of the token recognition of the system.

The Anglo Indian government granted large areas of land to Europeans, Eurasians and wealthy Indians at very cheap prices.⁴³ Every year a large numbers of people were transferred to tea and coffee plantation in the forest, particularly in the Anamalais.⁴⁴ The Badaga community a hell peasant tribe sold their lands to Europeans, in view of unbearable land revenue. The European planters managed to exploit such lands profitably. By 1946, there was 10 per cent of absentee landlordism in Coimbatore District.⁴⁵

Ruinous Peasant Holdings

According to census of 1891, those who lived on cultivation fall into 8 categories, 1. of a minority of non-cultivating proprietors taken in money and kind, 2,3 and 4 were their managers and clerks, 5. Cultivating Owners, 6. Tenants cultivators, 7. Non Cultivating tenants and 8. As agricultural labourers included with the 7th and 8th were the service inam holders personal inam holders and religious inam holders.⁴⁶

Throughout the Coimbatore district, Gounder the peasant community shared the privileged position of being the majority caste. The title 'Gounder' denoted a village chief or a prosperous ryot. The colonial character profoundly affected the economic and political character of their region.⁴⁷ The ryotwari land revenue did not completely displace the existing chieftain; some remained as Zamindars, but lost their Judicial and Military power.

But for the most numerous castes in Coimbatore was the Vellalas, more than 31 per cent of the population. Other common cultivating castes were the Kanarese Vokkaligas and the Telugu Kammals and Tottiaris. After the Vellalas, the Arumthathiaris or Madigas were the second largest caste people, the Pariahis, the Ottars (well sinkers and earth workers), were also in good number. The jungle tribes Sholingas of north Coimbatore strength.⁴⁸ Most of the Vellalars were peasants and landless labourers and known as 'excellent cultivators and cattle raisers'. The commercial crops like Combodia cotton and the moined rent forced to indebtedness and alienation. The alienated peasants sought labourer in the erstwhile urban mills.⁴⁹

The village, often it was far more differentiated and complex, elaborate gradations of tenancy rights. Coimbatore had only fewer large land and holdings. In Pollachi, according to Buchchanan, there were a few farmers had been holding lands only 86 acres, but the great majority had no more than 8 to 9 acres each. Lands leased to crop shares for 6/15ths of the gross produce, and the remainders were gone to the land revenue and to interest on money, grain, cattle and implements advanced by the farmer. A Parakudi or a tenant-at-will, who was generally a share cropper, can hardly be distinguished from a labourer. The 'Pannaiyal' or labourer-servant was sometimes given a small plot of land to cultivate as tenants. Landless tenants and non cultivating landlords constitute 14 per cent each of the agricultural population.⁵⁰

The tenants lived from hand to mouth by cultivating others lands. Inamdars frequently took vexatious actions under Act VIII of 1865 to alienate the tenants. The tenants of the peasants proprietor was notoriously rack rented and it was evident that the ordinarily rental increased largely.⁵¹ The landlords evinced an inclination to turnout their customary tenants for casual bidders who offered high rents. Tenancy became insecure.⁵²

Every kind of tenancy prevailed in Coimbatore, the casual tenant who leased for a year, tenant on inam occupied often from time immemorial customary or varying rent from year to year. The varam or metayer tenant, tenants who were so only in name, such as those ryots whose lands often ancestral were their own indefeasible property, but who in this district they were 'settled occupancy ryots' recorded in the permash accounts sub-tenants untouchable pallas were preferred as varam tenants. In amaravathi and Kavery area they were more subservient than caste tenants. In Amaravathi valley the untouchable was preferred because they served free labour when required, Panneyal (bonded labourers), asalur parakudi and ullur parakudi (naturalize non-resident tenants), tenants with temporary rights of cultivation without miras or hereditary right,⁵³ were also there.

Rental was at black market price. At Mohanur and Kudumudi plantains and sugarcane in wet lands paid in paddy rental but calculated at the black market price, 'in the district of Coimbatore. The increased rent tempts many ryots to the scanty but easily-earned income of a petty landlord to the greater abundance of landholding cultivator.⁵⁴ A common rental on purely dry lands was twice the assessment on the better wet lands, such as those of the upper half of the Kalingarayan channel, a common rental was 2/3 or 3/4 of the grain to the landlord, who paid the assessment, the tenant retained the other 1/3 or 1/4.⁵⁵

Pannaiyals (agricultural serfs) or asalur parakudis (tenants from other villages) they became ullur parakudis (naturalized nonresident tenants), tenants with temporary rights of cultivation and without miras (or hereditary rights), Olavadimiras (tentants with permanent rights of cultivation) and even occasionally Kudimiras (tenants with rights of occupancy and alienation).⁵⁶ It becomes legal rights rather than natural rights. Inam

villages had undergone into many several classes, ryots with permanent occupancy rights were the most important.⁵⁷ At the same time the land holder was entitled to enhance rents.

The proprietors and the hereditary and permanent tenants together formed the *ulkudi*. The casual tenants who formed a separate group constituted the *parakudi* or outside tenants, there were three forms of tenure, 'Samudayam' or 'Pasangakarei' i.e., cultivated and held entirely in common *Kareiyidu* i.e., temporarily allotted land and *Arudikarai* (*palabogum*), here the shares were divided out.⁵⁸

Melvaram (sovereign right), *Tundu-varam* (cultivators share) and *Swamibogum* (share of the owner) were the share of the produce.⁵⁹ *Varam* tenure partaked serfdom. Crop share tenancy ruined the immediate producer to a greater degree. Grain rentals for 1st class paddy lands under canal irrigation such as *Kudumudi*, *Pugalur*, *Nerur*, *Amaravathi*, *Pallapalayam*, *Karur*, *Gobichettipalayam* and *Erode*, money lenders of special crops at *china* *Dharapuram* area, Rs.500. In *Pongalur* area the paddy was sold Rs.700 at black market price. In *Kodumudi* area, for sugarcane was sold at the cost of Rs.80 to 100 per pothi at *Kavery* irrigated area, leases of lands under *Chilly*, *Dhall*, *Pulses*, *Groundnut* *Gobichettipalayam*, *Erode*, *Udumalpet*, *Pallapalayam* area, leases of garden lands (irrigated by wells) at *Gobichettipalayam*, *Erode*, *Udumalpet*, *Kolunjivadi* area, Pasture land was leased a sum of Rs.50 per acre.⁶⁰

The rate of cash rents increased, so also the paddy rents. Moneylenders and traders began to invest in lands. In *Coimbatore* the increased rents tempted the urbanites to buy lands.⁶¹ It suggests the significance of land. The new class of investors in no way recognized the customary rights, such as payments to village servants, temples, festivals, charities, *kaval coolie* (watchman's wages) *mamools* (regular) for *talaiyaris* and *vettis*. All of them became alienated and joined with the already reserved labourers.

The tenancy law of 1885 extensive inquiries and put a complex and lengthy act marked a significant step in the legislation. The power of *Zamindari* was however by no means broken. They were still able to intimidate their tenants, by the threat of legal proceedings. By the 20th century *landlordism* made a great stride, during the time of rising prices (1900-1915), in post war period (1915-1929), in the depression period (1929-1931), in the period of debt relief legislation (1937-1943) and the war period 1943 onwards. This was the period of purchase of land by the moneylender class.⁶² *Absentee landlordism* got an impetus from these classes who had surplus accumulation to invest in lands. The value of lands increased, for example, and one cent of wet land in *Kavery* bank of *kodumudi* sold at Rs.60, in *Gobichettipalayam*, the *Bhavani* river area sold at Rs.60, and the land was sold at Rs.40 to 50 in *Udumalpet*.⁶³

Tenants were evicted for the cause of arrears of rent. In *Erode*, tenants of long tending were few. *Landlords* changed the tenants to get higher rents. In *Udumalpet*, when a tenant was unable to pay, 1 or 3 *Salakais* (grain measures) was deducted and had to pay remaining in cash. In the areas like *Kolingivadi*, tenants cultivated for generations together.⁶⁴ The evicted tenants sought asylum in the cotton gins and oil presses of *Coimbatore* and *Tiruppur*. The merchants, moneylenders and the dominant caste groups took to entrepreneurship. In some respect, traditional paternalist landlord, tenant/ labour/ servant relationship were carried over into the mill works.⁶⁵

Ryots were declared to have proprietary right to the soil in all forests.⁶⁶ The hill tribe like *malasars* who had the inalienable rights in the forests forever then had leasing rights. The forests department leased the lands to the *Malasar* with the condition of not to sub lease it or transferable. Actually they did sub leasing the land to the landholder nearby *Pattadhars* to whom many were indebted.⁶⁷

The Royal Commission upon decentralization had remarked as follows in their report on village organization. The villages formerly possessed a large degree of local autonomy, since the native dynasties and their local representatives did not, as a rule, concern themselves with the individual cultivators, but regarded the village as a whole, or some large landholders, as responsible for the payment of the government revenues, and the maintenance of local order. This autonomy has now disappearing owing to the establishment of local, civil and criminal courts, the present revenue and police organization, the increase of communication, the growth of individualism and the operation of the individual *ryotwari* system.⁶⁸

'It is being advisable that the existing indefinite mode of dividing the produce of the earth and of accounting for the customary ready money revenue should be abolished... and the under tenants may have the benefit of the land protection in their dealing with the superior landholders and farmers.'⁶⁹ With the increase of tenants landlord scuffle, the *Madras* tenants and ryots protection Act, 1946 was promulgated.

In 1827 *J.Sullivan* stated that even before the British 'joint property had scarcely an existing in *Coimbatore*'. The whole district was broken up into about 196068 small proprietors.⁷⁰ In the *ryotwari* tract the increase of different tenancy totally exploited the myth of 'peasant proprietorship'.

Landless Agricultural Laborers

'I (thackery) shall here take the liberty to make a few observation on these part of the Board's minute under date 1st may 1818 which have reference to *Coimbatore*'... 'Though out of the *Tamil* Country, for the greater part of the laboring class, from time immemorial been in a state of acknowledged bondage in which they constitute to

the present times'. This state of bondage exists only amongst the inhabitants of two villages in the whole of Coimbatore Province.⁷¹ But they were attached in land not dispossessed. The disappearance of the village communities brought about the liberation of depressed classes bondage, but in the process, it destroyed the basis of guaranteed livelihood. Labourers increased not by multiplication but from the ryot class and artisanal folk whose business had been ruined by colonial character.⁷² Displaced labourers had to work as agricultural labourers.⁷³

In pre-British India, 'Land had been practically unsalable land was totally valueless unless they cultivate it, it had no market price for no one would buy it or make advances upon it as security.⁷⁴ The cultivators sank deeper into debt and their property began to out of their hands. The rigidity of this revenue system forced them into debt while the valuable property which they held made it easier to borrow.⁷⁵ This dispossession of the peasants was the chief factor in the evolution of landless agricultural labourers as a large and a distinct class, it is obvious that such a class should have the largest proportion where the land transferability was the easiest it was in the ryotwari region.⁷⁶

Virtually, the 'untouchable' caste provided the greatest part of the labour force. The wage had been at the same for ten years or more.⁷⁷ There were little rise but not in proportion to price. Labourers were usually paid in grain as a monthly wage of 32-40 measures of grain, besides extras in cash and occasional cloth. Once bound to slavish service, the labourer found it difficult to extricate himself.⁷⁸

This wage-statistics gives really a pity when reading a statistical report. To improve the labourers standard the Anglo Indian government assigned lands to the depressed classes. But they did not know whether purposefully concealed by the bureaucracy.⁷⁹ Government asked the Tasildars and Revenue Officials to inspect the things and submit proposals for reserving lands for assignment to the 'depressed' farm labourers school were organized to educate children of the labourers.⁸⁰ The proposals for ameliorating the conditions of agricultural labourer made by the post war reconstruction labour sub-committee were as rosy of other committee and commissions.

In plantation where there were foreign masters, immigrant labourers were paid in cash. The status of labourers in Anamalais numbering more than 40,000 working on the various tea and coffee estates of the European planters were very pathetic. The local congress committee took pity on the plight of the poor coolies and requested to constitute a committee to inquire into the conditions of the labourers on the Anamalais.⁸¹

The tribe's Malasar, kadar, Muduvar and Pullar in the Anamalis, Malasar and Irrular in the Coimbatore, irular and Sholagar in Sathyamangalam, Kollegal and Palladam, Kurumbar in the north of the district lost their age old practice to become prone to capitalists tendency. The tribe of the Udumalpet and Pollachi were employed by landholders as labourers. Merchants made some tribe as wage servants to collect the forest products. From the very nature of the evolution of the planting industry the terms of service and monetary rewards were as varied as the temperaments of the different planters. An association Estate Staff was formed in 1929 to fight the cause of the plantation workers.⁸² They planned a mass size, but in vain and controversies erupted in the organization of the workers.⁸³

The meager of indigenous industries could not absorb the surplus and alienated peasants and tribes. The demand for labour outside India in the parts of the British Empire in Kenya (for the rail road construction), Srilanka (tea plantation) West Indies (sugar plantation) and so on got into migration.

The Agricultural Relief Act did not benefit the 'depressed' or 'adivasis' (aboriginal tribes) or other backward classes. The legality of the Act as Agriculturist's were meant only those who had saleable land and nonfarm servants, it was above reality. The provincial agricultural labourer's association demanded to relieve from debt and to abolish the false grain measures (of wooden and cane baskets) prevailed in this region and to substitute the standard scale measures. The written contract between ryot and labourer must be made obligatory, minimum wages, wage boards, and government lands to the labourers.⁸⁴ The emigration to plantation or other industries seeking alternative employed it led to the breakdown of the commune life.⁸⁵

For more decisive in its impact on land policy was the mutiny of 1857. The British government well-intentionally retained the feudal vestiges to with stand the colonial clutch. Indian agriculture was taken to involve in the international economy without modernization. The tribal-feudal set up was retained. The opening on Suez Canal, rail road and wire speeded up the monetization, but in Indian Agriculture the feudalism was maintain.

Following the heavy assessment of land revenue large scale land transfers was occurred. At the same time a new class of landed aristocracy was created. The moneylenders and merchants prospered. Tenancy legislation was carefully tailored to avoid any damage to the landed community and was rarely enacted without their consent.⁸⁶ In an era of rising nationalism the government simply could not afford to antagonize this influential class and stood as brothers before the attar of the empire.

Pollan, secretary to the East India Association in 28 May 1923 conveying his message to a meeting at Westminster, wrote, In India the tenure of land was originally a simple and the tribal chief or herdsman or godhead (if any), was given a share of the produce. There was no Landlordism in those days. All land belonged

to the tribe and was common property of all and the common sense of the East and India early invented a simple quit-rent or crop-share to be paid by the fruitful cultivator. It is a common mistake to confuse the Indian land revenue demand with the tax arbitrarily imposed here in England under our landlord and lawer made low. The Indian land revenue demand is not the queer thing called in the West 'rent' the original cause of all the murder and agrarian outrage in Ireland.⁸⁷

Conclusions

The entry of India into the markets of the world was followed by monetization. Agriculture became under more commercialized, the Hindu, dated 27th January 1939, 'In Coimbatore, cattle were not maintained in dry villages, where, for ploughing purpose, the bullock labour was hired. The average area per pair of bullocks in Coimbatore district as compared 27.55 per cent in Bellary and 9.8 per cent in Vizagapatnam. The cost of maintaining a pair of bullocks per year ranges from rupees. 128 in Coimbatore spent the highest amount of human labour both male and female. Agricultural labourers earned 3 annas per day, women 2 annas and child 1 anna. Blacksmith and Carpenters received annas 6 to 14 annas per day. Since 1850 the rise of agriculture production was 25 to 80 per cent. Casual labourers were generally paid more frequently in cash. Lack of education, co-operation, poor village communications and marketing facilities made the ryots an easy prey for profiteers. In 1887, F.A.Nicholson pointed out about Coimbatore, 'The position of labourer is very precautions his ranks are increased not merely by multiplication from within, but by additions from ryot class and from those artisan castes whose trade has been ruined by external competition... omitting artisans and ryots, these classes numbered 774,369 in 1871 and 665,468 in 1881. The decreased 118,901 in more than the total decrease for the district, shows that famine was affected entirely on these classes.

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