

## *Chapter III*

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## **CHAPTER -III**

### **AGRARIAN CRISIS IN THE MADRAS STATE**

Agriculture has never been prosperous India as it has always been plagued by problems. Peasants, who rely on agriculture for the majority of their income, have never had it easy, as their livelihood is influenced by a variety of social and environmental circumstances. Agricultural difficulties include merchants, middlemen, money lenders, and others exploiting peasants, as well as a gamble with the monsoon and inadequate irrigation, crop diseases, expensive agricultural inputs, and no gain or profit agricultural inputs, smallholdings, and low land yield.

The agriculture crisis in India is nothing new. In India, agrarian crises have always existed. These disasters may harm individuals, crops, social classes, and regions. However, as policies and situations at both the national and international levels have evolved, the nature and scope of these crises have shifted.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Historical Background**

Beginning with the arrival of British authority in India, the agrarian crisis intensified. In fact, the imperialist rule began the process of agricultural decline with the adoption of a new land system. By instituting land income systems like the Zamindari and ryotwari, it created the groundwork for capitalist agriculture. Britain's policies had a huge impact on India's agrarian society. It resulted in a lopsided and imbalanced agricultural condition, as well as low yields, waste of labour, land sub-division and fragmentation, absentee landlordism, tenant exploitation, a high rise in rural debt, serfdom, and poverty, among other things. The agrarian economy was in perilous straits. The economic situation of the rural population was not pleasant. During the British Raj in India, the agriculture condition was volatile. The constant lack of happiness, which often manifested as peasant uprisings, insurgencies, struggles, and movements, was a reflection of the severe agrarian crises that afflicted the rural society. The Kol Insurgency of 1832-33, the Santhal Insurgency of 1855-56, the Revolt of 1857, the Champaram Peasant Movement, the Moplah Rebellion, the

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<sup>1</sup> . Desai, A.R.,(Ed), Changing Profile of Rural India and Human Rights of Agrarian Poor". Chandigarh M.A., CRRID Publication 1990.

Bijolia Movement, and other agrarian uprisings were all the outcome of a serious agrarian crisis that was exacerbated by the British administration.<sup>2</sup>

The government's land reforms mostly benefited the landowning class. Many gaps in the laws, as well as the Zamindars' power, and influence, allowed them to get around them. The administration's apathetic attitude contributed considerably to the failure of land reforms<sup>3</sup>. The Government had given the community development programme to develop the large number of the society's weak or marginalised people.<sup>4</sup>

## **Population**

India's population crisis arose from an exceedingly high fertility rate, which is accompanied by a high death rate that is very slowly decreasing." Our population continues to grow year after year. The annual increase of more than 12 million people does not have to be a concern, if the standard of living in India was high enough to absorb the additional population without lowering it. However, India's standard of living is already low and any additional population growth will further lower living standards. True, we are attempting to raise the standard of living of the Indian masses through planned economic development. Our economic growth, on the other hand, is exceedingly slow. Unless we do something to stem the tide of population growth, economic development will be stifled. That is the root of the issue.

Despite its high pace of population expansion, our population growth has not been abnormal. The rate of increase has not been very rapid in the recent past. However, growth has not been consistent over time. The population grew or shrank in response to the presence or absence of wars, famines, and epidemics. There is some validity to the claim that hunger and diseases alone have slowed India's population growth during the last century. The population was practically stationary until 1901. Between 1901 and 1921, the population of

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<sup>2</sup> . Desai, Vasant, : Rural Development, "Issues and Problems", Vol.1 Bombay, MA., Himalaya Publishing house 1991.

<sup>3</sup> . Deshpande.R.Q, Prabhu.N, "Farmer's Distrees Proof Beyond Question". Journal Economic and Political Weekly" 2005, 40:45, p.45

<sup>4</sup> . Jodhka, Surinder.S , Beyond Crisis, "Rethihking Contemporary Punjab Agricultural"Journal : EPW, Vol. XLI No:16, 2006, p.1530-1537.

the United States grew at an uneven rate. Between 1921 and 1961, the country grew at a rate of 10.6, 16, 13.5, and 21.5 percent per decade.<sup>5</sup>

### **Causes for the Rapid Growth of Population**

The nation's relatively high birth rate and falling death rate can be used to explain India's rapid population increase. The important truth about India's birth rate is that it is not one of the world's highest, but it has not shown any symptoms of decline in the recent fifty years.<sup>6</sup> The population trend and economic development are inextricably linked. The population factor has a direct impact on the development factor, which includes things like the resources needed to support the population at a reasonable standard of living, the size and potential employment of the labour force, and the rate of savings.

India's population pressure is also manifested in a different way. Because of the rapid growth of the population, every earning member now has a large number of dependents. According to the 1961 census, 40.2 percent of the population was between the ages of 0 and 14, 47.9% was between the ages of 15 and 49, and 11.9 percent was between the ages of 50 and beyond. This means that the productive, active population, which is small in comparison to the unproductive segments of the population at both ends of the spectrum, bears a disproportionately high burden.<sup>7</sup>

### **Result Of Over Population**

There is no simple explanation for India's population problem to be solved. In most cases, five options are proposed to address the problem of overpopulation in a developing country. They are (1) Scientific agricultural development; (2) large –scale industrialization; (3) internal migration to ease regional pressures; (4) moving to foreign countries; and (5) birth – control.

Through the Five – Year Plans, India is attempting the first two approaches with incomplete success. But they are really long range solutions. Agricultural productivity in India is very low and there are many problems connected with efforts to raise agricultural production<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> . S.N.Agarwala "Indians Population Problem " University of Michigan" -1977 p.101

<sup>6</sup> . Ibid, p.102

<sup>7</sup> . Ibid, p.104

<sup>8</sup> . Ibid, p.105

## Population in the Madras State

The City of Madras has come out as the fourth biggest City in the country, the other Cities being Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi. About 300 years ago when the site at Madras was chosen as a settlement by the British traders, it was nothing more than a tiny village. From an understingused hamlet, the city enlarged with the Fort St. George as the nucleus and it has now grown as an important metropolis. The growth of the a City of Madras concided with the gradual expansion of the British commercial enterprise. From a population of 4 lakhs in 1871, it had grown to such a size as to accommodate about 25 lakhs in 1971. During this century, the highest decennial growth was during 1941-51, with an increase of 65.3%. The decade of 1961-71 was again marked by high increase of 42.8% over its 1961 population.

The City of Madras is located on the east coast at latitude 13° North and longitude 80° 15' East. It is an important port on the east coast. The City reported a mean temperature is 75° F. During the summer months of May and June, the temperature goes upto 95 F. The sea-breeze comes as a welcome relief during the months of March – October, in an otherwise warm and moist climate.

The improvement of the City in the first stage was due to the commercial activities of the English. The opening of a port, the establishment of the Municipal Corporation for civic administration and the development in communications accelerated the industrial growth. The establishment of a Spinning and Weaving Mills (Binny), the extending of the artificial harbour, the establishment of a few light and medium engineering industries and the electrification of a suburban railway tract, encouraged the industrial growth. Besides, a large number of educational institutions and other technical institutions were established. The setting up of foundry units, leather tanning establishments, transport and pharmaceutical manufacturing units, facilitated the industrial development<sup>9</sup>.

During the last 30 years, the growth of the City had been phenomenal. The five- year plans also brought about the starting of some large scale industrial ventures like the Integral Coach Factory, Hindustan Teleprinters, Surgical Tools Factory etc. The City being the administrative headquarters of the State of Tamil Nadu also helped the economic growth of the City<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup>. Ashish Bose, From Population To People, 1998.

<sup>10</sup>. Census of India Report 1971, Map 138

As the City could not accommodate the new industrial units, satellite towns like Avadi, Ambattur, Thiruvattiyur, Pallavaram, St. Thomas Mount etc., came up, which will all be covered in the area of “Greater Madras”. According to the 1971 Census, a new concept of Urban Agglomeration has been evolved and it includes the entire suburban outgrowth, which have close links with the core City. This integrated area has 57 urban units situated in Chingelput District, which encircle the City. The population of Madras Urban Agglomeration was about 31.7 lakhs. The City of Madras reported a density of 19,293 persons per Sq.km. while the density in the Madras Urban Agglomeration was 5,972 persons per Sq.km.<sup>11</sup>

### **Population Problem in India after the second world war**

Before the arrival of the French and British companies in India, the whole country was in the hands of the native kings. The native kings were more interested in war with one another in order to expand their territory, and not in the economic development of the people they ruled. Large portions of the land were in the hands of the zamindars and rich businessmen. There was a large variation in wealth and income. The native kings were never at rest. This was also mainly due to the large variation in wealth and land area.

The French and the British companies, who came to India with the objective of only trade, utilized this opportunity and diverted their attention to annex territories by playing one native king against another. The British, with the ‘Policy of Divide and Rule’ kept the powerful native kings by their side and expanded the territory under their political control and made the French to confine themselves mostly to trade. In course of time, the French were driven out of the political power and the British established their political supremacy in India.<sup>12</sup>

The only interest of the British was to take away wealth from India and even after establishing their political power in India their interest in trade and commerce did not decline. Their political supremacy was very useful for the expansion of trade. As a result of the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain, they needed large quantities of raw material for their industries, at a cheaper price from India and also market for their finished products<sup>13</sup>.

India had a limited industrial basis during the British rule. Millions of individuals in rural areas had suffered as a result of the old agrarian framework. The Indian economy had

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<sup>11</sup> . Ramesh Singh “Indian Economy” e.Book 6<sup>th</sup> Edition

<sup>12</sup> . Ibid, e.book 6<sup>th</sup> Edition

<sup>13</sup> . Umakapila “Indian Economy Since Independence” University Of Delhi, 9th Edition 2008-2009

been undermined by a protracted period of economic stagnation, which coincided with rising population pressures and it was followed by the burden of the Second World War. Poverty and hunger were common. Agriculture and manufacturing both reported low productivity levels. Domestic savings were incredibly limited in comparison to needs.

With the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, large stock of food grains were required for the fighting forces and the Indian food situation began to deteriorate. After the Bengal Famine of 1942-43, export of food grains were prohibited, from the first of September 1943. Imports on private account were banned and purchases from overseas were arranged on Government account. A scheme of rationing and procurement at fixed prices was also introduced. These measures had been continued even after the end of War in 1945. The partition of India in 1947 brought her new problems. Parts of Punjab, which produced surplus wheat, were lost to Pakistan. There was heavy loss in the agriculture sector as large parts of fertile land under rice, cotton and jute also went to Pakistan. The industrial sector was equally affected as most of the jute and cotton mills were in Pakistan. While 4.0 million refugees from West Pakistan and 2.6 million from East Pakistan migrated to India, a large amount of money had to be spent on immediate relief and rehabilitation work. After the partition, 77 per cent of the geographical area and 82 per cent of the population of the un divided India, was received by India. The man – land ratio has further increased. Thus the partition of the country had uprooted millions of people and dislocated economic life. This had further weakened the Indian economy. The storage of essential commodities and also the inflationary pressures of the postwar period and the great loss caused due to partition of the country had created a number of problems and handicaps for the economic development.

### **Economic Thinking**

It was unavoidable that the political side of India's war for independence would overwhelm everything else. Indian nationalism accommodated a strong economic and social reform component from the beginning. The most pressing issue was to combat poverty and all of the ills that it causes, and it was recognised that this could only be accomplished through social and economic progress.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> . Ibid, p.4

## **Genesis of the Agrarian Crisis in India**

The causes of the agrarian crisis were numerous, and they changed as policies, the environment, and the global political and economic situation changed. The modern agrarian crisis in India is the outcome of the long-term effects of various variables.

### **British Rule**

- a) The source of today's agrarian crisis can be traced to the British rule. The British government's anti-agricultural policies had caused far-reaching damage to the agricultural sector. The British made a significant modification to the accessible land system. The new land relations and revenue system put peasants in a difficult situation. It resulted in not just feudalism but also land fragmentation and subdivision. Agriculture's commercialization ushered India into the international market. As a result, Indian farmers began to produce for both the domestic and international markets. As a result, middlemen such as moneylenders and merchants exploited the Indian peasantry consequentl. Indian agriculturists were exposed to all market changes. The shift from food to cash crops, which opened up new routes to global markets, raised the demand for loans. Simultaneously, the rising value of agricultural land, legal provisions for sale, purchase, and mortgage, as well as favourable administrative machinery, made it easier for money lenders to operate in rural areas. Hence, during the British administration, rural indebtedness grew. Ironically, even after more than six decades of independence, India continues to be afflicted by these and other British-imposed difficulties. The country has failed to adequately handle these issues.<sup>15</sup>

### **b) Failure of Government Policies and Programmes**

Despite the fact that the government's defective and unbalanced policies have exacerbated rural poverty, the government has implemented numerous policies and programmes to address rural backwardness in particular since independence.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> . Singh Sukhpal, : Carocit, Indebtedness and framers suicides in Punjab : some missing links, Journal : EPW, Vol, XVI No:30. 2006.

<sup>16</sup> . Sridhar .N,why do farmers commit suicide. The case of AndrapradeshJournal : EPW, Vol, No.16.2006.



### **(c) Impact of Liberalization**

The government's liberalisation, privatisation, and globalisation policies impacted India's agriculture in a variety of ways. The government's expenditure and rural development models were shifted to industrial and urban development.<sup>17</sup> A drop in agricultural subsidies resulted in an increase in agricultural costs. The removal of tariff barriers exposed Indian agricultural products to market forces that determined their prices.<sup>18</sup>

### **(d) Natural Factors**

Variations in natural elements have a significant impact on agriculture in India. Even now, India's agriculture is dependent on the monsoon. Floods and droughts frequently occur, wreaking havoc on crops. Crop diseases have become more widespread as a result of climatic changes and other factors<sup>19</sup>. Insects and pests cause significant loss to peasants. As a result, the agriculture industry is beset by a slew of issues, including unreliable power, insufficient irrigation, a lack of storage facilities, and a shortage of roads and transportation<sup>20</sup>.

There must be a paradigm shift in our development thrust areas. The agricultural industry should be given the importance it deserved during the early five-year programmes. Commercialization of agriculture has compelled peasants to employ fertilisers, modern technology, pesticides and insecticides, irrigation, and other agricultural inputs. The peasants must also be employed to carry the produce<sup>21</sup>. All these issues have contributed to an increase in the cost of agriculture. In India, landholdings are tiny and dispersed across the country. This makes them unprofitable and unviable<sup>22</sup>.

## **Land and Agrarian Relations during The Pre – Independence Period**

Fertilizers, new seed kinds, regulated irrigation, and scientific equipment are all examples of agricultural technical advances. Owner or tenant cultivation, absentee landlordism, burden of land revenue, cultivator indebtedness, and other 'institutional aspects' all have a part in supporting or

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<sup>17</sup> . Ibid, Vol no:16

<sup>18</sup> . Dharma Kumar and Meghand Desai (eds), “ The Cambridge Economic History of India”, Cambridge University Press, Chapter 2. Volume 2, 1757-2003, 1982 p.36

<sup>19</sup> . Ibid, Chapter 3, 2003. P.243

<sup>20</sup> . Ibid. Chapter 4 2003.p.352

<sup>21</sup> . Dutt 1902, “Munru and the Ryotwari settlement in Madras, 1820-27” pp. 153-171.

<sup>22</sup> . Jaya Mehta. “Changing Agrarian structure in the Indian Economy”,

opening agricultural expansion.<sup>23</sup> Understanding the evolution of land structure in India from a historical perspective is crucial because the existing land and agrarian structure is the result of a gradual process of evolution.<sup>24</sup>

### **Agricultural Conditions during Mughal Period**

An important question raised by economic historians is who owned the land in the past: the peasant, some intermediaries, or the king. The majority of modern research agrees that the king was not the owner. Private individuals are referred to were proprietors in numerous Mughal official papers. However, the essence of the issue is whether or not it is substantive. The peasant's right was not just in name but it was also in terms of the quality of the use of the term 'proprietary' in its strict legal sense.<sup>25</sup>

In an era when land was plentiful and peasants were few, authorities' eagerness to acknowledge the peasant's right of occupancy and their anxiety to prevent him from leaving the land were both natural. Because there was no scarcity of land, selling it was also not an issue. In actuality, the rights, that essentially form ownership, were typically distributed among the numerous parties associated with the land.<sup>26</sup>

### **Land Revenue System**

The land income system throughout the Mughal period was primarily based on the crops grown and their designated value. By calculating the 'yield per unit of land at the current harvest' by the 'amount of area under that crop,' the worth of each crops production was calculated. The land revenue was then calculated based on a percentage set aside for this purpose. Because this procedure gave officials some choice, it was changed to a way of announcing a regular schedule for different crops. Because the Mughal administration's main goal was to capture the majority of the peasant's surplus, the techniques of progress were designed to secure not just the largest revenue but also the peasant's unwavering loyalty to the monarch.<sup>27</sup> These were middlemen who came in two varieties: jagirdars and zamindars.

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<sup>23</sup> . Pradip Kumar Bose “Dimensions of Agrarian structure and change issues in theory”, 1989.

<sup>24</sup> . Madhusudhan Ghosh, “Agrarian structure and rural poverty in India”, , Page No. 175, 176

<sup>25</sup> . Ibid. 176, 177

<sup>26</sup> . Ibid. 177,178

<sup>27</sup> . Irtan Habib (2006), Indian Economy : 1858 – 1941, Tulika Books, New Delhi, Chapter 3

## **Jagirdars: Judicial and Police**

Land gifts helped the jagirdars, who were king's officers. The Emperor bestowed various titles upon them. Each rank holder was entitled to a specified amount of remuneration. The payment was supposed to be made by taking earnings from a piece of the king's domain. The land's value was determined by its ability to yield agricultural crops. The jagirdars were responsible for collecting taxes from peasants, depending on the crops grown on the land.<sup>28</sup>

## **Zamindars**

"Zamindar" is the Persian word for landowner (zamin). In addition to the land-revenue assessment, the zamindar had the basic power to levy specialised levies on peasants, such as home tax, forest produce tax, water tax, and so on. They were listed among the rights ceded to the zamindars in the settlement documents.<sup>29</sup> Thus, although having little direct involvement in agricultural output throughout the Mughal Period, two types of revenue collectors, the jagirdars and zamindars, wielded enormous power.<sup>30</sup> Towards the end of the Mughal Empire, this system became extremely oppressive.<sup>31</sup>

The mix of agricultural and manufacturing activity was a prominent aspect of pre-British village life. The majority of the production was for immediate consumption with the surplus being sold.<sup>32</sup> A group of elders known as the panchayat, which was normally a council of five persons, wielded control in the village. Peasants may farm larger or smaller plots, depending on their seed, cattle, and financial means. Larger land holdings were tied to, superior position or prestige, whether as headmen or members of the village's major forces.<sup>33</sup>

## **Advent and Impact of British Rule in Agriculture**

The first vital contact between British rule and Indian rural society was through the English Company. The East India Company attempted to derive the maximum revenue as early as 1765, when the Company acquired Diwani of Bengal. It gave the Company an exclusive control over the land revenue of Bengal, Bihar and parts of Orissa. The Court of Directors asked the Company to increase the investment of the Company to the maximum.

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<sup>28</sup> . Guha, Ranajit " A Rule of property for Bengal : an essay an the idea of permanent settlement ISBN 08223 – 1996

<sup>29</sup> . Ibid. Chapter 3

<sup>30</sup> . Dutt, "Wingate and the Ryotwari settlement in Bombay, 1827 – 35, 1902" pp. 368-383

<sup>31</sup> . Ibid. p.383

<sup>32</sup> Dutt 1902, p.368

<sup>33</sup> ."The Mahalwari System" Encyclopedia, Chapter 4

Interestingly, part of this resource was diverted to the Company's war needs and to the needs of other Presidencies of Bombay and Madras.

### **Land Revenue System**

During the British period, the land revenue system underwent numerous changes. In 1765, the East India Company, purchased the financial rights of Bengal, Bihar, and parts of Orissa. The Company's sole purpose was to raise as much money as possible in order to (a) finance its trade and commerce, and (b) maintain and grow its military supremacy in the country. The zamindaris were auctioned off to the highest bidders in order to increase land revenue. Many zamindars were unable to compete under the new system, resulting in a significant change in the makeup of landed societies.<sup>34</sup>

### **Permanent Settlement**

The zamindars were recognised as "proprietors of the land" and their dues to the state were established by the Permanent Settlement of 1793 in Bengal and Bihar. This choice was made to ensure the Company's long-term prosperity as well as its revenue security. During Britain's Industrial Revolution, robust trade from India, notably agriculture, which offered a variety of products for export, was viewed as crucial.<sup>35</sup>

The zamindars were obligated to pay the government a preset amount as revenue in the permanent settlement, which, in 1793, was equivalent to 90% of the zamindars' revenue.

The value of zamindars' income has diminished further as prices had risen. The State also suffered a loss because its revenues were set in monetary terms.<sup>36</sup> Zamindars, or tax collectors, were converted into hereditary landlords in theory. They were no longer agents of the government in collecting land income, but instead they were declared the sole owners of their Zamindari. The Zamindar had to make over nine-tenths of the income collections because the Company's first revenue demands were so high. The land rights of defaulting Zamindars were auctioned to the highest bidders, and they were eventually replaced by new Zamindars. As a result, many of the old traditional Zamindar families bowed to the pressure, although continuing the old custom of showing concern and relaxing for the peasants in difficult times. Their Zamindaris sold out rapidly, and their estates were sold at auction. As a

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<sup>34</sup> . Cooh. Bernard.S “ The Initial British Impact of India” August 1960 pp. 418-431

<sup>35</sup> . Ibid.,

<sup>36</sup> .“Commercialization of Agriculture : Article shared by “ Pratik Sharma.

result, a new breed of predatory businessmen emerged, ready to grab control of the estates and extract every last Anna from the peasantry in order to pay the quota and line their own wallets in the process.

The Permanent Land Settlement was implemented in Bengal, Bihar and some parts of Orissa in 1793. During the earlier, regime, the traditional Zamindars, who were mere tax collectors, were now made landlords, subject to a permanent fixed payment to the Government. The tax was calculated at the rate of ten-eleventh of the collection made from the cultivators. The remaining one-eleventh was left as the share of the landlords.

Lord Cornwallis stated in his Memorandum that he was establishing a new class in India. The Permanent Settlement's goal was to create a new class of English-style landlords as a social bulwark for their authority. With such a tiny number of Britishers, controlling such a large population, it was obvious that a social foundation for their dominance was required. "If widespread popular unrest or revolt were a concern. "Lord William Bentinck clarified, "I should say that the Permanent Settlement, while a failure in many ways and in most essentials, has the great advantage of creating a vast body of rich landed proprietors, especially interested in the continuation of British dominion and preserving complete control over the mass of the people." The "Zamindari Structure" evolved over time, eventually transformed India's land system. The British Government had taken control of the property, and the Zamindars had been given land, albeit they were not yet owners, but they were progressively given all authorities and rights of ownership. This was very similar to the landlord system that existed in the West. Land was regularly sold by the East India Company since the previous revenue was unpaid by the farmers and they failed to satisfy the new demand of revenue demanded by the State during the early years of Permanent Settlement, when revenue rates were high. A new class of Zamindars arose as a result of the frequent transfers of land. Land became a valuable commodity in this arrangement. The peasant might mortgage or sell his land at any time. It granted moneylenders the right to seize people's property. As a result of this situation, moneylenders began to acquire more and more land.

The causes of the indebtedness of Indian peasantry were closely linked with to the exploitation through the burden of land revenue. One result of the British land policy was the transfer of land from cultivators to non – cultivators. The British economy's predominant interest in land enhanced the revenue rates to a very high level. The rigid method of revenue collection in cash compelled the peasants to borrow money to pay the land tax. This gave an

opportunity to the money lenders to exploit the peasants. The rate of their interest was fixed very high, which ranged from 10 per cent to 200 per cent. In addition to those clear legal methods, they also employed fraudulent practices to force the poor agriculturists to sign false documents taking advantage of the ignorance of the illiterate peasants. The peasants could not detect fraud nor was it economically possible for them to take the help of the court.

The Zamindari system established revenue assessment in cash, irrespective of good or bad harvests. This was fixed for a thirty-five year period, at a uniform rate, which was very convenient to the administration as well as to the tax collector. The state machinery found it suitable for computing their budget. But, it proved disastrous to the peasant class. The peasants income through the land was always fluctuating, because of their total dependence on nature. At times, they had to borrow money from the moneylenders to pay their share of land revenue.

The impact of British rule on the Indian rural society is still a debatable issue. Some recent economic historians have questioned the view that there was a profound transformation of the rural society. They consider that the transformation was more or less a continuation of the pre-British system. The main point of disagreement is on the “social fabric of Indian agriculture”. But, both views agree that “the basic process of production and the level of technique” were left unchanged everywhere.

The nationalist writer’s views may be summarized as follows. The British revenue policy impoverished the peasants because of high rate of rent and the demand for payment in cash. Some recent writers have also focused on some other aspects like establishment of private property in land, creation of parasitic landlords, increasing burden of land and rural indebtedness. It has been argued that the introduction of money economy and commercialization of agriculture caused large-scale alteration of peasants holding. The self-sufficient village community was destroyed. The peasants became more and more wage labourers and share-croppers. According to an opposite view, the traditional Indian rural society was far from egalitarian. The land control, at the village level, was marginally affected by the British revenue laws. In their opinion, the pre-British agrarian society was not necessarily self-sufficient as it included a sizeable group of agricultural labourers.

The Permanent Settlement declared the Zamindar to be the proprietor of the soil. As the amounts of the annual payments of landlords were fixed once and for all, they were left free to pocket train the balance between their payments to governments and collections from

their tenants. As a consequence, they enjoyed the whole benefit of increased cultivation. Thus, the government's share in soil became relatively smaller and smaller. While the Zamindar's share became larger and larger. Later the wisdom of this decision was questioned. The Governor Cornwallis was concerned with the declining trend in the agriculture of Bengal. He identified Permanent Settlement to be the best revitalization of agriculture and considered the Permanent Settlement to ensure the best security of revenue and also to promote Company's fiscal growth.

The importance of healthy commerce could not be overstated. Cornwallis stated that Bengal's value was determined by its potential to provide a big annual investment for Europe. The Permanent Settlement was expected to stimulate agriculture. It would bring about confidence in property, which would lead to investment in agriculture. Ultimately, landed property would acquire a value hitherto unknown in India. Those, who employed usury or monopolizing salt and other commodities would now really invest capital in purchasing and improving land. Against this background, interpretation of the Company's motive of creating a social class for supporting its rule has been questioned in some recent writings. The Company's objective was to reduce the country to an agricultural land and fill it up with manufacturing imports from England and abroad. There was an occasional increase in the government share, but over the years it declined. The land revenue demand which was in 1793 fixed at 90 per cent of rental, declined by the end of the Nineteenth Century to 28 per cent. Hence the Bengal model was rejected by Orissa and Assam States. Both in Orissa and Assam, the revenue demand was increased from time to time.

Northern India's revenue system was a mix of the zamindari and mahalwari systems. In the zamindari system, the 'primary cultivator' was the basic unit for income analysis, whereas in the mahalwari system, the 'village' was the basic unit for revenue evaluation. Initially, the Northern region followed the Bengal model of permanent settlement.<sup>37</sup>

The cultivators were also given tenancy rights. In addition, a land revenue system was developed, with a theoretical limit of one-half of the rental of estates. In practice, however, it was rarely followed at the time of assessment or collection.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> . Ibid. Article p. 2

<sup>38</sup> . Ibid. Article p. 7

## Ryotwari System

The 'ryotwari system' was used to collect income in the western province. The settlement was usually for a fixed amount of time, such as 30 years. The 'ryoti cultivator' or ryot was recognised as the owner under the ryotwari settlement, and the land revenue was created in perpetuity based on the predicted value of the gross produce. The ryotwari system was developed in the Madras Presidency. The State took jurisdiction over all uncultivated lands and had the authority to release them for cultivation at freshly assessed rates. Despite the fact that the system favoured peasant ownership, it allowed wealthy landowners, particularly in Kerala's Malabar region, to participate<sup>39</sup>It is true that the British conquest and adoption of their tax system in India resulted in a change in Mughal India's age-old land structure. The emergence of private land ownership was the major shift. The income system established by the Britishers supplanted the local community's traditional rights to the land. They established two types of land ownership. The first was Permanent Settlement landlordism, and the second was individual peasant proprietorship. The Raiyarwari System was the first to offer individual peasant proprietorship.

After the extension of British rule in South India, a new system of land settlement was introduced. The mistakes of the Permanent Settlement were rectified. The land settlements were made "temporary" and hence a periodical revision was possible, for raising the government's demand of revenue.

This system was first introduced in Madras. According to this system, the Government should make a direct settlement with the cultivators. The settlement should not be permanent but temporary or subject to periodic reassessment. The British Government decided to introduce this system to secure the entire spoils. It was an attempt to remove intermediaries, which had appropriated major share in the permanent settlement. This was called the Raiyatwari System. Thomas Munroe was the person behind this system. He had advocated this system in opposition to Zamindari system as early as 1807. It was introduced by Munroe, as the Governor of Madras in 1820. Subsequently it was extended to other provinces which covered half of the British India.

The Raiyatwari System was promoted as a more direct approach to Indian institutions, but it was also foreign to the Indian system. It was assessed on the basis of acreage rather than the proportion of actual yield. After their first experiment in land settlement, the

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<sup>39</sup> . S.N.Pandey, "Economic History of Modern India" (1757 to 1947), pp.17-24



Britishers tried a new form of revenue settlement in Madras, Bombay and Berar regions. The “Permanent Settlement” in Bengal was an experiment in transplanting the enterprises and dynamism of the English landlords on to Indian soil. But this experiment failed as it did not eradicate the “parasitic landlordism”. At the same time, it could not change the mode of production in India, which was feudal.

Some famous historians have pointed out that property owners' mistreatment of peasants was not new. Mughal India followed this pattern of political action. However, such claims do not free the British of the consequences of their land policies. Under the British, there were some fundamental questions about the nature of land rights and ownership. The British did not create "private property" in land, according to Daniel Thorner, because property owners were never given absolute ownership rights, which was held by Empire. Such questions are purely intellectual in nature. It is undeniable that British policy hastened the degeneration of the peasantry, ultimately culminating in the Zamindars becoming despots.

After the failure of the first experiment and perhaps also under the impact of Nineteenth Century utilitarianism, the Britishers introduced the Raiyatwari Settlement at the second stage of land policy. Under this system, the occupant of land, Raiyat was recognized as its proprietor whose rights, being hereditary and transferable by sale, gift or mortgage, practically implied its ownership. The Raiyat was regarded as a state tenant who had to pay directly to the state treasury. As long as he paid his revenue, the peasants could not be dismissed.

The revenue assessment, under the Ryotwari Settlement, was valid, for a thirty-year period and it was revisable under the Raiyatwari System. The periodical settlements left enough scope for adjusting revenue to changing needs and conditions. Thus, the wisdom of the Bombay settlements was soon followed by the Madras administration. At every subsequent resettlement or revision, assessment invariably went up by 25-60 per cent.

The Ryots' surpluses and earnings were steadily encroached upon by revenue needs. Because of the growing population, there was a demand for land. However, because there was no other options for work, landowners under Ryotwari, began to sublet their land. As a result, a considerable number of Ryots became rent farmers, and a chain of sub-tenants and share-croppers grew up around them. Other forms of renters, as well as various types of

attached labour, evolved in the Roytwari districts, and this development ultimately debunked the concept of "peasant proprietorship."

According to the advocates of Roytwari System, it was an attempt by the British Government to establish an egalitarian peasant society in the South, West and North of the country. The framers of this system believed that orderly government and the magic of private property would encourage thrifty and enterprising peasants to reinvest their capital in land. It would expand horizons of prosperity. It also expected to herald a regime of economic growth. This economic strategy was expected to provide a far more stable political base for the British Raj than the Permanent Settlement. Its propounders, thus, advocated that Royatwari System would ensure for the British Government, the loyalty of thousands of small peasant proprietors. The growing prosperity would tie the peasants in firm bonds of allegiance to the British Government.

But, the reality of the Ryotwari System was quite different from the declared expectations. It is true that a small proportion of the peasantry, i.e. 10 per cent of the cultivators were able to reap the benefit from the Ryotwari System. The growing prosperity of this class of peasants was only one of the consequences of the system. A considerable proportion of the remaining 90 per cent of the peasants were unable to cope up with the market- oriented rural economy generated by the British Raj. As a result, a vast mass of peasants became increasingly impoverished. The majority of cultivators under Ryotwari System sank into the status of tenant cultivators or landless labourers. It made rich peasants richer and poor peasants poorer<sup>40</sup>.

### **Mahalwari System**

A temporary settlement comprising most of the United Provinces, the Central Provinces, sections of Bengal, and Punjab was devised between the Permanent Settlement and the Ryotwari Settlement. The "Gramawari" system, also known as the joint village or village lease system, was used. The government used to collect a fixed amount from each hamlet as "joint rent" under this arrangement. There was no function of intermediate agents between the Government and the village. The Government usually came to an agreement or made a "settlement" with each village, by fixing its revenue demand for a period of three to

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<sup>40</sup> . Ibid, p.25-27

ten years. This system came under a delegated administrator. If one were to apply modern jargon the former would have been the “Public Sector” and the latter the “Private Sector”.

The Mahalwari or Malguzari Strategy was another name for this land settlement system. It established the village an assessment unit. Many villages in the region, where the " Mahalwari" tenure was introduced, were populated by members of the a same caste, kindred, lineage, or tribe. As a result, their property was cultivated in a cooperative manner. This was interpreted to mean something along the lines of common ownership or communal management. In most cases, a co-sharer, with a good social standing, was chosen to take on the obligation of paying the village's assessment. Even in the Mahalwari System, the landlord spirit was prominent, according to Baden Powell's book, ‘Land Revenue in British India. Villages in Mahalwari areas were governed by either a single individual landowner or a group of descendants with co-sharer rights. The captured ethnic groups tribes, and castes were forced to work on the co-sharing of landlords' property.<sup>41</sup>

### **Impact of the Great Depression of 1930s**

During the Great Depression, the advantages of commercialization in agriculture began to wane. The terms of trade shifted against agriculture as export prices decreased faster than import prices. To meet the needs for rent and land revenue, more privately owned gold was exported, much of it as distress selling. The failure of local merchants and bankers, whose businesses were harmed by the liquidity crisis, also had experienced impact. As a result, the real cost of capital increased, forcing even the wealthiest farmers to reduce their investments in capital-intensive technology and practices. As the cost of labour increased, landowners were obliged to reduce their reliance on hired labour. Employment options outside of agriculture were likewise limited due to comparable circumstances elsewhere. The authority of wealthy landlords grew even stronger as a result of the slump. As a result, the wealthy benefited from the effects of the slump, while the poor peasants suffered greatly.<sup>42</sup>

### **Indebtedness and Land Transfers**

Under the British administration, rural indebtedness was also rampant. Because of the larger investment required, commercialization raised the demand for loans. Other factors, that

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<sup>41</sup> . Ibid, p.28

<sup>42</sup> . John.AGarraty“ The Great Depression” 1986.

contributed to higher indebtedness differed according to socioeconomic status. These included:

1. Purchasing food prior to harvest
2. Rent and revenue were paid in cash.
3. Meeting the needs of cash crops in terms of marketing;
4. Financing the increased input costs of commercial crops such as sugarcane, cotton, and tobacco; and so on.

Crop failures occurred in the middle of these developments, leaving growers and even zamindars unable to clear their loans. As a result, distress land sales occurred. The number of such sales had risen over time. As a result of their debt, many peasants were compelled to become poor agricultural labourers.

### **Agrarian Structure and Tenancy**

Land ownership and tenurial structure underwent considerable changes throughout the British Period. Different parts of the country had quite different farming systems. The majority of land in Eastern India was owned by landlords. There was significant peasant proprietorship in the Ryotwari districts of Madras and Bombay Presidencies. Conditions in other parts of the country varied between these two extremes.<sup>43</sup>

Landlords and moneylenders bought peasant-owned estates as prices of inputs soared. The peasants who lost land as a result, were not always evicted from off their land. On a crop-sharing system, the dispossessed peasants cultivated their own plots as tenants.<sup>44</sup> The area under cultivation in South India grew faster than the population in the later half of the Nineteenth Century. Large irrigation projects on the Godavari and Krishna rivers were completed. Cotton, groundnuts, and oilseeds had grown in popularity.<sup>45</sup>

Land revenue became less of a burden. The cultivator was able to make a purchase of land. In certain areas, such as the Krishna-Godavari delta, progress was quick. This resulted

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<sup>43</sup> . Ibid., 1986

<sup>44</sup> . Tirthankar Roy "The Economic History of India (1857-1947) Oxford Press, New Delhi Chapter 4, 2006.

<sup>45</sup> . G.P.Singh, "Revenue Administration in India" Mettal publication, 1993

in a massive surge in land prices. The wealthy peasants broadened their horizons by investing in rice mills, mica, and other enterprises. They ventured into banking after expanding their money lending business.<sup>46</sup> During the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, the rich peasantry in Western India grew in number, resulting in a growing stratification of the peasantry class.<sup>47</sup>

Sugarcane, tobacco, peanuts, and cotton were among the most popular cash crops. A small group of cultivators who had excess product for market sale made a lot of money and put it back into agriculture. Irrigation, cart purchases, and looking for better markets for their commodities outside of their surrounding area, were just a few of the investments made. Traditional moneylenders were regularly displaced as credit providers in the village by affluent farmers, who had taken advantage of new market opportunities. They also purchased land from small farmers who were often in debt.<sup>48</sup>

The zamindars in Eastern India abused their power to the point where the Government had no choice but to intervene to avert a revolt. Bengal passed two important tenancy laws after the Permanent Settlement: the Rent Act of 1859 and the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885. The Tenancy Act provided ryots, who had been in possession of any land for a period of twelve years were conferred occupancy rights.<sup>49</sup>

The gap in rents paid by occupancy and share-cropping tenants, which resulted in a considerable profit for the former, was the driving force behind this. Because there was no legal protection against non-occupancy tenants raising their rent, this was their protection. The situation was so bad that the Zamindari Abolition Committee found in 1948 that the bulk of land in the North-Western Provinces was owned by a small group of large landowners who made up only 1.3 percent of the population.<sup>50</sup>

### **Agricultural Labourers**

Contrary to common opinion, in pre-British India's traditional village economy, there was a substantially smaller segment of people working solely as agricultural workers on the

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<sup>46</sup> . Ibid, Chapter 4

<sup>47</sup> . Buckley, "The Priya tim works of India" New York 1905

<sup>48</sup> G.KorishraKutty, ' peasantry in India" 18, (Abhinav Publications, New Delhi 1986)

<sup>49</sup> . Ibid., 1986

<sup>50</sup> . Opcit., 1993

lands of others. The proportion of 'wage labourers' in agriculture had risen dramatically, according to census data.<sup>51</sup>

The use of coercion and force in their job grew less common, as did many forms of social injustice. The number of people migrating into and out of agriculture, mines, urban services, public works, and other industries had increased. As a result, the status of agricultural labourers had greatly improved.<sup>52</sup>

### **Agricultural Growth**

There were no incentives to invest in land because of the network of connections between the different groups of people, who relied on it for their livelihood. A large portion of agricultural output was set aside for parasitic land holders, who received income without having to work in the fields.<sup>53</sup>

As a result, agricultural growth had been minimal to near-stagnant. From 1891 to 1947, agricultural output grew at a pace of 0.37 percent per year, far less than the population growth rate of 0.67 percent per year. For example, the growth in food grain output was only 0.11 percent. After 1921, population growth accelerated to over 1% per year, outpacing food grain output. As a result, per capita output fell precipitously. On the other hand, commercial agricultural yield was achieved considerably over the time, nearly doubling. In general, output growth was larger in the ryotwari and mahalwari areas. In Greater Bengal, the most retrogressive land tenure structure was discovered. There were layers of parasitic intermediaries on the rental incomes.<sup>54</sup>

In some areas, two variables were identified as the reason for poor agricultural growth. The terms of land tenure and resource endowments were used interchangeably. Tenants who did not farm land directly in the Zamindari districts benefited more from the benefits of commercialization. The ryotwari villages benefited a segment of the peasantry more than others. As a result of the undesirable combination of superior rights and a non-agricultural background, less investment was made and land efficiency growth slowed.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> . "Agricultural Labour Enquiry Vol.I "All India Government of India, 1955-1956.

<sup>52</sup> . Ibid., Volume.1

<sup>53</sup> . Handbook of statistics an Indian Economy 2011.

<sup>54</sup> . T. Mahendran "Agriculture Development in India", Abhiject Publications, 2008

<sup>55</sup> . Ibid.,2008

## **Results of Land Revenue Systems**

It was discovered that agricultural growth was primarily meant to suit the imperial government's goals, resulting in significant social divisions in the Indian polity.<sup>56</sup>

The deliberate elimination of enterprises, that coexisted in the pre-British period thereby transforming the traditional village economy into a self-supporting holistic economic unit, was a key indicator of the British's self-serving motive.<sup>57</sup>

The expansion of the non-farm segment, such as railways and marketing networks, to help the agricultural sector, grew commercially, and supportive irrigation asset in some provinces, among other things, were positive steps taken to promote sustainable agriculture in the pre-independence years. Despite the significant profits created by agriculture, poor peasants were forced to suffer to the point of poverty, owing primarily to British support given to wealthy landlords. As an institutional alternative, the ryotwari system had surpassed the zamindari system, and the mahalwari system had also worked admirably. Bengal reported has a less progressive reputation as a region or province, which some writers characterised as retrogressive.<sup>58</sup>

## **Marketing in Agriculture Commodity**

Agriculture is one of the most important and vital sectors in India. Agriculture and related sector growth exercised direct impact on people's well-being, rural prosperity, and employment, and it served as a vital resource foundation for a wide range of agro-based firms and agro-services. While total production and productivity continue to rise, it is vital to give enhanced marketing facilities and infrastructure to the farming community in order for them to achieve fair prices for their products. Value addition in agriculture has immense potential to improve the living standards of the vast majority of people. The government's main agricultural marketing goal, prior to independence was to keep consumer food costs low and agro-raw material prices low for industry. Following independence, however, it became clear that farmers' interests must be protected, and agricultural product supply must be increased through incentive pricing. Recognizing flaws in the agricultural marketing system, such as losses to farmers due to excessively low prices, higher marketing costs, and significant

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<sup>56</sup> . Tomlinson, B.R, *The Economy of Modern India 1860 – 1970*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi Chapter 2, 1993.

<sup>57</sup> . *Op.Cit.*, 1955-1956

<sup>58</sup> . *Ibid*, Chapter 2

physical losses of produce, the government enacted a number of mandatory regulations to establish a mechanism to monitor market conduct on a regular basis<sup>59</sup>.

The establishment of well-designed market yards was considered as a requirement for controlling primary wholesale market behavior. But the regulation and extension of primary agricultural produce markets was seen as an institutional innovation. Raw cotton was the first farm produce to get the attention of the British Government during the British Period when they wanted to make pure cotton available to Manchester's textile mills at low prices. The Hyderabad Residency Order established the country's first regulated market in 1886, and the Berar Cotton and Grain Market Act in 1887 empowered British residents to declare any location in the assigned district as a market for the sale and purchase of agricultural produce, as well as establish a committee to oversee the regulated markets. As a result of this Act, similar legislation was implemented in other parts of the country.

The recommendation of the Royal Commission on Agriculture marked a watershed in the country's agriculture marketing industry. For controlling trade practises and establishing market yards in rural regions to monitoring practises and creating regulated markets, were two of the strategies used to address the problem in 1928<sup>60</sup>. The Indian Government developed a Model Bill in 1938 and sent it to all states, but little progress was achieved until India's independence in 1947. In the 1960s and 1970s, most states established and implemented Agricultural Produce Markets Regulation Acts. All major wholesale marketplaces were covered by these Acts. Market yards and sub-yards were planned with aesthetics in mind, and each market area established an Agricultural Produce Market Committee to draft and enforce legislation. As a result of controlled marketplaces, agricultural marketing became more organised.

The country established a network of regulated markets to assist the regulation and sale of agricultural commodities. The primary goal of establishing a network of physical marketplaces was to ensure that farmers could make a reasonable profit by creating an environment in which supply and demand dynamics could be fairly played out, market practices could be regulated, and transactions could be transparent. The number of regulated

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<sup>59</sup> . Prasad, Chandra.S “Agricultural and Rural Development in India since 1947. New Delhi, India : New Century Publications.

<sup>60</sup> . A.Vidhyanathan, “Agriculture Growth in India” OUP Indian publication, 2010



marketplaces in the country expanded as a result of the endeavour to manage expanding agricultural production. There were just 286 regulated marketplaces in the country at the end of 1950, but had increased to 6746. In addition, there are 20,580 Rural Periodical Markets in the country<sup>61</sup>. The State's APMC Act divides the state into a number of notified Market Committee Areas, with the APMCs responsible for regulating agricultural marketing practices in particular areas. As a result, both nationally and at the state level, the agricultural produce market has become increasingly fragmented, facilitating both proper market access for farmers and the construction of necessary infrastructure to handle the output<sup>62</sup>.

A compounding impact was created by the state's various trading licence requirements, as well as the implementation of market fees at different sites. This demonstrates that the current system capable of efficiently handling ever-increasing marketable surpluses while simultaneously providing farmers with convenient market access.<sup>63</sup>

- ❖ The benefits that farmers can get from regulated markets are determined by the facilities that are available. According to studies, only two-thirds of regulated markets have covered and open auction platforms and only one-fourth of markets have common drying yards.
- ❖ In different sections of the country, the density of controlled markets varies greatly.
- ❖ The Market Committee is allowed to charge purchasers or traders market fees ranging from 0.30 percent to 2.0 percent on the sale of notified agricultural produce. Further, commission fees to commission agents must be paid, which range from 0.5 percent to 4.5 percent for food grains and 3.0 percent to 7.0 percent for fruits and vegetables. In a regulated market, farmers must also pay a variety of development cess, entry tax, purchase tax, weighment charges, and hamal taxes, among other things, resulting in higher transaction costs and lower price realisation.
- ❖ Traders, commission agents, and other authorities form organizations, that frequently prohibit new members from joining, choking the spirit of competition. Private marketplaces, direct marketing, and contract farming are all prohibited in many areas, stifling competition and denying farmers access to alternative marketing channels.

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<sup>61</sup> . Ibid,

<sup>62</sup> . History of Agriculture, Enclycopeadia 2008.

<sup>63</sup> . Ramesh Chand, "Agriculture Marketing" E-Book.

- ❖ Government-controlled markets' monopoly, infrastructural shortcomings, and a high incidence of market charge all have a cascading effect on the current marketing system, making it difficult for the private sector to invest in the country's marketing infrastructure.
- ❖ Farmers in India are poor and hence they try to sell their products as quickly as possible once they are harvested, even if prices are low at the time. Credit protects the farmer against such "forced sales," allowing him to wait for better times and prices. The formal credit network in rural areas has to be strengthened.
- ❖ Farmers are frequently unable to obtain exact market pricing information in multiple markets. As a result, they accept the traders' offer at any price. The news media keeps farmers informed about price changes as well. Price quotations can be erroneous at times and have a substantial time lag. In most cases, the merchant offers a lower price than the government news media reports.
- ❖ Long supply chains have disproportionately large marketing costs and margins. To provide farmers with remunerative prices, agricultural marketing system changes are required to reduce intermediation by providing alternative marketing channels such as direct marketing, contract farming, and so on.<sup>64</sup>

The monopoly of Government controlled markets, infrastructure gaps and high incidence of market charge have cascading effect on present marketing system and limit private sector to invest in development of required marketing infrastructure in the country.<sup>65</sup>

### **Co-operative Stores**

A number of mills developed grain storage on a cooperative and non-cooperative basis. In 1942, seventeen businesses in Madras opened their doors Mettur Industry, Mettur Chemical Industrial Corporation, the Engineering Workshop, Madras and Southern Maratha Railway Company Limited at Arkonam, T.V. Sundaram Iyengar and Sons Limited and Sundaram Transport Limited in Madurai, Marine Workshop in Mandapam, Loyal Mills and Lakshmi Mills in Koilpatti, Mettur Industry, Mettur Chemical Industrial Corporation, the Engineering Workshop, Madras and Southern Maratha Railway Company Limited. T.V. Employee canteens were opened by fifteen Madras enterprises in the same year. P. Orr and

<sup>64</sup>. J. Mohanraj "Agriculture Marketing strategies in India", ISBN 9789380031187, Neha Publishers

<sup>65</sup>. G. J.Sudhar (Primary Weaves Co-operation in the Madras Presidency", (1935 – 1953) published by "Indian History Congress, 1990

Sons, Ordnance Clothing Factory, Gemini studio, Government Press, Coimbatore Pioneer Mills, U.K. Sankunnis Saw Mills at Kallai, South Madras Electric Supply Corporation limited at Trichirappallai, East India Distilleries and Sugar Factory at Nellikuppam, the Presidency Manure Works at Ranipet, Madura Mills 93 Janardhana Mills and Singanallur, Mettur also opened their doors.<sup>66</sup>

### **Shortage of Food Stuffs**

The outbreak of World War II in 1939 had little impact on Madras' food imports, and for the next two years of the war, there was no major food shortage. This situation did not change substantially when the War with Japan began in December 1941. In early 1942, the Japanese occupied the rice fields of Burma and Siam, and all imports from these countries ceased. The problem became considerably worse as Madras' neighbouring provinces, including Ceylon, Travancore, Cochin, and Bombay, reclaimed Madras' rice supply. As a result, Madras, which was previously a rice-importing province, became a rice-exporting region. Businessmen's drive to stockpile commodities in order to make rapid money triggered the food crisis. Prices soared as a result of the scarcity of food<sup>67</sup>.

The Government made moves to tighten its grip on food grain exports and price inflation in response to the food crisis. For the first time in Madras, it employed rationing to ensure that critical commodities were allocated properly. The Government was the first to take action, banning food exports to other countries. On June 13, 1942, it issued a notification prohibiting the export of rice outside the Province, except with official authorisation. The Government of India passed the Food Grains Control Order, to keep prices from rising. Wholesale merchants of paddy, rice, and wheat were required by law to get a licence, and those who were engaged in black marketing or stockpiling, had their licences revoked. Textiles, iron, steel, and other consumer goods were gradually added to black market trading. The Madras Collector was appointed Chairman, the Madras Tahsildar was appointed Secretary, and the Madras Mayor, Statistical Officer, and two wholesale merchant representatives were appointed to the Madras City Pries Advisory Committee. This Committee assessed the fair price to be charged in the markets based on local conditions and produced price lists for public reference.

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<sup>66</sup> . G.K. Madan "Co-operative Movement in India" Mittal Publications, 2007

<sup>67</sup> . Report on the Administration of factories Act for 1942, in G.O.No.1527, P.E.D, 30<sup>th</sup> July 1942, p.20

## **Rationing**

Food control involved the implementation of rationing in addition to the fixing of prices. In South India, the city of Madras was the first to institute rationing. To prevent fraud, the government issued ration cards and set limits. Ration cards were separated into two types: daily cards, which could be used to draw rations on a daily basis for the convenience of the poor, and weekly cards, which could be used to draw rations once or twice a week for the convenience of the rich. To prevent fraud, the Government made it mandatory for holders of ration cards to register, and it rewarded anyone who reported violations of the Madras Rationing Order. In 1942, the rationing system was adopted. This practice was terminated in 1943. In September 1943, the government adopted statutory rationing to make rationing more effective, making any breach of the rationing restrictions a criminal offence.

At the same time, it provided a daily ration of one round of rice per head to adults over the age of twelve, and half a pound of rice to children aged two to twelve. It began rationing wheat in all districts, including Madras City, in 1944. To cut down on rice consumption, the government encouraged the use of wheat, maize, and barley while simultaneously lowering the cost of these imported goods. It issued a legal directive barring rice from being served as a main course in Madras hotels, restaurants, and dining establishments. The Government engaged the services of organisations like the Triplicane Urban Co-operative Society (T.U.C.S.) and the Madras Co-operative Milk Supply Ltd to ensure that people had access to necessary supplies including milk.<sup>68</sup>

Wood, kerosene, and gasoline were in high demand during the conflict. To accommodate the rising demand for wood, people began cutting down casuarina trees and jungle wood plantations, which they then sold for exorbitant rates. The supply of firewood to Madras City was jeopardised by widespread exploitation, especially in 1943. Due to the scarcity of availability, poor individuals were unable to purchase fuel for their homes. More firewood was brought in from the neighbouring Districts of Chingleput, South Arcot, and Nellore by the government. When the firewood shortage became severe, the Government enacted statutory firewood rationing, in which families were allocated firewood based on their income and the amount of rice they were provided<sup>69</sup>.

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<sup>68</sup>. Rajan, "Genesis of the present Food crisis" Madras information, 11<sup>th</sup> Oct, 1947, p.15

<sup>69</sup>. SundaraRajan, V.C., "Problem of Food Supply" Madras war Review – 21 May, 1943, p.58

The Madras Kerosene Control Order established a new kerosene delivery system in the City. As a result, regardless of the size of the family, household heads were handed tickets and each received half a bottle of kerosene. It also made selling kerosene, in bulk, illegal, discouraging traders from loarding. Rationing of gasoline and electricity was also necessary due to the wartime conditions. The Government imposed limits on non-essential bus services. Due to the use of diesel oil and coal to generate electricity, rationing was enforced in Madras City. Every unit consumed in excess of the permissible amount was subject to a penalty under the rationing edict. Meanwhile, the administration refused to limit industrial energy usage because doing so would result in labour shortages and lower production for wartime needs.<sup>70</sup>

After Japan entered the War in 1941, the Government strengthened its military operations. The Governor, James Hope, established the National War Front to provide every possible assistance to the soldiers while also generating funds for the Allies. The Madras Presidency enlisted over half a million volunteers. The National War Front was a group of citizens, from all walks of life, who came together to assist the soldiers in whatever manner they could. It sent the military authorities a monthly Madras newsletter, which was published in their publication, Madras Calling. The soldiers from Madras stationed outside the Presidency were the target audience for this Journal.

It opened a War Supplies Shop in the Madras complex of the Indian Red Cross Society. The depot sent wool and other supplies to teams around the Presidency, then received, sorted, and packaged the finished goods for shipment to the various fronts. Similarly, the United War Charities Committee created mufflers, pullovers, and helmets for the troops. There was also a cafeteria and a Red Cross message and cable system for anyone who wanted to contact their loved ones in enemy-controlled nations. It also offered troops within reach of Madras with a free circulating library of books and gramophone records. Madras, in fact, has developed into a significant warehouse and distribution centre<sup>71</sup>.

### **Downfall of Trade**

The volume of trade immediately declined as a result of the conflict. Because the exporting countries were concerned about the war effort, the number of imports was similarly

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<sup>70</sup> . P.A.Gopala Krishnan, India's Food Problem.

<sup>71</sup> . "Victory", Publishing Book, Madras Presidency, Aug. 1943, p.22

kept to a bare minimum. As a result of the loss of continental markets and a significant lack of shipping capacity, exports decreased. This tendency was compounded by the loss of Burma and Far Eastern markets, as well as the enforcement of export restrictions in India. Madras felt the effects of the War. In 1939, the value of trade passing through Madras Port was 32.5 crores. In 1940, imports were down by 34.7 percent and exports were down by 22.5 percent due to the War. Imports of grains chemicals, dyeing, and tanning compounds declined, while rice, fruits, and vegetables exports rose somewhat. The Madras Port's overall volume of cargo handled had decreased by nearly half. However, as a result of the enormous flood of evacuees from Ceylon, Singapore, and the Federated Malay States, as a result of Japanese occupation, passenger traffic grew considerably in 1942<sup>72</sup>.

### **Starting of New Industries**

The administration became increasingly cognizant of the need for India's industrial progress throughout the conflict. When Japan entered the War in 1942, India became a supply hub for the Middle East and Far East, acquiring practically all industrial resources from western countries. In the Madras Province, the War fostered the growth of new industries. Further, a number of pre-war industrial businesses were able to re-establish their financial standing. Madras' textile businesses made huge profits throughout the war years. Textile demand soared, much like it did during the First World War. Because of the huge demand and limited supply, prices increased. As a result, in 1943, the Government passed legislation to halt the tendency. To support the industrialization process, the Government told entrepreneurs that if they created new businesses to meet wartime needs, they would be incentivised after the War. The war effort included the Joint War Charities depot, the Ordnance Factory in Avadi, Simpson & Co.'s Motor Works, the Baluchi Battalion at St. Thomas Mount, the Engineering College in Guindy, and the Ordnance Factory in Avadi. The War Hazards (Goods) Insurance Ordinance, passed by the Government in 1941, required that goods awaiting transshipment at the Port of Madras be insured against war hazards for a price equivalent to or more than their value. To meet government demands, all businesses were put under severe strain as a result of the war. Authorities were given freedom to make changes to the work system on short notice, without having to wait for formal approval. The Government then advised all city enterprises to provide food for their staff. In response to this request. The Hindu office supplied free meals to their employees while others received meals

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<sup>72</sup>. G.A.Natasan Publisher, "Madras war Review", Monthly Publications 11<sup>th</sup> Dec, 1942,p.9

at a reduced cost of Rs.1 to Rs.8 per person per month. The Government aided civic-minded people who were prepared to run messes for the poor in order to feed those who could not afford to pay for the food. To satisfy the war's mounting needs, the Government urged employees to work longer hours<sup>73</sup>.

The National War Front was renamed the Field Publicity Organisation to reflect the government's postwar ambitions. After the conflict, the Madras War Review continued under the name of Madras Review. The Governor's War Fund became the Governor's Amentics and Relief Fund with the objective of assisting troops and liberated prisoners of war. The A.R.P. organisations were no longer active<sup>74</sup>.

All the street shelters, as well as all of the illumination restrictions, were removed. It dubbed the women's A.R.P. corps the 'Indian Women's Civil Corps, to carry out social welfare initiatives among women<sup>75</sup>.

Following the relaxation of civil defence measures, the Government is worked to reintegrate those who were freed, into the workforce. Many personnel were hired in the city's defence services and major enterprises as a result of this effort.

Because the countries that had previously contributed rice to India were decimated by the fight and unable to provide grains to Madras, the food crisis lingered after the War<sup>76</sup>.As a result, the public expected rationing to continue for at least five years after the War ended. To deal with the crisis, the Madras government increased rationing from one pound per adult per day to twelve ounces per adult, per day, as well as declaring additional food grains as rationed commodities, including wheat, flour, millets, and barley. It made a concerted effort to prevent black marketing, hoarding, and profiteering practices. To conserve existing fresh milk supplies and alleviate widespread milk scarcity, the Madras Milk Control Order was passed. It outlawed the use of milk in commercial products like ice cream and cream cakes. Rationing of rice no longer included rationing of firewood<sup>77</sup>. The Madras Firewood Restricted Acquisition Order 1945 was passed to prevent firewood hoarding. The triumph of the Labour Party in the general elections in England in 1945 gave the national movement's

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<sup>73</sup>. Hendry Knight, Food and Administration India, University Press, 1954.

<sup>74</sup>. Victory, Publishing Book, May 1942, p.13

<sup>75</sup>. Madras in 1945, p.74 (Annual Report)

<sup>76</sup>. Ibid., p.75

<sup>77</sup>. Ibid., p.76

leaders a ray of hope. The transfer of power to the Indian people was said to be the main goal of the Labour Party. Following that, the Indian Government released all political prisoners jailed in connection with the Quit India Movement and repealed the ban on the Congress. 'Liberty Week' was held from August 6 to 16. Several gatherings were held around Madras City, and a two-minute silence was observed in honour of the martyrs of the August 1942 riots. In 1945, the Madras Congress Committee experienced a change. C. Rajagopalachari was replaced as President by Kamaraj. He founded the National Young Federation in Madras, in September 1945 to coordinate the activities of all young organisations in order to achieve the constructive goals of the congress<sup>78</sup>.

The Congress and the Communist Party were fighting for control. Aside from the economic consequences of WWII, the political causes of the struggle had an impact on the leadership of the organisation.<sup>79</sup> Changes in the sequence of events favoured the expansion of Communist influence in the following years. The political climate after the war favoured the Congress Party.<sup>80</sup>

The Government held general elections for the Central and Provincial legislatures in September 1945, which had been postponed due to the War. The Governor of Madras issued a proclamation dissolving the Legislature and calling for new elections on September 29, 1945. After the Congress High Command decided to run for office, K. Kamaraj and his supporters went on a whirlwind tour throughout Madras, speaking at various events and building up enthusiasm for the party. The elections took place in March 1946, and the Congress won by a landslide. The Congress won a substantial majority in the Legislative Assembly, with 164 out of 215 members and 32 out of 52 seats in the Legislative Council. T. Prakasam was elected as the Parliamentary Party's leader by the Congress, and the Government was formed under his leadership in April 1946.

### **Impact of Second World War**

It is impossible to deny that the War had negative implications for both the working class and the general public. The regime used the war effort to carry out a repression campaign against political movements led by the Congress and communists in general. The

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<sup>78</sup> . Bhargave, "History of Modern India", Delhi, 1955 p.578

<sup>79</sup> . Baliga, B.S., Madurai District Gazetteer, Vol.I, Madras, 1966, p.25

<sup>80</sup> . Fortnightly Report, 8 Nov, 1945



Gandhian agitation tactic, on the other hand, gained greater acceptance among the masses for national freedom than any other method. As a result, the administration suppressed all kinds of dissent. In contrast, the Quit India Movement of 1942 avoided punitive administrative procedures and relied on unified national forces rather than working-class forces led by communists. As a result of its impact, workers' problems were set aside on the altar of independence. The Communists' support for soviet-mandated labour failed to mobilise public support for the war. Instead, they, together with Socialists and Leftists, were instrumental in bringing the struggle to an end. During World War II, the Communist Party's political approach worked against its appeal to the wider public. The goal of the Socialists, to unite the working class in order to give a political alternative to the nationalist Congress Party, was not achieved. Since 1945, the E.V.R. Periyars Dravida Kazhagam, a political alternative to the Congress, gained increasing recognition and developed as a political alternative to the Congress. Its philosophy is social equality<sup>81</sup>.

### **Famine in India and Madras Presidency**

During the British administration, famine was frequent in the Indian subcontinental countries of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Famines struck India throughout the 18th, 19th, and early 20th Centuries, killing an estimated 60 million people. In the 19th and early 20th Centuries, famines in British India were severe enough to have a significant impact on the country's long-term population growth.

A good southwest summer monsoon is crucial for securing water for irrigating crops in India, which is strongly reliant on the weather. Droughts were to blame for the Bengal famine of 1770, the Chalisa famine, the Dojibara calamity, the Great Famine of 1876–1878, and the Bengal famine of 1943. Some commentators believe British government delayed measures to overcome the severity of India's famines during colonial period. Famines were mostly over by the turn of the century, with the exception of the 1943 Bengal famine, which was triggered by World War II. The Indian Famine Codes of 1883, as well as transportation advances and developments following independence, all contributed to the famine's alleviation. Historically, agricultural labourers and rural craftspeople were the principal victims of famines in India. During the worst famines, cultivators were particularly

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<sup>81</sup> . Madras in 1945, p.20 (Annual Report)

vulnerable. During famines,<sup>82</sup> railroads created with the intention of exporting food grains and other agricultural commodities, exacerbated the situation. By the Twentieth Century, the British had extended the railroad, which had helped to put an end to catastrophic famines during times of peace. The Bengal famine of 1943 was the most recent big famine. More than 2000 years ago, one of the earliest treatises on hunger relief was written. This treatise is credited to Kautilya, also known as Vishnugupta who advised a good monarch to either construct new forts and waterworks and share his provisions with the people, or entrust the nation to another king. Famine relief was used by Indian kings in the past in a variety of ways. Some were overt, such as launching a free food distribution programme and granting public access to grain storage and kitchens. Among the other measures were monetary strategies such as revenue remission, tax remission, military pay rise, and advance payments. Construction of public works, canals, and embankments, as well as sinking wells, were among the other projects. In times of hunger, Kautilya advised seizing affluent people's money to "thin them out by exacting surplus revenue." Data on famines may be found in five primary sources, ranging from ancient India through colonial times.

- Famines are remembered through legends passed down through oral tradition.
- The Vedas, Jataka tales, and the Arthashastra are examples of ancient Indian religious literature.
- Several famines occurred before the 16th Century, according to stone and metal inscriptions.
- Muslim historians' writings in Mughal India
- Foreigner's writing.

According to ancient Ashokan edicts from the Mauryan period in 269 BCE, Emperor Asoka invaded Kalinga, roughly the present state of Odisha. The huge human toll of the conflict, estimated to be around 100,000, is mentioned in the massive rock and pillar edicts. According to the edicts, a larger number of people died later, probably as a result of wounds or famine. The Periya Puranam in Hindu literature mentions a 7th century famine in Thanjavur due to shortage of precipitation. According to the Purana, Lord Shiva aided the Tamil saints Sambandar and Appar in giving relief from the famine. Another famine was described on an inscription in 1054, with details like as "difficult times," a town being ruined,

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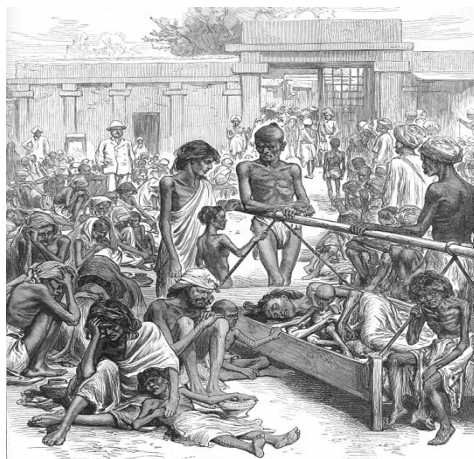
<sup>82</sup> . Ibid.,1945

and food cultivation being disrupted. South India's Dvadasavarsha Panjam (Twelve year Famine) and the Deccan's Durga Devi Famine, both from 1396 to 1407, are only remembered through oral tradition. Famines during this time period have few original sources.

In the late 18th and early 19th Centuries, famines were more widespread. Between 1850 and 1899, millions of people died in 24 catastrophic famines, more than in any other 50-year period. Famines in British India were severe enough to have a long-term impact on the country's population growth, especially between 1871 and 1921. The Bengal famine of 1770 is thought to have killed about a third of the region's population—roughly 10 million people.

Later attempts to show that the famine had no impact on the net revenue were only possible because collection had been "violently held up to its prior standard." The 1901 Famine Commission documented twelve famines and four "severe scarcities" between 1765 and 1858.

Famines were recorded after the English arrived but reported before 1880s. The Indian Famine Codes had a cultural bias in terms of the reported causes of the famine. According to researcher Brian Murton, they "reflected the opinion of a handful of Englishmen." According to evidence, significant famines occurred every forty years in the pre-colonial India, with the frequency increasing in the 12th Century. These famines were not as frequent as those that happened during British rule in the 18th and 19th Centuries.



## **Opinions for Remedies**

Famines in British India were not caused by scarcity of food in a specific geographic area. Instead, they were brought about by a lack of political and social organisation, which resulted in inadequate food transportation. According to Nobel Laureate in Economics Amartya Sen, famines in the British Era were caused by disparities in food distribution rather than a lack of food. He attributes the incidence of famines to the British Empire's undemocratic nature.

According to Tirthankar Roy, the famines were driven by environmental conditions and they were an integral part of India's ecology. Roy believes that enormous agricultural investments were needed to break India's stagnation but these were not made due to water scarcity, poor soil and cattle quality, and a poorly developed input market, all of which made agriculture investments exceedingly risky. After 1947, India focused on agricultural institutional reforms, but this was inadequate to break the stagnation cycle<sup>83</sup>.

The famines of the 1870s and 1890s, According to Mike Davis, were "Late Victorian Holocausts," in which the impacts of widespread weather-related crop failures was greatly exacerbated by the British administration's indifference. Between 1860 and 1920, the expansion of Indian railways, as well as the opportunity for more profit in other markets that this provided, enabled farmers to accumulate assets that could be used in times of scarcity. Many farmers in the Bombay Presidency began raising a portion of their grain for export in the early Twentieth Century. Food costs began to rise as a result of predicted scarcities.

## **Causes for Famines**

The famines were exacerbated by uneven rains and British economic and administrative policy. British Policies were responsible for rack-renting, levies for war, free trade policies, the expansion of export agriculture, and the neglect of agricultural investment. India's exports of opium, rice, wheat, indigo, jute, and cotton were critical to the British empire's economy, bringing much-needed foreign currency, notably from China, and stabilising low grain prices in the British market<sup>84</sup>.

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<sup>83</sup>. Dan Banik, "Starvation and India's Democracy" London, Newyark, 2007

<sup>84</sup>. B.M. Bhatia, "Famines in India" A study in some aspects of the Economic History of India with special reference to Food Problem, Delhi Konark Publishers, ISBN, 978-81-220-021

The Great Famine of 1876–78 prompted a massive exodus of agricultural labourers and artisans from southern India to British tropical territories, where they worked on plantations as indentured labourers.

Famine was preceded by a drought in the Madras Presidency, which was aggravated by the government's laissez-faire grain trade policies. Despite the famine, two of the most severely impacted districts in the Madras Presidency, Vizagapatnam and Ganjam, continued to export crops. Various infectious diseases like as bubonic plague and influenza, commonly followed these famines, attacking and murdering an already malnourished populace.



### **British Response:**

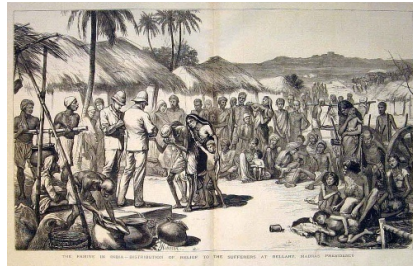
The Bengal famine of 1770 was the first significant famine under the British rule, with a quarter to a third of Bengal's population starving to death over a ten-month period. The East India Company's tax rises worsened this famine. Despite the fact that the famine was not caused by British colonial control, future British governments were apprehensive of tax increases as a result of the famine. In 1866, the rains in Bengal and Odisha failed once more. In Bengal, the application of laissez-faire policies resulted in starvation<sup>85</sup>.

The 1874 Bihar famine was effectively checked in by the Lt.-Governor of Bengal, Sir Richard Temple, with little to no mortality and this was a the only known occasion of the

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<sup>85</sup> . Curry Hugo, "Famine as a Geographical phenomenon" D.Reidal Publication.co, 1984, pp 71-74

British taking required action in the face of impending a food crisis. Many British officials chastised Temple for spending too much money on famine aid.



### **Lack of Policy Intervension**

The Government's non-intervention in the grain market, even during famines, indicated how Adam Smith's beliefs informed British famine policy in India. Another important factor in defining famine policy was restricting famine aid to a bare minimum, with the colonial authority spending the least amount of money possible. Another possible influence on British policy on famine in India, according to Brian Murton, a geography professor at the University of Hawaii, was the English Poor Laws of 1834, with the variation that the English were willing to "maintain" the poor in England in normal times, whereas Indians would only obtain subsistence when entire populations were threatened. There are parallels between the Irish famine of 1846–49 and the Indian famines of the late Nineteenth Century. During famines in both countries, there were no restrictions on food export. The correspondence on policy-making in India during the 1870s, reflected no lessons learned from the Irish famine<sup>86</sup>.

### **Famine Code**

According to the Famine Commission of 1880, every province in British India, including Burma, had a surplus of food grains, with an annual surplus of 5.16 million metric tonnes. The Famine Code, a set of government suggestions and regulations on how to respond to famines and food shortages, was created by the Famine Commission. They demonstrated a method for identifying food shortages and responding to them. Famine mortality reached an all-time high in the last 25 years of the Nineteenth Century, notwithstanding the laws<sup>87</sup>.

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<sup>86</sup> . Ibid.,

<sup>87</sup> . Mike Davis, *Nino famine and Making of the third world*”, UK Verso Pub, 2001pp.294-300

At the time, India's annual rice and other grain exports were roughly one million metric tonnes. " There was contrast between the earlier period of frequently recurring catastrophes, and the latter period when long stretches of tranquillity were disturbed by a few large-scale famines", was due to the Famine Commission's policy changes in 1896–97.

Despite the fact that India had not had a significant famine since 1902, until the Bengal famine of 1943, starvation was a menace. During World War II, between 2.5 and 3 million people perished as a result of famine. India's overall food supply was rarely insufficient, even during droughts. The Famine Code established an open-ended public works policy to create employment for these individuals.

The inability to feed the millions of people who went hungry during the 1870s famines was blamed on the a lack of rail infrastructure, as well as the integration of grain into the world market via rail and telegraph.<sup>88</sup> Rail service, on the other hand, was critical in getting grain from places where there was enough to famine-stricken areas. The Famine Code of 1880 called for a substantial reorganisation and development of railways, with an emphasis on intra-Indian lines rather than the existing port-centered system. These new lines were added to the existing network, allowing food to be delivered to famine-stricken areas. However, the system's efficiency was dependent on government famine relief. Railroads could pla a crucial role in carrying grain from one section of India to another, but they could not guarantee that hungry people would have the money to buy that grain." Famine reduced the body's resistance to infection, increasing the prevalence of infectious diseases such as cholera, dysentery, malaria, and smallpox. People travelling in search of food and labour, may transmit the disease as a result of the human response to starvation. By transporting people to locations where food was plentiful, or even outside of India, railways had a significant impact on famine mortality. They gave famine-affected individuals the option of travelling to other parts of the country and the world, by increasing areas of labour movement and allowing massive emigration of Indians in the late 19th Century. Migration and relief supplies were adequate to withstand the impact of a medium-scale food shortage by the 1912–13 scarcity crisis. However, it is clear that this component alone cannot explain for the dramatic decrease in famines in the Twentieth Century<sup>89</sup>."

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<sup>88</sup> . Famine in India – Wikipedia

<sup>89</sup> . Curry Hugo "Famine as a geographical phenomenon" 1984.

The Bengal famine of 1943 peaked in July and November of that year, and by early 1945, the worst of the famine had passed. Famine death estimates were unreliable, although up to two million people might have died as a result of the famine. The Japanese cut off the supply of rice to Bengal with the fall of Rangoon, but this was just a small portion of the food required for the region. Military reasons were prioritised, leaving Bengal's impoverished unprovided for. The Indian government attempted to get food from surplus places like Punjab to Bengal's famine-stricken provinces, but provincial administrations obstructed grain transportation. According to the 1948 Famine Commission, Bengal had enough rice to feed the entire country throughout the major most of 1943. Amartya Sen attributed famine down to inflation, claiming that those who benefited from it, ate more and left less for the rest of the people. These studies, on the other hand, did not account for possible calculation errors or the impact of fungal disease on rice. The British government failed to carry out the Famine Code during the Bengal famine of 1943, according to De Waal, since it failed to recognise food shortage. The Bengal famine of 1943 was India's last major famine, and it is seen as a watershed moment in the history of hunger<sup>90</sup>.

### **Infrastructure Development:**

Improvements in famine assistance operations after the exit British of the helped to reduce malnutrition-related deaths. Policy actions in independent India aimed to make people self-sufficient in terms of earning a living and to provide low-cost food through the public distribution system. Organizations like the Central Rice Institute in Cuttack, the Central Potato Research Institute in Shimla, and universities like Pant Nagar University, built the early agricultural infrastructure between 1947 and 1964. Despite the benefits of modern infrastructure, India's population was growing at a three percent annual rate, needing food imports. At its peak, the United States imported 10 million tonnes of food.<sup>91</sup>

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development was established to alleviate infrastructural shortages throughout a twenty-year period. NABARD provides loan rescheduling and debt conversion assistance to qualifying institutions such as State Cooperative Banks and Regional Rural Banks for up to seven years during famines, droughts, and other natural calamities. Around the same time, high-yielding wheat and rice cultivars

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<sup>90</sup> . Thakur, et.al., "urban and regional development in India", 2005, p.585

<sup>91</sup> . Nafziger, E.Wayne, Economic Development (5<sup>th</sup> edition) Cambridge university press, 2012, p.223



were produced. The Green Revolution occurred as a result of the actions taken during this time period, resulting in increased confidence in India's agricultural capabilities.<sup>92</sup>



The agrarian crisis in Madras was examined in this Chapter. The agrarian crisis began with the introduction of British authority in India, and the imperialistic government's adoption of a new land system initiated the process of agricultural fragmentation. The rural people's economic plight was distressing. Despite its high pace of population expansion, our population growth has not been abnormal. The population trend and economic development are inextricably linked. Apart from the money lender and wealthy farmers taking advantage of the situation, these uneconomical holdings resulted in frequent quarrels and litigation. With the outbreak of World War II and an influx of people, vast stocks of food grains were collected for the fighting forces, and the Indian food situation began to deteriorate. Following independence, the government implemented a number of policies and programmes aimed at addressing agricultural concerns and rural poverty in particular. Variations in natural elements have a significant impact on agriculture in India. Even now, India's agriculture is based on the monsoon. During the British Period, a lot of changes were made to the land revenue system. Many zamindars of the earlier period were unable to compete under the new system, resulting in a significant change in make up of landed societies. Because the countries that had previously contributed rice to India were decimated by the fight and unable to provide grains to Madras, the food crisis lingered after the War. As a result, the public anticipated that rationing would last at least for another five years after the War ended. The influence of climate change on Indian agriculture is enormous. In the southwest, a good summer monsoon is critical for collecting water for irrigating crops. Droughts, along with policy failures, have resulted in significant famines in India on several occasions. High-yielding wheat and rice cultivars were introduced after 1967. The Green Revolution arose as a result of the steps made during this era, resulting in a sense of self-assurance in India's agricultural capabilities.

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<sup>92</sup> . David Arnold "Social Crisis and Epidemic – Disease in the Famines of Nineteenth century India", 1993