

**Tribal Social Formation in Madras Presidency:
A Study on Agency Areas of Andhra (A.D. 1858-A.D.1947)**

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To the University of Hyderabad in partial fulfillment of a Ph.D Degree in

Department of History

By

Vulli Dhanaraju

(Reg.No.07SHPH01)



**Department of History
School of Social Sciences
University of Hyderabad
P.O. Central University
Hyderabad – 500046
Andhra Pradesh
India**



CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **“Tribal Social Formation in Madras Presidency: A Study on Agency Areas of Andhra (A.D.1858-A.D.1947)”** submitted by **Vulli Dhanaraju** bearing Reg.No: 07SHPH01 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of History is a bonafide work carried out by him under my supervision and guidance.

The thesis has not been submitted previously in part or full to this or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

(Prof. K.P. Rao)
Head, Department of History

(Prof. Y.A Sudhakar Reddy)
Research Supervisor

Dean of the School
School of Social Sciences



DECLARATION

I **Vulli Dhanaraju** hereby declare that this thesis entitled “**Tribal Social Formation in Madras Presidency: A Study on Agency Areas of Andhra (A.D. 1858-A.D.1947)**” submitted by me under the guidance and supervision of **Prof. Y.A Sudhakar Reddy** is a bonafide research work. I also declare that it has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this University or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

Date: 17/10/2011

(Vulli Dhanaraju)

Reg.No: 07SHPH01

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Glossary

Agency Areas or Agency Tracts: In the Ganjam and Vizagapatnam Districts Ac., 1839, the District Collectors were first designated as 'Agents' to State Government for directly administering the notified areas. The notified territories were administered by the Agents, were called as Agency Areas or Agency Tracts.

Agent: The District Collector was designated as Agent to Government for administering the Scheduled Areas.

Amin: Smaller level official below Thasildar who was appointed to collect revenues by Sircar Government.

Anjali: The messengers were given a feast before paying the rents and presents called 'Anjali'

Bethi: The Oriya aristocracy received free service through the local Oriya headmen called Patro. Thus customary practice was known as Bethi. This unpaid service and free gifts which were originally tokens of tribal's regard and loyalty to Oriya elite to develop into symbols of elite's domination on their tribal subjects. This led to several disturbances.

Chigurupnnu: Toddy tree tax

Diwan: Diwan is a senior official in the Court of Rajah.

Fituri: Rebellion

Hill Tribes / Scheduled Tribes: Some Communities are listed as Hill tribes living in Agency Tracts Interests and Land Transfer Act, 1917 for affording protection from exploitation by outsiders. The scheduled Tribes are those communities declared as Scheduled Tribes by Presidential Order.

Inam: The Inam was only grant for gift made by government with or without condition of service.

Kattubadi: The muttadar had to pay a fixed rent called 'Kattubadi'

Mahals: Mahals also called Malguzari. The system of land tenure existed in Nugur, Albaka and cherla areas and in villages of Subbannapeta, Dondupeta and Sarangapani in Agency areas of Andhra. This has its origin in old Central provinces and Berar.

Mandal: Mandel is a smaller revenue unit consisting of several villages. It was created after abolishing Taluks by Government of Andhra Pradesh in 1985.

Mansabdar or Munsabdar: Mansabdar also called as Munsabdar is an intermediary Zamindar in tribal areas. They are non-tribal headmen in the tribal areas.

Modalupannu: The Mansabadar levies additional tax called 'Modalupannu' at the rate of one half or two thirds of Chigurupannu

Mokhasa: A village or group of villages granted on rent free tenure by Government.

Muttadar: Mutta refers to a group of villages. The head of the Mutta is called a Muttadar. The Raja of Jeypore is believed to have appointed these tribal headmen to collect the revenues and pay to him annually thorough Zamindar.

Patta: Patta means a certificate of right on lands

Pesh Kush or Kattubadi: It is a fixed rent.

Podu cultivation: This type of agriculture adopted by the agency tribes in shifting cultivation is known as podu. There are two forms of podu, the ordinary or chilaka podu and hill or konda podu.

Rajalanchanal: Symbolic gifts to the rulers

Samuthudar: Refers to head of group of Koya villages (Samuthu) in Badrhalam areas of Godavari district.

Sanad: It is an order, appointing 'Muttadars' in which several conditions of service tenure were included.

Scheduled Area: The term 'Schedule' is defined as an appended statement of supplementary details usually accompanying a legal or legislative document and after

taking the form of a detailed list of relevant matter. The territories mentioned in the first of Schedule of the Scheduled Districts Act, 1874 came to be known as scheduled Districts.

Shist: Rent

Sircar: Sircar or Circar is local word for Government.

Swatantams: Fees to village officers.

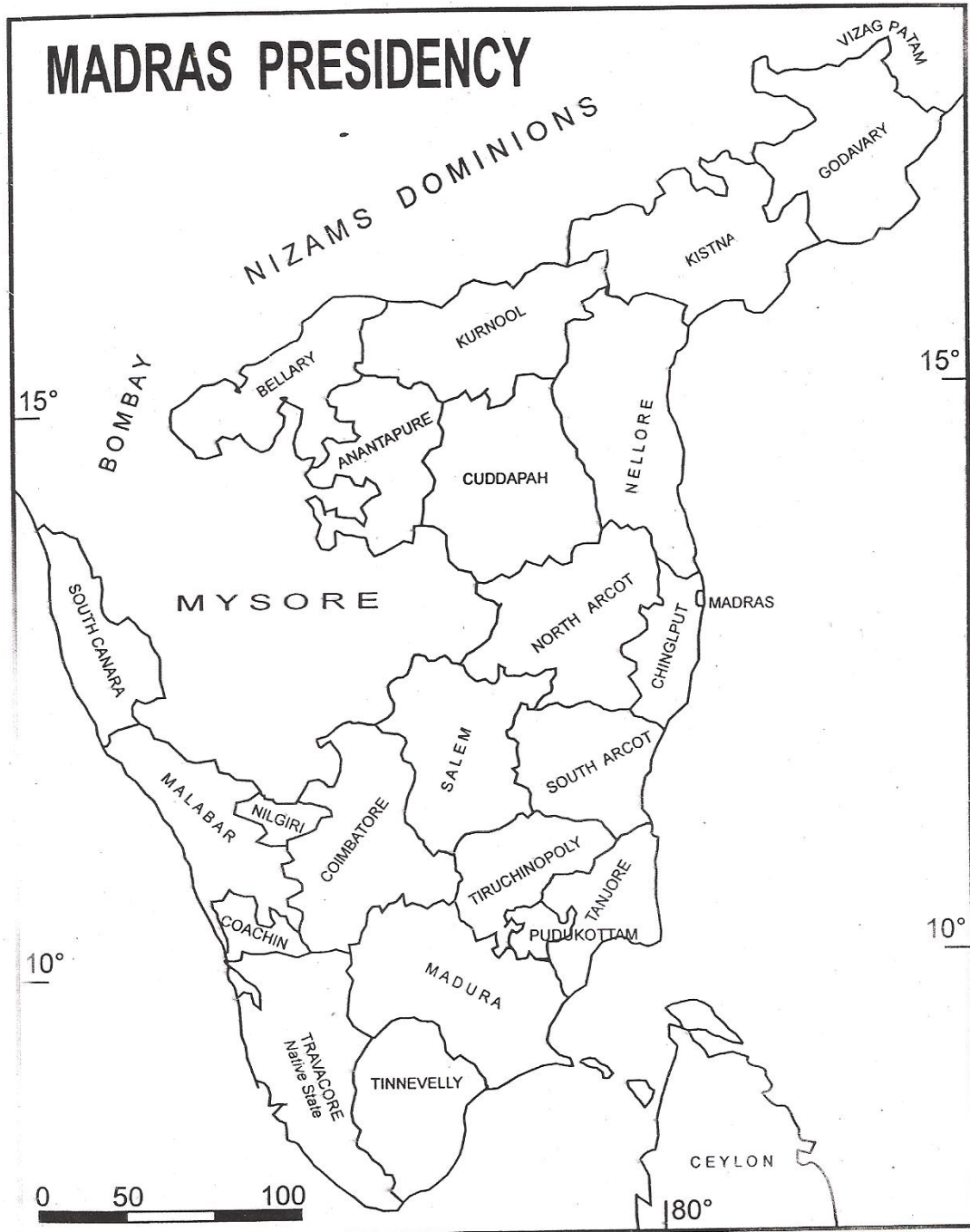
Thasil or Taluka: It is a smaller level revenue unit between village and Revenue division. Several villages make a Thasil or Taluk, several taluks make a division and several divisions make a District.

Veti: Free service of labour

Vysas: Non-tribals of the plains

Zamindar: The Musalman kings gave the designation Zamindar meaning owner of the land (zamnin).

Map of Madras Presidency

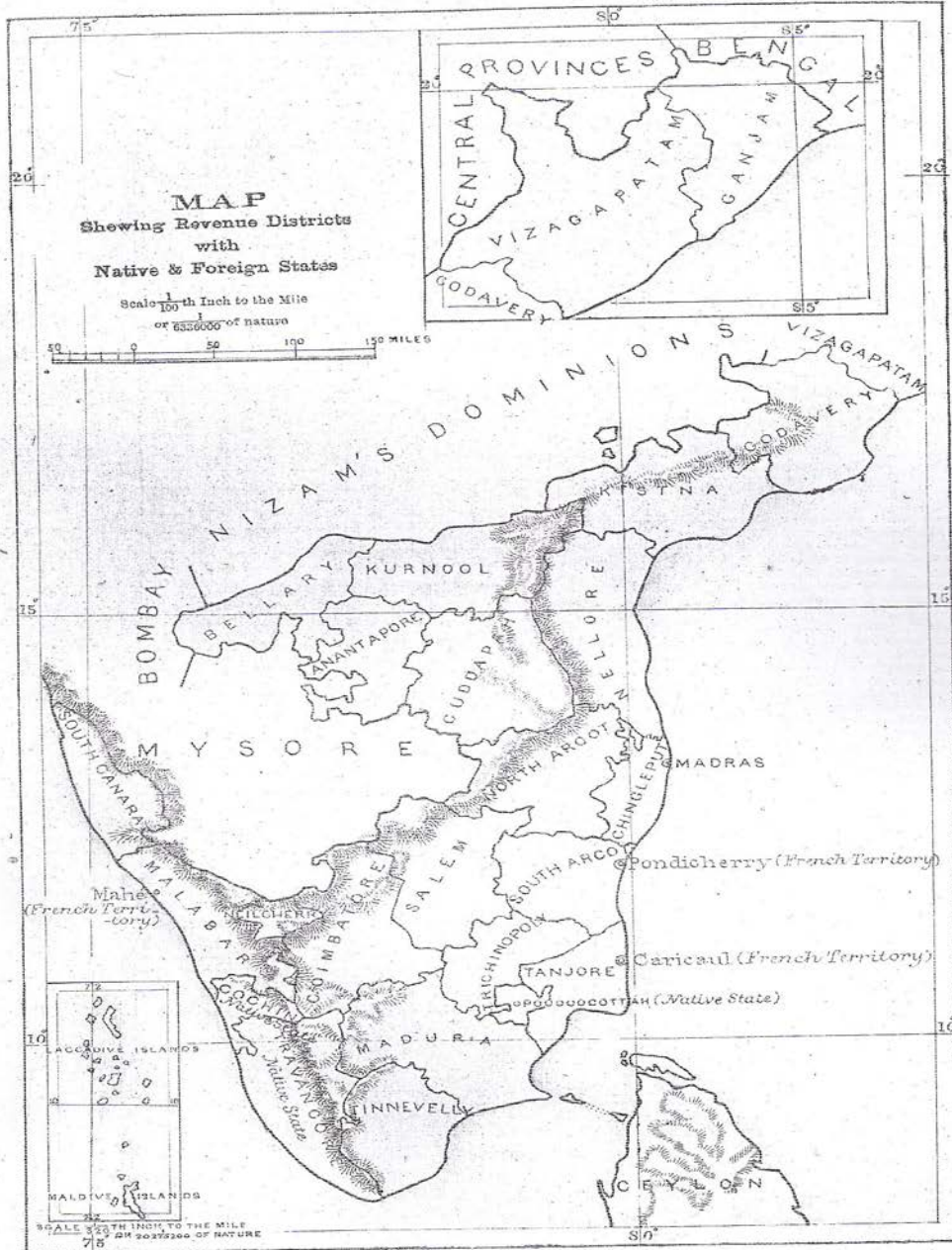


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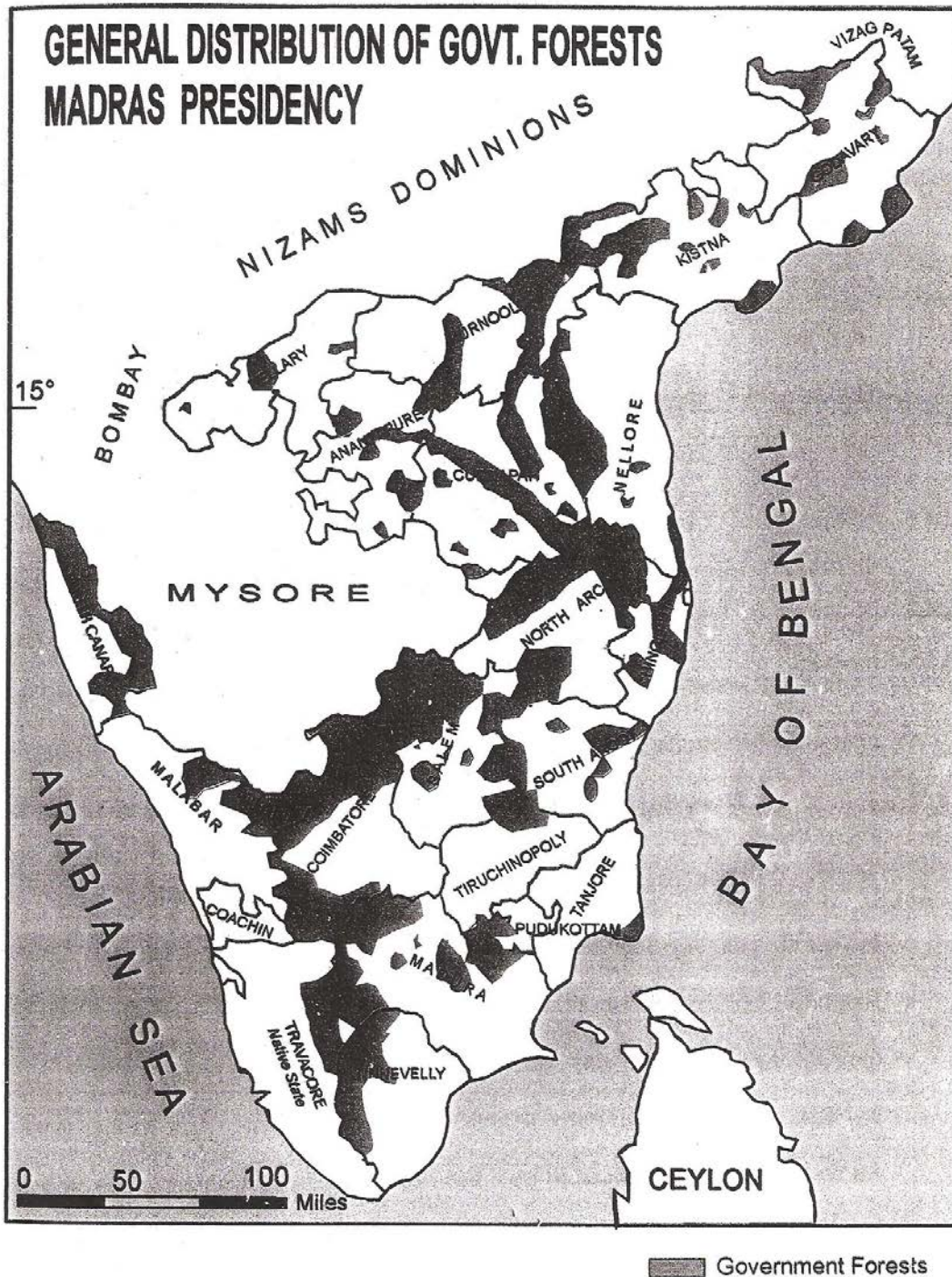
MAP OF REVENUE DISTRICTS.]

CIVIL DIVISIONS.

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Map of the Forest Distribution in the Madras Presidency



Source: C.D.McLean, Manual of Administration in Madras Presidency, Vol.II,
Asian Educational Service, New Delhi, 1985.
(Originally Published by Government Press, Madras, 1885)

Chapter-I

Introduction

I. Introduction

The British colonial rule and its implication in India is one of the vast historical phenomena in Indian history. Its ruling in Indian provinces introduced a major shift in the historical process and brought forth the notion of 'nation' amongst the ruled. The colonial rule marked a significant point especially in the tribes of Madras Presidency they were lived under economical as well as cultural deprivation. In order to fully exploit the economic and cultural resources of the country, the British rulers introduced various institutional structures and policies in Indian provinces.

Bipan Chandra¹ writing on the impact of British colonial rule on the tribals opined that, "the colonial administration ended their relative isolation and brought them fully within the ambit of colonialism. It recognized the tribal chiefs as Zamindars and introduced a new system of land revenue and taxation of tribals' products. It encouraged the influx of Christian missionaries into the tribal areas. Above all, it introduced a large number of moneylenders, traders and revenue farmers as middlemen among the tribals. These middlemen were the chief instruments of bringing the tribal people within the vortex of the colonial economy and exploitation. The middlemen were outsiders who increasingly took possession of tribal lands and ensnared the tribals in a web of debt. In time, the tribal people increasingly lost their lands and were reduced to the position of agricultural labourers, share croppers and tax-rented tenants on the land they had earlier brought under cultivation and hells on a communal basis."

The restrictions imposed on tribal people by the British administration through their law enforcement, had endangered the 'freedom of the natives', and forced them to question the imposition of new types of authority. Due to the imposed British policies, a segment of the new native ruling authority emerged, which exploited tribal people in

¹ Bipan Chandra, et al, *India's Struggle for Independence 1857-1947*, Viking, New Delhi, 1988, p.45.

various forms. Their challenges had taken the shape of insurrections witnessed in all the tribal belts of the country from time to time. In every part of India the impact of British rule led to new social formations among the tribal people.

K.S Singh argues that the entry of the colonialism into the tribal regions of India through various philanthropic strategies of the communal tribal mode of production and attributed judicial nature of the regions by way of adopting survey and hence, the emergence of the private right on land.² The very entrance of the colonial state into these areas was resisted violently by the tribals of the respective regions.

In pre-independence days, the study of the social and economic conditions of the tribal people were difficult, as the areas inhabited by them were inaccessible, making it insuperable to establish contacts with them. However, a few Government officers, anthropologists, welfare workers and missionary workers who maintained constant touch with them, have left valuable accounts which depict the conditions under which they used to live. All these aspects of tribal people under Madras Presidency is a visible area to think , rethink and construct a historical praline with the conceptual abbreviation of social formation .

II. Significance of the study

Firstly, the formation of social classes among the present day people is not an accidental affair. It has evolved through several forces in the past. Therefore, an understanding of their present conditions will inevitably lead to the study of their social history. However, reconstruction of tribal history is very difficult task, precisely because they have had no written records by themselves. Whatever records are available, they are written by 'others', with different interests and compulsions. These are mostly divorced from the objective and subjective conditions of the tribal people.³ For the understanding of social formation of the tribal society one has to study the theoretical concepts.

² K.S. Singh, *Tribal Society in India : An Anthro- Historical Perspective*, Monohar, 1985, p.12.

³ Jaganath Pathy, *Tribal Peasantry Dynamics of Development*, Inter –India Publications, New Delhi, p.44.

Secondly, all the studies on the tribes under the British rule viewed colonialism as a hegemonic construction and applied the same to the tribal areas as well as to lands of the main stream of the cast society. But it may not be correct because the nature of British exploitation was different from region to region and even among various tribal communities.

Thirdly, it is the British, for the first time in the history, which could affect the tribal social organization through formulations of policies and administrative mechanism which eventually had far-reaching effect on their livelihoods.

For addressing the aforementioned salient features an attempt is made in this thesis to study the impact of the British administration on tribal social formations.

III. Nature and Scope of the Study

The present study examines historical background of the colonial policies, implementation and its impact on tribal society in Madras Presidency. It proposes to examine how the colonial state, in the name of forest conservation, imposed several restrictions on tribal areas with support of local rulers who were manly responsible for the implementations of colonial policies in respective areas. The study also discusses the native tribal social system and its implications on their traditional preservation of forest areas. The study addresses questions such as why and how the colonial policies were formulated. What were the factors which had influenced their nature and direction? How the colonial bureaucracy debated on policies with reference to the tribal rights over forest? How the rights of the tribal people were traded in the colonial policies? How the tribal people contested the colonial policies? And, what were the methods adopted by the British government in addressing these contestations in the Madras Presidency?

The process of evolution and implementations of the colonial policies in the Madras Presidency had gone through several contradictions, contestations and struggles within the colonial administrative structure on the one hand and between the colonial state and people on the other. The present study also examines the role played by non-tribal groups who were created by colonial administration for the implementation of the colonial policies in Madras Presidency. Missionary activities exerted considerable

influence in shaping the tribal society during colonial period; however, it was not just an extension of colonial rule. The complex mechanism of missionary activity got its own history and relative autonomy from the colonial establishment. In other words, the present study analyzes the nature of colonial state's intervention and local rulers' attitude towards tribal people in Madras Presidency.

IV. Area of the Study

The Madras Province occupies the Southern portion of the Indian peninsula. The province may be broadly divided into three convenient regions based on the consideration of language, Physical and tenural conditions. They are a) the Northern Telugu districts, b) the Southern Tamil districts, and c) the West Coast districts of Malabar and Canara. The 11 districts of Andhra have an area of 67, 212, 98 sq.miles and account for about 52.7 of the aggregate areas of the Madras province. There were three major Agency areas in Madras Presidency i.e Ganjam Agency, Vizagapattanam Agency and Godavari Agency. The present study manly focuses on above-mentioned Agency areas in Andhra during colonial period.

V. Review of Literature

As such, the studies on tribes were taken up thus far by two major disciplines known as Anthropology and History. The Anthropological studies were broadly ethnographic in nature and hence, concentrated on livelihoods and religious practices. The Historical studies, on the other, dealt with interventions of State authority into the tribal life and its policies affected the tribes. To accommodate both, the Literature Survey is organized into three sections; the first section deals with the works on tribals from the historical perspective; the second section consider the works on tribals form anthropological perspectives and; the third section reflect on the works done exclusively on the tribes Agency region of Andhra Pradesh which is the subject area of the present thesis.

i). Works on Tribals - Historical Perspectives

Geeti Sen's edited book, *Indigenous Vision: People of India Attitudes Environment*⁴ represents the environmental history of India. This book mainly deals with the natural resource utilization patterns of various tribal communities in India. She argues that the forest policies formulated under the British rule still exercise deep impact on the contemporary forest policies in India. She claims that "the forest laws enacted by the British colonial rule are still in force and with the government claiming the jungles as its property to be exploited even at the cost of extensive marginalization of *Adivasis*."

Nandini Sundar book, *Subalterns and Sovereigns: An Anthropological History of Bastar, 1854-1996*, is an implicit critique on the categories of anthropology and history proceeds made initially by colonial officials, between the tribes and castes of India. Colonial officials believed that the tribes--usually communities that lived in or around forested and hilly areas--were the original inhabitants of India, and had been driven into the forests by the incursions of later communities. The tribes, by this account, were autochthonous and largely isolated groups, dependent on modes of subsistence that were primitive in comparison to the castes. They practiced an animist religion distinct from that of the castes. This book persuasively shows how even Bastar, often treated as a paradigmatic example of tribal India, resists fitting into the tribe-caste distinction. This supposedly isolated tribal area is extremely diverse linguistically and culturally; it has seen considerable in-migration over the centuries. The political and religious practices prevalent in the region were far from being outside by any "mainstream" of Indian history.

Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha's book *This Fissure Land: Ecological History of India*⁵ proposes a framework for the writing of ecological history of South Asia. This book is divided into three parts. In the first part, Indian history is explained in the form of successive mode of productions *i.e.*, hunting and gathering, pastoral, agricultural and

⁴ Geeti Sen (ed), *Indigenous Vision: People of India Attitudes Environment*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1992.

⁵ Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha, *This Fissure Land: Ecological History India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1992.

industrial. This explanation shows how the natural resource management systems were evolved in each mode of productions.

In the second part, how the conservation ethics rooted in the Indian culture evolved. For them, the caste based village society in India had developed a variety of institutions to regulate the use of living resources and also develop elaborate systems of diversified institutional structures for utilizing natural resources in judicious way.

In the third part, they describe the commercialization of forest resources initiated by the British rule and deprivation of the forest dependent communities and their livelihoods and consequent conflicts between the state and people. They argue that the pre-colonial Indian society, to a large extent, enjoyed the ecological equilibrium with a prudent mode of natural resource utilization patterns regulated by a complex web rooted in the belief system and traditional culture. They were of the opinion that the natural utilization pattern in the pre-colonial Indian society did not acquire the commercial character due to limited requirements by local village communities for their subsistence needs. They argue that the advent of the British colonial rule marked a significant ecological watershed for it altered the traditional mode of resource use and initiated the commercialization of forest resources in India. This resulted in the massive displacement of various segments of the population in the Indian sub continent from their living environment.

E.P Stebbing had written extensively on the history of forest administration in various provinces under the British rule. He brought out a four-volume work entitled *The Forest of India*⁶. These volumes describe the history of forest policies in the British India and provide graphic description of the chronological events and various aspects pertaining to the colonial forestry. These volumes mainly illustrate the administrative details such as important administrative measures, statistics pertaining to forest budget and reservation and brief narration on the forest policies in various provinces under the British rule in India.

⁶ E.P.Stebbing, *Forests of India*, 4 Volume series, first two volumes are published by John Lane, London in 1922 and 1927; Vol. III was published by A.J. Reprints, New Delhi, in 1982 and Vol. IV, Oxford University Press, London, 1962.

These volumes provide valuable information and important sources on colonial forest policies in India.

Berthold Ribbentrop's book *Forestry in British India*⁷, gives valuable details pertaining to legal and administrative measures of the Forest department in India. It also narrates certain important aspects of the colonial forest policies such as forest settlement, forest surveys and work plans. He argued that the British government inherited the property right in forests and wastelands from the pre-colonial rulers. He had pursued the history of forestry in defense of the colonial government.

Ajay Skaria⁸ examines the forest policies in the Dange tribal region of the Western India. He shows how the Dange tribal society underwent transformation due to the colonial state intervention through forest policies. He argues that penetration of the colonial state apparatus, especially the forest department, deprived the Dange hill tribes by evolving a plan based intermediaries' exploitation and at the same time, transformed their identity. This work shows how the tribal regions were opened for exploitation both by the colonial state on the one hand, and by the plain based merchants on the other.

H.F Trivedi's book, *Tribal Land System: Land Reform Measures and Development of Tribals*⁹ attempts to show how land reform could ensure conditions necessary for forest conservation, and for tribal subsistence. He recognizes that to conserve, forest policy should be linked to land policy. While formulating land reforms and forest policy, it is necessary to keep in mind the increase in population, occupational patterns and literacy levels. Land reforms, according to this approach, must ensure that tribal forest dwellers do not become indebted. This will restrict their dependence on the forest for livelihood. When indebtedness pushes the tribals to cultivate on unauthorized forestland, it leads to increasing deforestation. To stop this, the status of the tribal even in the forestland has to be

⁷ Berthold Ribbentrop, *Forestry in British India*, Reprinted Edition, Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1989.

⁸ Skaria' "Timber Conservancy, Desiccationist and Scientific Forestry: The Dangs, 1840-1920", in Grove, V. Damodaran and S. Sangwan (ed), *Nature and Orient*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi , 1999.

⁹ H.F. Trivedi, *Tribal Land System: Land Reforms Measures and Development of Tribals*, New Delhi, Concept, 1993.

raised from a labourer to that of an owner. The author does not, however, question the destruction of forests as a result of development programmes. In his study this is not considered while explaining tribal indebtedness.

A.R Desai's edited work, *Peasant Struggles in India* attempts to give a panoramic view of the tribals and peasant struggles in India during the colonial period.¹⁰ The work comprises of several essays written by many authors who give an historical account of the struggles launched by various sections of the agrarian population of India including the struggles and movements of the tribals. Desai summarizes these essays in his theme of the analysis by raising several fundamental questions relating to tribes' socio, economic life.

Amir Hasan's¹¹ study, *Tribal Administration in India* shows that two important factors contributing to unsatisfactory development of tribal communities in Uttar Pradesh and present administration setup and personal policies in tribal areas. In this book, author has examined various aspects of administration in tribal areas of Uttar Pradesh and other states and traces the development of tribal people, both Scheduled and non-Scheduled Tribes, since independence after reviewing the situation during the British period. It helps us to understand the nature of Tribal administration during colonial India.

The main argument of this author was that the colonial government followed a policy ranging between non-interference and limited interference in tribal affairs depending upon the industrial potential of the area. They evolved a system of lightly administering the tribal people and tribal areas by adopting a single line administration which did not usually interfere with the traditional organization and tribal customs. It resulted in isolating the tribal people from the rest of the country but not from exploiters or moneylenders, with an eye on tribal land. Forest contractors had appeared on the scene due to increasing exploitation of major and minor forest produce undertaken by the British Government.

¹⁰ A.R Desai, *Peasant Struggles in India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1979.

¹¹ Amir Hasan, *Tribal Administration in India*, B.R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1988.

The government itself did not undertake any developmental activities among the tribal but, nevertheless, provided facilities to Christian Missions which undertook educational and medical activities among the tribal people along with their proselytizing activities. These policies were in tune with the basic objectives of the British Administration, *i.e.*, maintenance of law and order and effective control of the Empire.

G.M Joshi's study, *Tribal Bastar and the British Administration*¹², traces the course of British policy towards Bastar and its impact on the life of the people, thus bringing out the tribal policy of the British administration identifying the main problems of Bastar and the means adopted to solve them. The British contact with the tribal state of Bastar did bring about changes in the local people. The process was inevitable; however the extent of intensity of change depended as much on the earnestness of the policy-making officers as on the effectiveness of the policy implementing agencies. The reaction of the local people, high and low, was the most important factor which the suzerain British authority had to reckon with. The success or failure of the British policy squarely depended on whether or not the Government had been able to effect an adjustment between what it considered best for the local people of Bastar and what the latter considered necessary for themselves.

V.Raghavaiah, the pioneer social worker of tribal development, has made several attempts to analyze the tribal life in Andhra Pradesh as well as in India. His valuable books *Tribal Revolts*¹³ and *Tribes of India*¹⁴ have set in a good tradition of giving a chronological sketch of the tribal revolts in India since 1778 and have presented a review of the problems of the tribals. Though they have their merits, proper attention has not been paid to the land issue in the tribal areas.

¹² G.M Joshi, *Tribal Bastar and the British Administration*, Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1990.

¹³ V. Raghavah, *Tribal Revolts*. Andhra Rastra Adimajati Sevak Sangh, Nellore (A.P), 1971.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, *Tribes of India*, Vol:I, Bharatiya Adimajati Sevak Sangh, New Delhi, 1969.

B. Works on Indian Tribals - Anthropological Perspective

Furer-Haimendorf's book, *Tribes of India*¹⁵ particularly describes the process of social change among the tribes of Chenchus, Kondareddis, Gonds of Adilabad, and Nishi, Miris, Sherdukpens of Arunachal Pradesh. He analyzed the process of expropriation and oppression in selected tribal areas mainly in Andhra Pradesh, wherein he was in charge of Tribal Affairs in the 1940's while in the service of Hyderabad State. He found that in areas where massive immigration of advanced population occurred, it had caused a complete fragmentation of tribal communities. Due to infiltration of outsiders the indigenous authority system had given way and even the effectiveness of traditional authority system had sharply declined because of the tribes' increasing dependence on economic forces over which they had no control.

He, however, found that complex religious and mythological system such as the deities of Gonds were more liable to change than the simple village and religious practices of more primitive tribal communities like Chenchus. The cult of the tribal deities stood outside the world view with which Gonds became increasingly familiar through the teachings, through school and contact with officials and traders and hence, appeared to the young Gonds as out of date and in need of reinterpretation. As a result Gonds got inclined towards the Hindu deities and Hindu mode of worship. Abandonment of cow sacrifice under the pressure of adverse Hindu opinion is one of the series of the important adjustments of rituals affecting the Gonds.

In Andhra Pradesh, in the past 40 years most of the tribal societies have come under the attack by economically more advanced and politically more powerful ethnic groups who infiltrated in the tribal region in search of land and new economic possibilities. These tribal movements triggered a struggle for land in which the aboriginal tribes-men were usually the losers, deprived of their ancestral land and, turned into impoverished land lease laborers. He directly blamed the policy of the government in opening up the homeland of tribes to the more advanced plains people.

¹⁵ Furer-Haimendorf, *Tribes of India, The Struggle for Survival*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1982.

However he, found that the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh (formerly NFFA), the territory of the extreme Northeast corner of India where the tribes formed the majority of the population are generally managing their own affairs. These he ascribed to the policy of British India as well as of Government of India in restricting completely land alienation to non-tribals. He showed how an economy played a vital role in the societies of Apatanis and Nishis of Arunachal Pradesh. There was a rapid material, social and educational development of tribal society which found a place in the modern world without so far losing its identity as a distinct ethnic identity.

He adopted a diachronic approach when discussing the over-all development of tribal societies during the past 40 years. These micro-studies of the different tribes of South India and of Arunachal Pradesh are very proficient listing not only the factors responsible for change but also indicating the directions of change.

Haimendorf's *the Reddis of Bison Hills, a Study of Acculturation*¹⁶ focused on the ethnographic profile and tribal cohesion and symbiosis among the *Konda Reddi* Tribe and several other tribal groups of the lower Godavari and Northern Hill regions of Eastern Ghats.

In this study, a detailed ethnography is provided with respect to the process of acculturation particularly among different tribal groups who are located at different stages of advancement with regard to agricultural methods, technology, varieties of crops grown, all important social institutions and ritual practices. Referring to the Koyas, who are practitioners of both shifting and settled agriculture in comparison with Konda Reddis and other tribal groups, who are entirely shifting cultivators, Haimendorf finds them purely in consonance with the physical environment. He provides details of the emergence of plough cultivation in the region, as well as among certain tribal groups. He attributes the emergence of plough cultivation to the process of diffusion and acculturation as a result of several centuries of contact between tribal groups and non-tribal populations.

¹⁶ Furer- Haimendorf, *The Reddis of Bison Hills, A Study of Acculturation*, Macmillan & Co, London, 1945.

In another study, **Haimondorf**¹⁷ describes some of the measures taken by the Madras Provincial Government to control the crime rate among the Chenchu tribes and the schemes implemented for their well-being. He also described various changes taking place in the Chenchu tribal society due to opening up of Chenchu areas and the intrusion of the contractors into Chenchu forests.

In yet another study, **Haimondorf (1948)**¹⁸ discusses tribals in contact with more advanced and politically powerful ethnic groups leading to pressures on land resources and triggering moments among the tribals who are usually the losers and deprived of their ancestral land. He highlighted this process through his analysis with the data from Andhra regions.

K.S Singh's edited book, *Tribal Situation in India*¹⁹ tries to fill the gap of knowledge on the tribals representing various parts of India. It also gives a vivid picture of various political, administrative, cultural, economic problems faced by the tribals. In the second part of this book, the authors mainly concerned with the tribal economy process from shifting cultivation to the settled agriculture and remark that the tribal economy is now no longer self-sufficient. They observe that the tribals suffer from poverty and indebtedness, and at the same time commercialization of agriculture has also adversely affected them. The traditional communitarian agrarian system has collapsed among the tribals and alienation from land has become a common feature. The issue of land holding and the increasing control of the non-tribal people over the tribal lands have become fatal in the tribal regions and the issue is covered at a length. The studies reveal that the interactions between tribal and non-tribal have shown a degree of stress among the tribals. The book though relatively informative, fails to analyze the problems responsible for the underdevelopment of the tribals.

¹⁷ Ibid., "Seasonal Nomadism and Economies of the Chenchu of Hyderabad", *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol:7, 1947.

¹⁸ Ibid., *The Raj Gonds of Adilabad, A peasant Culture of Deccan*, Macmillan & Co, London, 1948.

¹⁹ K.S. Singh (ed), *The Tribal Situation in India*, Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, 1972.

K.S. Singh's²⁰ article begins with a brief discussion of the conceptual framework which has governed the study of tribal societies in general. It then goes on to consider the relationship between history and anthropology, and between colonialism and anthropology. It describes the nature of the colonial transformation of the tribal society in relation to the political system, social structure, economic and agrarian institutions and movements and shows how and where the processes of colonial transformation in the tribal and peasant societies in India ran parallel and diverged, and how they related to the over-arching colonial system. An attempt is made towards the end to identify the areas where anthropologists and historians may explore the possibilities of collaboration in the investigation of tribal society.

Verrier Elwin's work²¹, *A Philosophy for NEFA* describes a democratic approach to the problems of the tribals. The Governmental efforts, which intend to adopt appropriate steps to integrate the tribal community into the mainstream, are reflected in several reports on tribal problems. Prominent among such reports are; 1. *The Report on the Socio-Economic Conditions of the Aboriginal Tribes in the Madras Presidency (1948)*, 2. *The Report of the Special Agency Development Officer, Government of Madras (1952)*, 3. *The Report on Aboriginal and Hill Tribes of the Partially Excluded Areas in the Bombay Presidency (1947)*, 4. *The Report of the Committee on Welfare of Scheduled Tribes, Government of Madras (1976)*, and, 5. *The Report of the Commission of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (1953-19987)*.

A.K. Pandey's²² *Tribal Society in India* is a thought-provoking study which presents an important correction to propositions of Western researchers and conservative scholars. He has successfully tried to investigate the problems of underdevelopment, culture of powerlessness and culture of poverty among tribals vis-à-vis the Indian society. Drawing upon the writings of neo-Marxists, the author contends that kinship in a tribal society is

²⁰ Ibid, "Colonial Transformation of Tribal Society in Middle India", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 13, No. 30 (Jul. 29, 1978), pp. 1221+1223+1225-1232.

²¹ Verrier Elwin, *A Philosophy for NEFA*, Government of Assam, Shillang, 1960.

²² A.K. Pandey, *Tribal Society in India*, New Delhi.1997.

inherently ideological in that it reproduces class and so perpetuates the established patterns of social inequality and social order of the contemporary tribal India.

Raghava Rao²³ examines various changes that had taken place in the Konda Dora society due to the contacts with the non-tribal moneylenders and *shahukars* and the introduction of modern technology by the developmental agencies.

Setu Madhava Rao's²⁴ study, *Among the Gonds of Adilabad* explains how Gonds of Adilabad have been appropriated from their resources especially, from their cultivable lands. He also discusses the phase wise transformation of tribal lands from the community orientation to the chieftain system to *Mokasadar* to *Deshmukh* system of land holdings and its changing effects of ruination of the Gond life.

Prasada Rao²⁵ in his study on Jatapus of Srikakulam district analyzes various aspects of tribal economy and the changes caused in the community due to the entry of merchants and moneylenders into the tribal inhabitants.

In another study he also discussed various exploitative practices adopted by moneylenders to alienate tribal lands. He felt that these practices are the basic factors for rise of Naxlite movement in Srikakulam district.²⁶

Gopala Rao's²⁷ study examines the process of transfer of land from tribals to non-tribals and various factors influencing such transfer in Mondomkhal, a mixed village of former Srikakulam district. The study identified that land has been alienated by some people for finance agricultural operations. It is clear from the case studies of the study that giving and taking of credit on land led to land alienation.

²³ D.V. Raghava Rao, *Konda Dora's – A Study in Socio-Cultural Change*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Andhra University, Waltair, 1975.

²⁴ Setu Madhava Rao, *Among the Gonds of Adilabad*, Popular Book Depot, Bombay, 1949.

²⁵ D.L. Prasada Rao, *The Jatapus- A Scheduled Tribe in Andhra Pradesh*, Unpublished PhD thesis, Andhra Pradesh, Waltair, 1970.

²⁶ Ibid., "Shavukars and Tribal Society", in *Tribe*, Vol:III, Nos.3&4, 1971-1972.

²⁷ N.Gopala Rao, "Land Alienation- A Menace to Tribal Economy", in *Tribe*, Vol: X, No. 4, 1978.

Ramaiah's ²⁸ book, *Tribal Economy of India* analyzes the economy of 408 *Koya* tribal families from 51 villages in Andhra Pradesh. He studied the problems of agriculture, forestry and indebtedness of tribals. He also deals with *Konda Reddi* tribes in relation to their shift from traditional tamps to cash crops. The *Konda Reddis* are originally shifting cultivators. The introduction of cotton crop brought about fundamental change in the tribal economy. He stated that the crop fetched cash and economically they achieved better position and livelihood. The author critically discussed several approaches to the multidimensional development of Indian tribes. The study suggested that planners and the government policies should not create feeling of isolation among the tribals.

G. Prakash Redy's²⁹ book, *Politics of Tribal Exploitation* examines the problem of land alienation in the district of Adilabad. He interprets the concept of 'land alienation' as one which occurs when a tribal alienates his land to a non-tribal. He finds deceit as a method employed by the non-tribals to grab the lands of tribals is. One of the important causes of land dispossession is the immigration of non-tribals into the tribal areas. The result of this immigration is the eviction of many tribals from their land by the high caste Hindus, petty non tribal traders and shop keepers. He argues that the land alienation contributed heavily towards tribal unrest. He does not provide however, any locus to tribal stratification resulting from land alienation.

Venkata Rao's³⁰ work, *Dimensions of Transformation in Tribal Societies: With Reference to Andhra Pradesh* emphasized the tribal transformation in Andhra Pradesh over a period time. Brought out as a survey of research and a source book, the present book traces the dynamics of tribal scenario unfolded through the works of various authors. Of the thirty-three scheduled tribes in Andhra Pradesh, there are thirty inhabitant hilly and forest regions. There was relative stagnation for a long period and significant changes took place starting from the colonial era with the penetration of administration and migration of non-tribal populations into the tribal areas. The proximity with non-tribals led to the emergence

²⁸P. Ramaiah, , *Tribal Economy of India*, Life and Light Publications, New Delhi, 1981.

²⁹ G. Prakash Reddy, *Politics of Tribal Exploitation*, Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1987.

³⁰ P. Venkata Rao *Dimensions of Transformation in Tribal Societies: With Reference to Andhra Pradesh*, New Delhi, 2004.

of caste like features in the tribal communities. Pressure on land and forest resources caused by land alienation and forest policies resulted in serious problems to the tribals leading to misery and unrest. After independence, further changes have taken place under the impact of governmental policies and programmes.

R.N Pareek's *Tribal Culture in Flux* on the Jatapus³¹ had analyzed the life of the tribals of the Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh. It covers certain areas of the Badragiri taluk of the Srikakulam district giving details of the forms of exploitation and the role of *sahukars* in the economic sphere of the Jatapus. He criticizes the governmental attitude for its negligence in the welfare of the tribals by pointing out improper revenue system and the inability of the government to arrest the illegal money lending practices of *komities*. Besides this, the main observations of the author are that the presence of the Komities and other non-tribal castes had control over the "choicest and fertile land", and that the majority of the tribals were the victims of the process of appropriation. Giving the picture of the land holding pattern of the area, he analyses the factors behind the concentration of the land in the hands of the non-tribal trader- cum-land lords of the area.

C. Historical Works on Madras Presidency and Colonial Andhra

David Arnold³² worked on the tribal resistance to the colonial state intrusion in the Rampa and Gudem areas of the Andhra agency area. He shows how the restrictions imposed by the forest departments on shifting cultivation and minor forest products resulted in series of tribal revolts. He argues that the socio-economic conditions of certain tribes like the *Koyas* and *Konda Reddis* were disrupted by the commercialization of forest and their subsistence economy was replaced by money and commercially oriented economy. Consequently, the Andhra region witnessed a serious of tribal revolts against the colonial state's forest policies.

³¹ R. N Pareek, *Tribal Culture in Flux*, B.R Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1978.

³² David Arnold, "Rebellious Hillman: The Gudem-Rampa Raisings, 1893-1924", in Ranjit Guha(Ed), *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History*, Vol. I, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1982, pp .88-142.

Kavitha Philip's book, *Civilizing Natures: Race, Resources and Modernity in Colonial South India*³³ pointed out the strategies adopted by the Forest Department, not only to control tribes but also use them as cheap labour in forest conservation activities in different parts of the Madras Presidency. She argues that the pattern of modernity, initiated by the colonial forest policies, negatively affected the forest dependent tribes in South India.

Atluri Muraly's study on the *Manyam* rebellion in the Andhra region, describes how the colonial forest policies intervened in the socio-economic conditions of the *Manyam* people and how the tribal lives became miserable due to implementation of forest policies. He argues that imposition of strict regulations on *podu cultivation*, minor forest products, forced labour and corruption by forest officials created discontent in the tribal areas and prepared them to participate against the British government in the national movement under the leadership of Alluri Sitarama Raju.³⁴

Aiyyappan's³⁵ book, *Report on the Socio- Economic Conditions of the Aboriginal Tribes of the Province of Madras* describes the ethnographic profile of Madras Presidency. He also deals with various problems faced by the tribals due to forced labour, land alienation and forest regulation. The report discussed the true problems of exploitation and land alienation by *Shavukars* and recommended for restricting their activities. The report suggested for separate tribal welfare authority and for taking various welfare measures in the tribal areas of Andhra Pradesh.

³³ Kavitha Philip, *Civilizing Natures: Race, Resources and Modernity in Colonial South India*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 2002.

³⁴ Atluri Muraly, "Alluri Sitarama Raju and Manyam Rebellion of 1922-1924", *Social Scientist*, Vol. 131, April 1984, pp.3-33.

³⁵ A.Aiyyappan., *Report on the Socio- Economic Conditions of the Aboriginal Tribes of the Province of Madras*, Government of Madras, 1948.

Velayutham Saravan³⁶ focused on impact of forest policies on the Malayali tribe in Salem district of the Madras Presidency. He argues that the commercialization of the forest resources, initiated by the British deprived the forest based tribal economy by denying the customary access to forest resources. He maintains that the British forest policies created favorable atmosphere for the plain-based intermediaries for exploitation in tribal areas.

In another article of **Velayutham Saravanan**³⁷ attempts to analyze how the colonial project of establishing coffee plantations disturbed the self-subsistent traditional tribal system, damaged the ecology, and resulted in environmental decline in the *Shervaroy* hills of Madras Presidency during the nineteenth century. The thrust of the argument is that the colonial administration was least concerned about the tribal people's customary rights over forest resources, and their traditional administrative and judicial systems. The British administration, which disregarded the tribal system, not only encouraged the British planters but even condoned their patently illegal activities. In other words, the means adopted to set up coffee plantations in the hills/forests to favour the British planters led to the disintegration of the age-old tribal socio-cultural system and their forest-oriented economy. It concludes that in the process of commercialization, the colonial policy refused to accord due importance to ecology and environment as well as to the sustainable livelihood of the tribal communities. Instead, its only concern was with the British planters establishing coffee estates during the nineteenth century.

In another article **Velayutham Saravanan**³⁸ analyzed the colonial agrarian policies applied to the tribal areas of the Salem and Baramahal region of Madras Presidency during the survey and settlement period (1872–1947). It argues that those

³⁶ Velayutham Saravanan, “Commercialization of Forests, Environmental Negligence and Alienation of Tribal Rights in the Madras Presidency, 1792-1882”, *Indian Economic & Social History Review*, Vol: 35, No.2, 1998. pp.125-146;

³⁷ Ibid, “Colonialism and coffee plantations: Decline of environment and tribals in Madras Presidency during the nineteenth century”, *Indian Economic & Social History Review*, Vol. 41, No. 4, (2004), pp.465-488 .

³⁸ Ibid., “ Colonial Agrarian Policies in the Tribal Areas of Madras Presidency: 1872–1947”., *South Asia Research*, Vol. 26,No.1 , (2006), pp. 63-85

setting the colonial agrarian policy did not consider the economic disadvantages of the hill areas and forest-oriented tribal economy and treated them in line with the plains; mainly to extract the maximum land revenue. The article shows and confirms that colonial agrarian policy, from the late 19th century to the end of colonial rule, contributed to the deterioration of the tribal economy in Madras Presidency resulting in restrictions on rights and access over land and forest.

In another article **Velayutham Saravanan**³⁹ attempts to highlight the colonial commercial forest policy vis-à-vis tribal private forests in the *Kalrayan* hills of Salem and Baramahal region of Madras Presidency during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (1792-1881). Further, it analyses the different strategies employed by the colonial government to encroach upon private forests, disregarding the traditional rights of the tribals. It concludes that the British administration intruded into tribal areas merely to bring the abundant forest resources under its sole control to further commercial interests, and not to protect them from the contractors or preserve the environment.

Rama Chandra Guha's⁴⁰ article is divided into three sections. The first section deals with forestry in British India, the second section deals with the post-colonial situation of the forests and the third section discusses the evolution of forest legislation in India.

He analyzed the colonial and post-colonial forest policies concentrates on the historical process whereby traditional forest communities have been progressively curtailed through the development of forest policy, management and legislation. The social imperatives behind forest policy have differed in the two periods. Before A.D. 1947 it is the interests of British imperialism which subjugated the tribes and after A.D 1947 the interests of the mercantile and industrial bourgeoisie was given importance and the too subjugated the forest dwellers. The net result is that in both the periods the tribal subjugation was done in a uniform manner. The post-colonial state has taken over and

37 Ibid., Colonial commercial forest policy and tribal private forests in Madras Presidency: 1792-1881 , *Indian Economic and Social History Review* Vol: 40 Issue: 4, Dec- 2003, pp.403-423 .

⁴⁰ Ramachandra Guha, "Forestry in British and Post-British India: A Historical Analysis", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 18, No. 44 (Oct. 29, 1983), pp. 1882-1896.

further strengthened the organizing principles of colonial forest administration - the assertion of state monopoly right and exclusion of forest communities.

Abhijit Banerjee and Lakshmi Iyer⁴¹ analyzed the colonial land revenue institutions set up by the British in India, and show that differences in institutions of property rights during historical times lead to sustained differences in economic outcomes. Areas in which proprietary rights in land were given to landlords in pre British regimes have significantly lowered agricultural investments and productivity in the post-independence period than areas in which these rights were given to the cultivators. These areas also have significantly lower investments in health and education. These differences are not driven by omitted variables or endogenous problems; they probably arise because of differences in historical institutions lead to very different policy choices.

B.H Baden Powell⁴² written a critique on the ‘**1882 Madras Forest Act**’ and wrote the struggle between the Forest and Revenue departments and its influence on the forest policy within the colonial bureaucracy in the Madras Presidency. He argued that the forest reservation procedure proposed in this act was complex and its implementation depended on the ability and discretion of the Forest Settlement officers who conducts the forest settlement process. He felt that some of the rules of the act gave enormous powers to the revenue officials in conducting the forest settlement process of mixed and thorny forests in plain areas in the Madras Presidency. He expressed apprehension that due to this, reservation of forests in the plain areas might become hard task for the Madras Government.

Sanghamitra Misra’s⁴³ article attempts at understanding the nature of colonial intervention in the Naga Hills during the period 1840-1880. He argues that the strategic

⁴¹ Abhijit Banerjee and Lakshmi Iyer “History, Institutions, and Economic Performance: The Legacy of Colonial Land Tenure Systems in India”, *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 95, No. 4 (Sep., 2005), pp. 1190-1213.

⁴² B.H Baden Powell, “The Madras Forest Act”, in *The Indian Forester*, Vol. IX, No.1, January 1883, pp.32-38.

⁴³ Sanghamitra Misra, “The Nature of Colonial Intervention in the Naga Hills, 1840-1888”, *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol: 33, No.51 (December. 19-25, 1998), pp.3273-3279.

location of the Naga Hills had necessitated the implementation of an alternative policy by the colonial state. Such a policy was aimed at effectively legitimizing colonial intrusion through the use of minimum coercive force and hence with a relatively low financial expenditure. In the period from 1840-1880, colonial incursions into the Naga Hills was a gradual but consistent process sustained through discourses which successfully strengthened the state through a complex set of representations.

Suranjit K Saha's⁴⁴ article attempts the processes through which the early states emerged from within the mountain and forest regions of east-central India over a long period from A.D. 450 to A.D. 1320. It finds that the classical Hindu states to the north, particularly the Gupta empire, did indeed provide the principal ideological role model for the rise of those local and regional states, but that the latter were in the main home grown political structures built by autochthonous leaders from below to upwards. These highland states also appear to have played a crucial historical role in the gradual fusion of the lineage based local societies into a subcontinent wide pan-Indian society. He argues that an adequate understanding of the current tribal situation in the micro region, and indeed in the rise of India, would require an understanding of the spatially differentiated process of political and material development rooted deep in its history. At the core of that understanding must recognize that India's so-called mainstream society is built out of progressive coalescence intertwining of locally evolved processes and structures that India has been built from below to above.

Anthropological Perspectives

It is pertinent to ask why is it that so many researchers in India especially anthropologists who until recently were de facto tribal researchers have accepted administrative category of tribes in their studies? There could be a number of plausible explanations to this: but all could be, directly or indirectly, linked to the nature of anthropological knowledge.

⁴⁴ Suranjit K Saha, "Early State Formation in Tribal Areas of East Central India", *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol: 31, No. 13 (March 30, 1996), pp.824-834.

Although it is well known that the list was prepared on an a priori basis through stereotypes and images, for all the tribal researchers of today a tribe is a tribe which is included in the list of the scheduled tribes. It may be mentioned that most of the tribal studies in independent India are, explicitly or implicitly, associated with tribal welfare, and since the communities which are officially notified as tribes are alone eligible for special protections and privileges, identification and study of any new community or rejection of any community or section thereof as non-tribe has little policy implosion; defining tribe *ipso facto* is considered irrelevant. Moreover the official list has been so much axiomatic that any critical scrutiny is prone to be dubbed as a reactionary political exercise. Under such circumstances, a definition of tribe has to be such that it should cover all the tribes in the scheduled list, which is an impossible talk. The other alternative is to ignore a definition not simply because the attempt is meaningless but identification of social space of tribe is complex in a caste ridden dominated social setup.

For these reasons, the researchers may justify their treatment of definition and identification of tribe as a taboo, but certainly, they have not made the reader any wiser about the primitive society and its dynamics. How is it that the so-called tribes could struggle against colonialism, and establish independent multi-national states, and how are they all over the world, struggling for autonomy and independence as well as carrying their cultural identity? May be these and similar questions can be escaped by individual anthropologists; but anthropology as a science can broadly affords such a continuous silence. It ought to be capable of explaining what precisely it means by tribe and what the internal potentialities of such societies for change are.

In anthropology, there are a few exceptional attempts to universalize the concept of tribe and to present it a more or less a distinct entity from other social aggregates. Thus, for instance, on the basis of several hundred ethnographic studies, a notable attempt was made to list the criteria of universal utility in defining the boundaries of tribe for cross-cultural purposes⁴⁵.

⁴⁵ Jagannath Pathy, "Imperialism, Anthropology and Third World", *Economic and Political Weekly*, XVI (14), 1981, pp. 623-627.

Besides the in-built problem of universalization of the concept in anthropology, colonial connections, acceptance of a priori category, and the like this attempt of identification of universal characters had a few more limitations. Essentially, it lacked a clear perspective of history and of social structure; and thus it made a mechanical and statistical exercise of the cultural data that were collected at different times and place, and from different interest. The over-emphasis on culture too led to a narrow focus on the traits or attributes rather than the whole.

The following can be summarised from the literature survey of all the three sections.

- ❖ The British policies were the root cause of the tribal insurgencies in tribal areas.
- ❖ The nature of the tribal revolts were not properly assessed in terms of Subaltern studies' framework for tribal/peasant insurgencies. At least eight forms of insurgencies were identified by the Subaltern studies.
- ❖ The Anthropologists who worked on the tribals were much interested for giving ethnographic account of the every day life of the tribals. Though some of the development anthropologists suggested various schemes for the upliftment of the tribals, they did not look into historical forces that operated for the backwardness of the tribals.

In this thesis an attempt is made to study the tribals of agency areas of Andhra in order to look for deep structural issues which evoked the response of the tribals. The manifestation of the response of the tribals as the insurgencies needs to be labeled so as to understand their nature.

VI. Hypothesis

After careful analysis of the data and the secondary sources from the preliminary survey the following hypothesis is developed:

1. The primary cause of the tribal insurgencies as per this thesis lies at the deeper structural level. The superimposition of pyramidal power structure of the British

organized on the principles of centralized bureaucratic system over the inverse pyramidal power structure of the tribal social formation has resulted in the tribal revolts.

2. The structural aberrations was created by the British that resulted in tribal unrest. To cope up with the tribal unrest the British resorted to implanting outsiders/plain people into the tribal areas as peasants, traders, merchants and revenue officials with the view to displace *Podu cultivation* (shifting cultivation). This further enhanced the problems to the tribals. As such the colonial policies failed to generate social formation based on the mode of production of settled agriculture in the agency area of the tribes and therefore, tribals remained backward and continued to impoverish due to the policies of the British.

VII. Objectives of the Study

- 1) To study the native tribal social system and how the British, Subaltern and Nationalist groups have represented the problems of tribal community.
- 2) To asses the nature of the British intervention in tribal regions of Madras Presidency.
- 3) To study the nature of the Tribal resistance movement in colonial Andhra
- 4) To study the Agency Administration in tribal areas during colonial period in Andhra.
- 5) To assess the formulations of the colonial forest policies in Madras Presidency.
- 6) To study the impact of the British Policies and tribal Social formations in Madras Presidency.

VII. Methodology and Sources of the Study

The main objective of the present study is to analyze the evolution of colonial policies, implementation, and its impact on tribal society in Madras Presidency. To carry out of this task, two fold methods are followed; one, the **Historical Method** and the other, **Ethnographic Method** drawn from the accounts of the ethnographers and administrators. It is pertinent to mention here that the data on the tribes is not based on the fieldwork but grossly drawn from the works of other anthropologists and the reports of British administrators. Being a student of History, the data collection in the thesis

grossly drawn from the archival sources and less importance is given for the field data. This may be considered as one of the limitations of the thesis.

Methodology⁴⁶ can be defined as the analysis of the principles of methods, rules, and postulates employed by a discipline. It is a systematic study of methods that are, can be, or have been applied within a discipline. The word method denotes the rational process of mind for gaining knowledge or for the demonstration of truth. Method signifies a logical procedure independent of particular contents of research and qualifies as intelligible. The process and the forms of perception reasoning meant to make the reality that is to be perceived (Bayle 1988: 9)⁴⁷. The first step in methodology is the collection of data. Data is organized information. It can be numbers, words, measurements, observations or even just descriptions of things. The data is collected from primary and secondary sources, but both the information is merged in the research process. The **primary source** for collecting data for the study is based on the fieldwork and the **secondary source** material includes the relevant published or unpublished written material on the issues linked to the study. To realize the above said objectives, in the present thesis mainly depended on the archival source material (primary) and secondary sources. The Archival sources comprise government orders and the Proceedings Madras Presidency Government. The secondary sources consisting of published books, articles, journals and unpublished works. These works help in formulating the conceptual and theoretical framework that is necessary in this work.

The **Historical Method** comprises the techniques and guidelines by which historians use primary sources and other evidence such as secondary sources and tertiary sources to research and then to write histories in the form of accounts of the past. The accounts of the past lies in identifying events and the causes for such events and eventually how the events themselves become causes for further events in a given chronological time frame.

⁴⁶ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/methodology>, dt.25th March 2010.

⁴⁷ Jean Liou Loubet Del, Jean, *Introduction to the Methods of Social Sciences*, Trans. Sunaina Suneja ed. J.C. Johari, Sterling Publishers PVT Ltd, New Delhi.

The **Ethnography Method** uncovers meanings and perceptions on the part of the people participating in the research viewing these understandings against the backdrop of the people's overall worldview or 'culture' and the researcher strives to see things from the perspective of the participants. Ethnography is a descriptive account of social life and culture in a particular social system based on detailed observations of what people actually does. The ethnographer focuses on selected informants within a community to elicit information clarification and responses to reveal common understandings related to the phenomena and these subjective but collective understandings are often interpreted to be more significant than objective data. Hence the ethnographer or the researcher occupies key position in the data collection and other process. In this thesis the ethnographic data is drawn from the accounts of the ethnographers and administrators.

VIII. Brief Chapterisation

The thesis is divided into Eight Chapters.

I. Introduction

This chapter deals with a general introduction to Tribal studies and the British legacy. Apart from the basic concept, significance of the study, nature and scope of the study, Area of the study, literature survey, aims and objectives of the study, hypothesis, methodology and sources of study are also enumerated in this Chapter.

II. Tribe and Tribal Studies: Perspectival Discourse

In this chapter the concept of tribe is traced from a historical perspective and brought forth different meanings attributed to tribe which eventually culminate in defining tribe. In the context of Indian Social frame, the term tribe acquires a significant meaning for it represents a distinct group of people whose social formation is totally different from the other social groups whose identity lies in 'caste hierarchy'. The tribe constitute isolated autochthonous communities living in the hilltops and forest regions with communal property holding as the primary mode of production with little social ranking. Hence, they are treated distinctly and given a separate status in the Constitution.

Having a separate existence in the rich forestlands the tribes have become a source of contest for the monarchical, feudal and colonial States. In this Chapter how the

tribals were viewed by different schools of thought such as Colonialists, Nationalists and Subalternists is discussed. The Colonialists' views were largely drawn from the English Utilitarianism and Orientalism wherein the tribals were depicted as Innocent, barbaric and uncivilized and therefore to be brought into the fold of development; whereas the Nationalists' perspective appreciated the tribal system of self governance. The Subaltern perspective only analyzed the tribal insurgencies and put forth a framework for studying such tribal revolts as an academic discourse. This was further taken up by the anthropological studies and they too categorized the tribal revolts from the ethnographic perspective.

III. Tribal Social Formation in India

This Chapter gives a theoretical and conceptual framework of the thesis. The term, 'social formation' is a generic concept propounded by the Marxists to denote various stages of development in different modes of production in the schema of primitive communism to communism. In India the pre-capitalist socio economic formations have undergone a vital change due to the colonial interventions. The colonial mode of production has initiated a proto capitalist socio economic formation in urban and semi-urban centres. The rural India too responded to this process through commercialization of agriculture to some extent. As a result absentee landlordism and middle class grew to a considerable extent and challenged the inroads of colonialism. However, the tribal societies being semi-nomadic and practicing communal ownership of land remained single entity groups without having class formation as such and hence, primitive. Even the colonial regime failed to alter the situation and in fact worsened the life style of the tribes by displacing them from their communal ownership. This chapter discusses some of these issues in the light of the scholastic debate.

IV. Tribes of Andhra Agency in Madras Presidency - An Ethnographical Account

In this Chapter an ethnographic account of the tribes of Agency areas is discussed. The agency areas which are part of the Northern Circars included the present Srikakulam, Vizayanagaram, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari and West Godavari, Krishna and Guntur districts of Andhra Pradesh and Ganjam and some parts of the Koraput districts of Orissa.

The 470 miles of coastal area comprising of above districts lay between the Gundlakamma in the Guntur district of A.P and Chilaka Lake in Orissa. The hill tracts of Andhra were the home of many tribals like Koyas, Konda Reddys, Bagathas, Kondadoras or Konda Kapus, Badabas, Ghonds, Savaras, Jatupas, Valmikis, Mudodaras, Parjas, Kotias, Ghasis, Dombas, Erukulas and Yanadis Gadabas, Gonds, Valmikis, Erukulas and Yanadis as well as small groups like Ronas, Pattunayakas and Bhils. Few dominant tribes such as Konda Reddys, Koyas and Bhagathas were taken for a detail study in order to show the salient features of the tribal social formation in the Agency areas.

V. British Administration in Madras Presidency - A Special Reference to Agency Administration in Andhra

This chapter deals with the colonial administration in the Agency areas. The present chapter examines the colonial revenue settlements applied to the tribal areas of the Andhra in Madras Presidency. It seeks to demonstrate the operation of colonial land revenue settlements on tribal lands and attempts to analyze the impact of such policies on the tribal society during British colonial rule. It is argued, in particular, that colonial land revenue policies did not consider the tribals and transformed them to landless labourers. The consequence of the colonial land revenue settlements were the emergence of various revenue officials in the tribal society such as Zamindars, Munsabdars, Muttadars etc., and their main duty was to collect revenue and favour the government. This chapter also examines two important issues of tribals namely,

1. The immigration of non-tribals from plains to scheduled area with vested interests of cornering resources in tribal areas.
2. The out-migration of some tribals from scheduled villages into interior forests on account of loss of resources mainly due to exploitation of non-tribal traders, moneylenders and landlords.

VI. Formulations of Colonial Policies in Madras Presidency

In this chapter formulation of colonial forest policy and its impact on tribal society in the Agency areas is studied in detail. In addressing the demand for more intimate knowledge and exploitation of Indian forest resources, British policy makers evolved an elaborate administrative structure, a stringent legal code, and a body of scientific practice incorporated in the form of Forest Laws. These formulations culturally alienated the indigenous societies. The edifice of state forestry was erected on the foundations of law, bureaucratic structures, and scientific knowledge that excluded contiguous village communities from forests in two ways. First, physical access was restricted. Second, the use value of the forest for subsistence was minimized by altering species composition and reducing biological diversity. Forest conservation was meant to conceal the real considerations of the British Empire's need for raw materials and to justify the expropriation of forests from "traditional" forest users in order to more fully exploit the forests.

Four important factors responsible for the emergence of legal debates and discourses related to the forest policies in the Madras Presidency is discussed in this chapter:

1. One, massive wood consumption by the shipbuilding, railways and the other government departments;
2. Two, the phenomenal agricultural expansion that had converted most of the forests and village common lands into cultivated fields;
3. Third, population increase and its pressure on the forest resources;
4. Fourth, wood and other requirements from the forest resources for the colonial state.

These four factors created pressure on the forest resource base and compelled the colonial state to formulate administrative and legal interventions for the management of the forests in the Madras Presidency. It was in this context that the legal ideas and debates on the forest legislation were pronounced in the Madras Presidency.

VII. Impact of the British Policies and Tribal Social Formation in Andhra:

The Impact of the British rule over the tribal lands and forestry can be viewed as a conflict between two opposing forces. For the British it is a struggle for power and maintenance of the statuesque and for the tribes it is a struggle for their very survival. The impact is studied from two perspectives; the British and the Tribal. For the British it is conservation forest resources and exploitation of forest wealth for infrastructural development such as railways, shipyards, and roads and buildings. In the process they encouraged outsiders from the plains to inhabit in the tribal villages for promoting settled agriculture. The tribals were discouraged from carrying out shifting cultivation. Having displaced from their native environs, the tribals resorted to revolts and insurgencies. However these revolts were all led by the non-tribals. Four phases in the tribal revolts are identified in this thesis.

VIII. Conclusion:

In this chapter a brief summery of all the chapters is given along with findings and suggestions. It is observed that the tribal resistance is due to structural impositions and displacement of the tribal mode of living. The nature of revolts indicate that they are not actually tribal revolts but given the image as tribal revolts. There is no tribal leadership found in any of the revolts unlike in the Northern India. The non-tribal leadership used for their selfish gains the tribals and projected them as tribal unrest. The tribal consciousness did not emerge to such an extent to identify their common enemy due to lack of tribal social formation interims of class interest.

Chapter-II

Tribe and Tribal Studies: Perspectival Discourse

I. Conceptual Framework of Tribe

Understanding of contemporary tribal societies requires a basic appreciation of the historical processes that have determined the course of successive changes which have affected the peoples of India, including the tribal societies, which were equally influenced by the forces of change which were economic, socio-cultural, ideological and political in their manifestations. Keeping in mind the vastness of the Indian sub-cultural multitudeness of its people, one can only generalize that the historical experiences would be as variable for different people as their interaction with their environment and the socio-political forces that they might have encountered from time to time. This time and space framework is essential to understand the tribal societies in the right perspective.

Definition of Tribe

To define the concept of the term 'tribe' is an old attempt. However, the attempt made by different scholars at different points of time often overlap. While defining, scholars have emphasized on universality, validity, and applicability of the term. The term tribe is derived from the Latin word *tribus*. Originally it was used to imply three divisions among the early Romans. Later on, it was used to mean the "poor" or the "masses". In the English language, the word appeared in the sixteenth century, and denoted a community of persons claiming descent from a common ancestor. But the popular notions of tribe emerged only with the expansion of colonialism and subsequent emergence of racist stereotype related to the people of Africa and Asia. Before colonialism, travelers, missionaries and explorers to these continents spoke of peoples, kingdoms etc., and only exceptionally tribes. And by the late nineteenth century, colonial

administrators and anthropologists had labeled the people of most parts of Africa and certain parts of Asia as tribals.¹

In ancient Indian literature, there seems to be no equivalent for the English term tribe, except for the Sanskrit word *Janah* denoting an agglomeration of individuals forming a large group of non-monarchical type with a definite territory kinship, common ancestry and common cultural pattern.² Prior to the British annexation, most of the presently called tribes were either unconscious of their ethno-tribal identifies or called themselves as people, vis-à-vis outsiders, in their own distinctive speech.

The term 'tribe' has assumed different meanings in different historical contexts. It basically refers to 'people' or communities of people mentioned as '*Janah*' in Vedic and Sanskrit literature.³ Since the days of extensive fieldwork carried out by organ among the American Indians and by Evans-Pritchard among the Nuers of East Africa, a structural definition has been drawn on this concept. However, it was basically confined to the small-scale communities. In rare cases, the neighboring communities have been included if they figure as an integral part of the concerned community.

Gradually, the demand was generated to define the tribe as a type of distinct social formation. However, it has always been difficult task before the scholars. The conceptual understanding of the tribe by the scholars during the 19th century was based on the stages of evolution and type of society and other features like relative isolation, common territory, common name and a common language, simple social formation, strong kinship bond, single social rank, distinct customs, existence of youth dormitory, common ownership over land and the natural resources and low level of technological development of few such attributes.

¹ Fluchr-Lobban, Carolyn, et al, "Tribe": A Socio- Political Analysis", *UCCA Journal of African Studies*. 7 (1), 1976, pp.143-165. Also see in Jagnnath Pathy, *Peasantry Dynamics of Tribal Development*, Inter-India Publications, New Delhi, 1984, p.2.

² Mamata Choudhury, *Tribes of Ancient India*, Indian Museum, Calcutta, 1977, pp. 6-12.

³ B.Choudhury, *Tribes of Ancient India*, Indian Museum, Calcutta, 1977, pp.6-12.

In the Indian Context, many attempts have been made to distinguish the tribe from that of non-tribal groups which help in understanding the concept of the term.⁴ For the first time Ghurye⁵ brought forward a wealth of evidence from classical, medieval and modern sources to demonstrate the interpretation of tribal and non-tribal cultural practices and social organizations.

The necessity of making census in Indian States during British era was not simply aiming at the census of population; rather it was more of documentation of the natural resources of the localities. This became useful as a wealth for making capital, which was rightly understood by British rulers. The first census report by Baine during 1891, the then Commissioner for Census of India included all tribal groups as 'Forest Tribes', and kept the same under the sub-heading of 'Agricultural and Pastoral Castes'. Their number was estimated at 16 million, who were again classified as 'Animists' or 'people following tribal religion' in the census report of 1911 by Gait; as 'Hill and Forest Tribes' in the Census Report of 1911 by Hutton. These people by that time were numbering 2 million and later on came to be known as 'Backward Tribes' in the Government of India Act 1935, and as 'Tribes' in the Census Report of 1941 accounting for a total population of 2.47 crores. Similarly, over the time the term 'tribe' in Indian context, by and large, is synonymously used as *Adivasi* (original settlers), *Girijan* (Hill dwellers), *Vanyajapt* (Forest caste), *Adimjati* (Primitive caste), *Janajat* (Folk Communities) and *Anusuchit Janajati* (Scheduled Tribe). Identification of the tribal groups through various fictitious names not only brought many common masses into its fold, but also imposed various new names, which the tribal people even do not know.

Another dimension of the term tribe is that in spite of various definitions and designations given to it, during last 10 years, anthropologists and others have come across of a new term, that is 'indigenous people' which also conceptually challenges the earlier meaning of the term for tribe. The justification to replace all the earlier

⁴ F.G. Baily, "Tribe and Caste in India" *Contribution to Indian Sociology*, No: V: 7-19, 1961; D.G.Mandelbum, "Social Grouping in Man", in H.L Shapire (Ed), *Culture and Society*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1956.

⁵G.S Ghurye, *The Aborigines- "So-called"- and their Future*, Gokhle Institute of Politics and Economic, Pune, 1943.

connotations of this term, tribal population basically relates to two major characteristics which have become the basis for identifying them as such, *i.e.*, autochthons various later settlers. The term 'indigenous people' to a large extent are similar to that of the term 'native' used during the colonial period. Since the distinctions of physical, racial traits and religion do not show many differences as compared to the non-tribal population the question of habitat, language and dialect have been regarded as the basis of tribal identity.

Soon after independence of India, it was felt to formulate policies and launch development efforts for the tribal population, which were incorporated in the Constitution of India. Certain pockets in India are largely dominated by the tribal communities, then known as 'excluded are' for the outsiders, which became redesigned as Scheduled Area and the list of tribal groups, later on noted in Indian Constitution, came to be known as Scheduled Tribes as per article 342. The number of such Scheduled Tribes in India was 212 in 1950, increased to 427 in 1971, again increased to 437 in 1981, and 612 in 1991, may be little more in recent decades, who vary in terms of population size, geographical distribution, mode of production and social organization.⁶ The conscious attempt to change the listing of Scheduled Tribes specifically during 1956 and 1976 has never changed its number compared to the changes in the later period due to various factors like political compassion and internal divisions. Many scholars have also referred to tribe as a type of society representing stage in social evolution, signifying a set of characteristic features and specific mode of social organization.⁷ They have explained four major sequential stages of evolution from 'band' to tribe to 'chiefdom' to the state.⁸ Later on, some of them have denied of the existence of any difference between tribe and chiefdoms, band and tribes, who however, do not reveal a meaningful direction.⁹

⁶ N.K.Behura and Nilakantha Panigrahi (ed), *Tribals and the Indian Constitution*, Rawat Publication, Jaipur, 2006, pp.6-7.

⁷ E.R. Service, *Primitive Social Organization*, Random House Inc, New York, 1962; M.H.Fried, *On the Concept of Tribe and Tribal Society*, Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences, Serious-II, No. 4, pp.527-540.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ M.Godelier, *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1977, pp.76-87.

The logic of defining 'tribe' is easily understood if it is linked to the debates of Constituent Assembly where Jaipal Singh a member favoured the use of the term 'Adivasi' instead of 'Scheduled Tribe'. This was rejected on the ground as argued by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution that the word Adivasi is really a general term, which has no specific *legal de jure* connotations. He argued that the term 'Scheduled Tribe' has a fixed meaning because it enumerates the tribes.¹⁰

Defining the concept of tribe in such a manner in India is still continuing due to the fact that very few studies have developed this issue, rather most of the scholastic studies on tribal themes are associated with tribal welfare. In this respect, Beteille concludes that anthropologists in India both before and after independence have been concerned more with the practical problems of definition.¹¹ As a result, even after six decades of development any attempt to include or exclude a group or a part thereof became a question of benefitting or depriving them from the protective regulation and largely became a discussion for the political statecrafts. During the last couple of decades, with the promulgation of special plan and policies for the welfare of the tribal people, certain indicators concerning poverty and backwardness have influenced the scholars while defining the concept of tribe. However, it is a fact that grouping tribal communities under the banner of Scheduled Tribes of the Indian Constitution does not help much in really consolidating their positions as single ethnic, linguistic and cultural entities rather than maintain their distinct identities.

Nevertheless, there have been a few trails in India to define tribe. But ironically, these definitions are not only dissimilar, but even contradictory to one another. This could not have been otherwise, when definitions are made on the basis of the study of one or two communities already notified as tribes. The socio-cultural variations among those groups being very wide, studies in different communities resulted in dissimilar conclusions. Also certain unsubstantiated images and propositions that are implicit in

¹⁰ N.K.Behura and Nilakantha Panigrahi (ed), op.cit. Pp.6-7.

¹¹ Andre Beteille, 'Anthropology and Some Indian Problems', Institute of Social Research and Applied Anthropology, Calcutta, 1972, p.188.

tribal anthropology appeared repeatedly in an exaggerated form to strengthen the level of tribe.

Ignoring the dissimilar features that appeared in various definitions of tribe, one can consider the commonly accepted attributes and analyze the level of conceptual clarity. In general, the defining attributes are (1) oldest inhabitants of the land but with shallow history; (2) common name territory and language; (3) strong kinship bond with endogamy and distinct taboos; (4) single social rank and political organization; (5) distinct customs, moral codes, religious belief and rituals; (6) youth dormitory, high illiteracy and absence of schooling; (7) common ownership or pre economic profession of subsistence level; and (8) low level of technological development. (Separation, Division of Labour, Hierarchy and Reciprocity)

If all the above indicators are considered necessary for a community of people to be called as a tribe, then apart from a dozen or so small communities the rest of those listed under the scheduled tribe category cannot be called tribe.

Major Perspectives on Tribal Studies

1. Colonial Perspective

The late 19th century saw a worsening of living conditions of tribal people in the tribal areas. Most areas like Bihar, Orissa and Central Provinces, and Agency areas of Andhra, land alienation and indebtedness amongst tribal people grew at an alarming rate. At the same time the conditions of tribals in forests also worsened as they were reduced to providing cheap labour to the forest department. All this created conditions of extreme dissatisfaction that also led to much protest by tribal people. Some of the most famous ones were Birsa Munda's movement in A.D. 1875, the Gudam Ramapa Uprising (A.D. 1879) and the Santhal uprising (A.D. 1855-1856) that forced the colonial policies. In other areas like the Mandla district of the Central Provinces *Baiga* tribal people fled from the forests and the British were forced to negotiate with them so that they remain in their villages and work for the forest department. They were thus forced to create an area where the otherwise banned practice of shifting cultivation would be allowed in some

part of the forests. All these protests and negotiations not only resulted in some welfare measures being put into place but also resulted in the crystallization of the tribal cultural identity which was reflected in anthropological and official texts of the time.

One of the most important debates of the time was the debate about the demarcation of tribal areas into protected zones under the Government of India Act of 1935. The enactment of the provisions showed that the tribals had now become completely dependent on the welfare measures of the state to meet their basic needs. The debate on the measures proposed under the Act also revealed the way in which different people viewed tribal people. One of the most important figures in the debate was W.V. Grigson,¹² an official who was commissioned to enquire into conditions of tribals in the Central Provinces viewed them with the lens of benevolent patriarchal authority. In the *Maria Gonds of Bastar* he wrote that the Marias, a primitive tribe of Bastar, were people who had lived in harmony with forests and thus he said that: “In most of this area (*penda* area) the forests have been too remote and inaccessible to be exploited, and that, even though some fine timber has been sacrificed much that has gone is over mature. Vast areas of forest have been reserved by the State, and it is not possible to work half these reserves. The Maria does not rage through the forest clearing patches for cultivation at random; he has more or less definite rotations, and a field of two to three years’ they may have a twelve or fourteen years’ rest, and a dense forest at the end of it. The axe and fire have let the light of civilization penetrate slowly but surely into the Bison-horn country as nothing would have done for centuries; they alone have prevented the Abujmarh tract from remaining a trackless wilderness”.¹³

The above view marked a significant departure from the views of officials in the 19th century. It also showed that the officials were forced to recognize the rights of tribal people in a manner that they were being articulated at that time. Further people like Grigson also reflected upon the role of the British Empire in tribal development when he wrote that, “Above all there must be an approach to some elements of ‘economic

¹² W.V. Grigson, *The Aboriginal Problem in the Central Provinces & Berar*, Government Publication, Nagpur, 1944.

¹³ W.V. Grigson, *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*, 1991,

democracy' if the aboriginal is to play his due part in the India of the future. There is no political democracy without economic democracy".¹⁴

For Grigson 'economic democracy' denoted ownership of land, freedom from indebtedness and from exploitation of labour at unusually low wages. To achieve 'economic democracy' outside intervention in tribal areas had to be restricted and government protection ensured.¹⁵ However what is significant about Grigson's perception is the fact that he considered the people in Bastar as similar to that of people in Africa when he wrote that: "The primitives have more in common with African tribes than they have with people in other parts of India such as the plains of Bengal, the Punjab or Maharashtra.... I don't think that "self governance" outside the village or tribe has ever entered their heads. It is obvious that what is needed is a form of protectorate and this can only be achieved through benevolent autocracy".¹⁶

The belief that tribals were not able to look after their own interests was largely based on the assumption that they had always lived in a hostile society that had exploited them. The creation of a protectorate would in fact enable forces that had their benefit at heart to protect their interests and also bring about their economic development. This perception was integral to many official anthropologists of the period whose vision was also informed by the European anthropological writings of their times. The most prominent of these anthropologists was **Verrier Elwin**¹⁷ who worked first in Central India, then Eastern India and finally the North-East. The romanticism and the functionalism of his anthropology have had an important impact on the way in which people have looked at tribal people. In the 1940s **Elwin** wrote in his famous pamphlet, *Aboriginal*, that "*a tribe that dances does not die*". By making such a statement he exemplified the fact that tribal people were distinguished from others by their distinctive

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Verrier Elwin, *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin*, Bombay, 1964.

cultural identity.¹⁸ For **Elwin** the ‘primitive’ was a romantic category which he described in the following way when he wrote that: "The life of a true aboriginal is simple and happy, enriched by natural pleasures. For all their poverty, their days are spent in the beauty of the hills. A woman carrying a load to the hill-top pauses a moment to see the scene below her. It is the ‘sweet forest’ the ‘forest of joy and sandal’ in which they live".¹⁹

The ‘forest of joy’ was Elwin’s dreamland - a place where people tended the dead, were devoted to the soil, staged a magnificent and colourful tribal festivals, and were infused with the spirit of sharing. For Elwin these were ‘things of value in tribal life’. For him the ‘primitive’ constituted a ‘pure’ and a ‘pristine’ state of existence that was morally superior to the civilized world.²⁰ Elwin’s image of the forest dwellers voiced his despair at the tendency towards the destruction of an idyllic society. This sentiment, however, was not expressed in a vacuum but embedded in it the critique of the modern industrial society. Thus he said that: “Until modern life is itself reformed, until civilization is itself civilized, until war is vanished from Europe and untouchability from India, there is no point in trying to change the aboriginals”. "Far better let them be for the time being not forever of course; that would be absurd. Perhaps in twenty, fifty or hundred years a race of men may arise who are qualified to assimilate these fine people in their society without doing them harm. Such men do not exist today".²¹

Elwin suggested the establishment of a national park in which the tribes might take refuge. On the other hand, the nationalist social workers like A.V Thakkar Bapa²² vehemently opposed the anthropological theory of separation and isolation. The Indian National Congress also held the view that the Excluded Areas were trick of the

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Baidyanath Saraswathi,(ed), *Tribal Thought and Culture*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1991,pp.14-15.

anthropologists to preserve the aboriginals as museum specimen for the exercise of their 'blessed science'.²³

Elwin assumed that the contact between the tribals and the wider agrarian society would result in the injustice to their cause. In this he also critiqued the British rule for its policies towards the tribals. He opposed the British policy of extending of modern commercial economy into these areas, and wanted a relaxation of forest rules. In this he also received the support of some colonial officials, notable amongst whom was the Governor of Bombay, Wylie who wrote that: "We are dealing with people whom their admirers describe as the ancient lords of the jungle but whom I personally prefer to consider as forest labourers isolated from the normal working of the law of demand and supply and as such at the mercy of the Forest Department who are the sole pervayors of the labour from which, if the inhabitants of the forest villages are to stay there at all, they have got to make a livelihood".²⁴

Sharing such a critique with Elwin, many colonists like **Wylie** and **Grigson** also shared with him the solutions to the problem. Ideally, Elwin wanted the forest dwellers to acquire the spirit and benefits of civilization without a painful transition process. Thus he wrote that: "I advocate, therefore, for the aboriginals a policy of temporary partial protection, and for their civilized neighbors a policy of immediate reform....It is not enough to uplift them into a social and economic sphere in which they cannot adapt themselves, but to restore to them liberties of their own countryside".²⁵ By advocating this position, Elwin showed how systemic change in forested areas, were organically linked to changes in modern society, which he considered decadent. Such a perception of tribes, their problems and solutions was to influence the thinking of scholars down the ages. The most prominent of these is Ramachandra Guha,²⁶ who in a recent biography of Verrier Elwin celebrated the cultural primitivism for which Elwin became really well

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Verrier Elwin, 1964.

²⁵ Verrier Elwin, 1964.

²⁶ Ibid.

known: “Most of all Verrier Elwin must be distinguished from other primitivists in that he actually lived with the persons whose culture he so vigorously celebrated. The narrator of primitivist revelries has the choice, which he generally exercises, ‘to return, at the end his sojourn, to the highly civilized countries he came from’.... Not many who wrote so eloquently of the return to nature,’ he [Elwin] remarked, ‘were prepared however, to take the journey themselves, *at least not without a return ticket*’.”²⁷

Elwin was living with the tribals and his understanding of their problems was therefore based on their experiences and life rather than the participant observation of an academic anthropologist. But even if this distinguishes him from others, his long-term ideas and the policies that he recommended succeeded in supporting the benevolent imperialism of people like Grigson. But it is not only Guha who were influenced by colonial anthropology, several other activists and anthropologists also used the arguments of people like Elwin and Grigson to justify their stand for the restoration of traditional tribal rights and identities in the current polity.

In the mid-forties when the negotiations for the transfer of power were in progress, the administrations became active to ensure the protection of tribal interests. Sir John Hubback²⁸, who had long experience of working in tribal areas in Bihar and Orissa, prepared a note on backward tribes at the instance of the Viceroy in 1944. He was of the opinion that the British government had a moral responsibility for the protection of the tribals even after the transfer of power. He recommended that the Indian government should allow the employment of officers for the upliftment of backward tribals who would work under a British high commissioner. Hubback also suggested the formation of a three-member committee consisting of an administrator, an anthropologist and a missionary to oversee the administration of the tribal areas. The secretary of the State for India was critical of the recommendations of Elwin that the tribals should be kept in reservations. He was doubtful about the political morality of maintaining the tribals as museum pieces.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Quoted in K.S Sing, *Tribal Society in India*, Monohar Publication, New Delhi, 1985, p.112.

T.S. Rutherford²⁹, who was governor of Bihar in mid-forties, was against any form of intervention in tribal affairs by the government of India. He indicated the policy towards tribals in the following words; “We have not done much for them beyond a certain amount of protective legislation which functions effectively where the officers responsible are really sympathetic.”

Ultimately, the proposal regarding the removal of the tribes from the jurisdiction of the provincial governments and their transfer to the control of an outside authority fell down as it was impracticable. It was conceded that if India was fit to govern itself, she must also be able to look after her aboriginals. It may be mentioned that in all the discussions about the management of tribal affairs, the tribals were nowhere in the picture.

II. Environmental Perspective

In the 1970s and early 1980s, tribes were seen as self sufficient and isolated societies that lived in harmony with nature. In the late 1980s and early 1990s a significant body of environmental history concentrates on the history of state forest management and its impact on the rights of local people. In these studies, some historians follow the assumptions of their predecessors by stressing that tribal communities had stable systems of survival. However, the notion of stability and harmony is elaborated in terms of the theory of ecological prudence. Authors like Ramachandra Guha and Madhav Gadgil argue that pre-colonial societies were well adjusted to caste institutions that regulated resource use where each community occupied a specific ecological niche in society.³⁰ These ecological niches were closed and self-contained systems of resource use that were regulated by social and cultural codes. And within this system the tribes were given the niche of being either hunter-gatherers or shifting cultivators who were well adjusted to their surroundings in all its aspects. The notion of a community is characterized by the idea of egalitarianism and homogeneity where there is little differentiation in terms of access to resources. It is also marked by the fact that political and ritualistic authorities are the source of resource management as well as the cohesiveness of the community.

²⁹ Ibid, p.116.

³⁰ Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha, *The Fissured Land*, Oxford University Press, 1992.

Kinship is defined as the organizing principle of labour and the conceptual and the cultural aspects of society defined the way in which the community related with other and defined the boundaries of the community. This is reflected in the work of Nandini Sundar and Ajay Skaria who attempt to complicate the picture by hinting at the transformation of community identities in history.³¹ While they are right about the transformations in identity, they too refuse to acknowledge the fact that the identities that they themselves were writing about were a result of the underdevelopment of tribal regions.³² The self-perceptions of tribal people of themselves as the original inhabitants or as shifting cultivators and hunters and gatherers got solidified with the colonial government putting a ban on these practices. Thus, the primordial tribal identity was hardly traditional in nature and in fact reflected the destruction of the productive forces in tribal societies.

III. Nationalist Perspective

Anthropology of tribes in India entered into a new theoretical debate with N.K Bose identifying the Hindu method of tribal absorption and G.S Ghurye considering tribe as a Hindu subsystem.³³ Surajit Chandra Sinha³⁴ followed it up systematically and profoundly and made significant contributions to both theory and method. His theoretical thrust has been evolutionary, but he has always laid emphasis on a natural historical approach, with descriptive integration in his ethnographic presentation of the tribal cultures. He tried to place the tribal social formations in a historical perspective, and yet retaining a core concern about the evolutionary levels.

In the contrast to the views of the anthropologists and the colonists, the nationalists of the 1930s and 40s were severely critical of colonial policies and hostile towards anthropological writings that celebrated the cultural primitivism. The supporters of tribal culture values considered the relationship between tribes and peasants to be exploitative in character. They contended that the segregation of these people was the

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Baidyanath Saraswathi,(ed), 1991,op.cit., pp.14-15.

³⁴ Ibid.

most effective way of modernizing them. They themselves convinced for their argument in the following;

Nationalist anthropologists and Congressmen contested these assertions, thereby arguing that the basis of exclusion was completely unfounded. The Congress debated the pro-exclusion British officials on two counts.³⁵ **The first argument** was political. It concentrated on being anti-imperialist in its stance and laid emphasis on the development of an overwhelming Indian identity that was intended to mobilize people against the colonial rule. **The second contention** contested the social and anthropological basis of the contentions made by those supporting the government policies of Exclusion and Partial Exclusion.

The Congress thought that the future of tribals was integrally linked with the economic progress of the rest of the Indian population. They did not want to deny these communities an opportunity to associate and learn from other advanced communities. They disagreed with the official view that the tribal people had special needs and rejected anything that celebrated the distinctiveness of cultures. For example in this scheme of thinking anthropology deserved contempt. Two leaders of the Central Provinces, **M.S. Aney and N.M. Joshi**, charged all anthropologists with desiring to keep all the “primitive races of India uncivilized and in a state of barbarism as raw material for their science in order to add to their blessed stock of scientific knowledge. But the most articulate position in this respect was taken by **G.S. Ghurye** in his monograph *Aborigines So -Called and Their Future* in which the crux of his thesis was that ‘aborigines’ were an integral part of the Hindu society since a very long time.³⁶ Explaining why these communities must be called “so-called aborigines” he said that: “It is clear from this discussion that the proper description of these peoples must refer itself to their place in it near Hindu society and not to their supposed autochthonism. While sections of these tribes are properly integrated with Hindu society, very large sections, in fact a bulk of them, are rather loosely assimilated. Only very small sections, living in the recesses of

³⁶ G.S. Ghurye, *Aborigines So -Called and Their Future*, 1963(Third Edition), pp.19-20; *Scheduled Tribes*, Popular Prakashan, 1963, Bombay.

the hills and the depths of the forests, have not been more than touched by Hinduism. Under the circumstances the only proper definition of these people is that they are imperfectly integrated classes of Hindu society. Though for the sake of convenience they may be designated as the tribal classes of Hindu society, suggesting thereby the social fact that they have retained much more of the tribal creeds and organization than many of the castes of Hindu society, yet they are in reality Backward Hindus".³⁷ In support of his views, he quoted who at one stage of the discussion on the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution observed: "the tribal people in areas other than Assam are more or less Hinduised, more or less assimilated with the civilization and culture of the majority of the people in whose midst they live."³⁸

According to **Ghurye**, the historical process inevitably led to the 'Hinduization' of the tribals. He argued that they would witness moral and economic betterment if they were 'properly assimilated' into such a society. Their dance and music would be allowed in Hindu society; and even if they lost some part of their culture, they would be at an advantageous position in the long run. Of the preservation of "tribal culture" Ghurye stated that: "Isolationism or assimilationism does not therefore appear to owe its inspiration either to a supposedly queer academic interest of the anthropologist or to the possibility of the perverse mentality of British administrators. It is very largely a matter of opinion as to [which is] the best way of preserving the vitality of the tribal people only secondarily complicated by other considerations".

Ghurye stated that the exclusion of the tribals was a political statement that was to be opposed. According to him its sociological and historical assumptions were inaccurate. He saw the peasant and tribal communities as open and dynamic structures, each influencing the other. But despite this conceptual framework, the merits of the assimilation of the tribes into Hindu society continued to be over emphasized in Ghurye's work. Ghurye was not the only nationalist sociologist to criticize the pro-Exclusionist policies.

³⁷ G.S. Ghurye, 1963, op.cit, Pp.19-20.

³⁸ Ibid. p.385.

In an essay entitled ‘**Hindu Method of Tribal Absorption**’ Nirmal Kumar Bose laid down his interpretation of the relationship of the dominant Hindu communities with tribes.³⁹ He said that, “From what has been observed among the Juangs and from the reading of law books, it is to be noted that the Hindu society while absorbing a new tribe or while creating a new *jati* by differentiation of occupation, always guaranteed or tried to guarantee monopoly in a particular occupation to each caste within a given region. The last point is very important; for the same *jati* may be found practicing many different trades if it finds the prescribed hereditary occupations no longer economically satisfactory”.⁴⁰

The stances of both Ghurye and Bose resulted in a defense of Hindu culture and society. They saw the tribal identity as a sub-set of the larger identity of the caste Hindu society and therefore did not consider the assimilation into Hindu society as a major problem. But this was not true of all nationalists. Social workers like **A.V. Thakkar**⁴¹ reflected upon the need to develop a strong nationalist identity.⁴² In 1941 Thakkar wrote that, “These people were the original sons of the soil and were in possession of our country before the Aryans poured in from the North West and North East passes, conquered them with their superior powers and talents and drove them from the plains to the hills and forests. They are older and more ancient children of the soils than the Hindus and more so than the Muslims and Anglo-Indians. But they are steeped in ignorance and poverty and do not know their rights and privileges, much less their collective and national responsibilities”.

In his interpretation of the tribal past, Thakkar tried to reinstate the position of these communities as the ‘original inhabitants of India’. However in doing so he also asserted

³⁹ Nirmal Kumar Bose, *Hindu Method of Tribal Absorption*; Nirmal Kumar Bose’s ‘India’s Eastern Tribes’, in Romesh Thapar, *Tribe, Caste and Religion in India*, The Macmillan Company, Meerat, 1977, pp.54-55.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Baidyanath Saraswathi, (ed), 1991, op.cit., pp.14-15.

⁴² K.S. Singh, ‘G.S Ghurye, Verrier Elwin, and Indian Tribes’, in A.R Momin, *The Legacy of G.S. Ghurye A Centennial Festschrift*, Popular Prakashan, 1996, p.43.

that the present conditions of poverty and ignorance in which tribal people lived had to be changed. This transformation could not be brought about through a policy of isolationism or Exclusion. Thakkar argued that the spirit of provincial government of national responsibility could only be inculcated into these communities through a policy of “assimilation”. But his path of assimilation was slightly different from that of Ghurye and Bose. He said that: “It is difficult for me to understand why these persons [persons in favour of Exclusion and Partial Exclusion] fear the contact with the Hindus and Muslims of the plains. In few cases the social evils of the plains are likely to be copied by unsophisticated aboriginals. But it is not right to consider that contact will only bring bad customs into tribal life and that the aborigines will suffer more than they benefit. Safeguards may be instituted to protect the aborigines from more advanced people of the plains, as has been done with regard to non-alienable land. But to keep these people confined to and isolated in their inaccessible hills and jungles is like keeping them in glass cases of a museum for the curiosity of purely academic persons”.

Thakkar considered the strategy of assimilation was an essential part of their development process. He believed that if these communities learnt some good things from the Hindu society, they would also be exploited by it. Hence he proposed a different type of a policy of protection for these communities. Rather than the confinement of these communities in a segregated space, he proposed protection of the forest communities through the legislation of special laws. In this sense, even if Thakkar was opposed to the Exclusion, he was in favour of some kind of protection for tribals.

The predominant nationalist view that the tribes were not a historically and anthropologically valid category was reflected in the writings of postcolonial writers who were inspired by them. Reviewing the literature on tribes and peasantry **Andre Beteille** wrote in 1987 that there was no satisfactory way of defining the tribal society. Arguing that it was difficult to call any one a tribal in Indian society, rather the agrarian society was comprised of a heterogeneous body of peasants cut up into various ethno-linguistic categories. In a similar vein Guha also argues that historically informed anthropologists like **G.S. Ghurye and D.R. Gadgil** were justified in repudiating the categories of aboriginals and tribals and that the historical record supported such skepticism. Thus we

find that the anthropologists, sociologists, and historians of contemporary tribal India were profoundly influenced by the writings of people who studied tribes in the colonial times.

The Indian National Congress at the Faizpur session (1936) expressed its views as follows; “This Congress is of the opinion that the separation of these excluded and partially excluded areas is intended to leave out of popular control, the disposition and exploitation of the mineral and forest wealth in these areas and to keep the inhabitants of these areas apart from India for their easier exploitation and suppression. The Congress holds that the same level of democratic and self governing institutions should be applicable to all parts of India without any distinction.”⁴³

Gandhi’s Perspective

During the debates in Constituent Assembly Indian Nationalist opinion was mainly shaped by Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru. Mahatma Gandhi’s interest in the tribal problem was largely influenced by Thakkar Bapa.⁴⁴ Tribal welfare was one of the items included in Gandhiji’s fourteen–point reconstruction programme which was drawn up in January 1942. He believed that the Adivasis could not be neglected. He had intensely disliked the policy of isolation and status quo and the concept of the Excluded areas. In 1946 he said that he regarded as a “matter of shame that the Adivasis should be isolated from the rest of the nation of which they were an inalienable part.”⁴⁵ If a social worker was prevented from social service to the Adivasis, he should be prepared to go to prison. Under Gandhiji’s inspiration a number of voluntary agencies were formed for social service in Gujarat, Bihar, Assam and other states.⁴⁶ To some extent these activities brought some tribals into the mainstream of the national movement. These organizations

⁴³ J.S Bandari and Subhadra Mitra Channa,(ed), *Tribes and Government Policies*, Cosmo Publication, New Delhi, 1997, p.57.

⁴⁴ Sachidanda, ‘Colonial Hangovers and Democratic Imperatives- Study of Tribal Policy in India’, ‘in J.S Bandari and Subhadra Mitra Channa,(ed), *Tribes and Government Policies*, Cosmo Publication, New Delhi, 1997, pp. 50-59

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

became the channels for the spread of the ideas of nationalism and freedom. In course of time, a nationalist perspective on tribal problems emerged in contrast to the isolationist approach of missionaries and administrators.

Nehru's Perspective

Nehru's⁴⁷ perception of tribes was shaped by their early participation in different Congress sessions. In December 1937, Nehru met for the first time a mixed group of tribals from the North East. He did not like the idea of segregating the tribals from the rest of the country. He emphasized the unity of India and considered the concept of excluded areas as undesirable in course of a talk with the representatives of Chittagong Hill tracks in July 1945 at Simla. However, Nehru's enthusiasm about unity of the country in relation to the tribals began to wane during his visit to Assam in December, 1945. He came to realize that the tribals needed a general assistance from the government to shed their backwardness. They have also to be given protection to save them from exploitation. He began to feel that such groups needed autonomy and freedom to shape their lives as they liked. Thus, Nehru's philosophy moved from uniformity to protection and then autonomy.

IV. Subaltern Perspective

The purpose of this part is to draw attention to only two of the potentially useful analytical paradigms for studying tribal revolts in India. These approaches have unfortunately remained neglected at least by the mainstream sociology and social anthropology in India. It is high time we took cognizance of them and entered into paradigmatic dialogue.

An important approach to the study of tribal movements has been enunciated by Ranajit Guha⁴⁸ and his historian colleagues in India and abroad. Broadly designated as 'subaltern historiography', this approach seeks to restore a balance by highlighting the

⁴⁷ Sachidananda, "The Legacy of Nehru and Tribal Policy in India" in *The Legacy of Nehru*, G.B. Pant Institute, Allahabad. Also see in J.S Bandari and Subhadra Mitra Channa,(ed), 1997, pp. 101-102.

⁴⁸ Ranajit Guha (ed.), *Subaltern Studies-Writings on South Asian History and Society*, Vol. I, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1982.

role of the politics of the people as against elite politics played in Indian history. Thus, 'elite' and 'people' are viewed as binary domains to constitute a structural dichotomy. Adherents to this approach argue that the elitist historiography, whether of the neo-colonialist or of the neo-nationalist variety, has always overstated the part the elite has played in building Indian nationalism, but it has failed to acknowledge, far less properly interpret, the contributions made by the people (masses) on their own, independently of the elite.⁴⁹ Parallel to the domain of elite politics there always existed throughout the colonial period another domain of Indian politics in which the principal actors were not the dominant groups of the indigenous society but the 'subaltern' classes and groups constituting the masses of the labouring population and the intermediate strata in the town and country people.⁵⁰

Subaltern historiography treats 'people' (subalternity) as an autonomous domain that originates neither from elite politics nor depends on them. Therefore, whereas the mobilization in the domain of elite politics is achieved vertically, in that of subaltern politics it is achieved horizontally. Guha, however, does admit that given the diversity of its social composition, the ideological element in the subaltern domain is not uniform in quality and density and at times such diversities lead to pursuit of sectional interests, economic diversions as well as sectarian splits that tend to undermine the horizontal alliances in this domain. Therefore, Guha also clarifies that the two domains have not been sealed off from each other but often overlapped mainly because the elite domain always tried to mobilise and integrate them but primarily to fight for elite objectives; however, the subaltern masses managed to break away from the elite control and put their characteristic stamp on campaigns initiated by the elite groups.

The whole thrust of subaltern historiography is on reconstructing 'the other history', i.e., history of people's politics and movements and their attempts to make their own history. As a brilliant demonstration of how the 'other history' could be constructed

⁴⁹ Ranajit Guha (ed.), 1982, op.cit., pp. 2-3.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 4.

Guha has offered us a study of the peasant insurgency in colonial India.⁵¹ The study provides with a useful framework for studying social movements in general and tribal/peasant insurgencies in particular. It is, of course, anchored in subaltern historiography for understanding the complex phenomena of peasant or ethnic protest movements in contemporary India. It is one of those serious pieces of social science scholarship which has raised many theoretical and methodological issues that must not only be acknowledged but also debated seriously.

While analyzing the tribal insurgencies in colonial India, Guha makes no secret of the fact that his approach to the study of social movements basically forms a part of the general tradition of scientific Marxism-but a variant of it quite obviously deduced from Gramsci's formulations that are refreshingly original and hence intellectually very stimulating.⁵² With all the candidness that is often associated with a Marxist, Guha believes that the task of historiography is to interpret the past in order to change the present world and that such a change involves a radical transformation of consciousness. He therefore warns social scientists and activists not to view peasant or tribal insurgents merely as 'objects' of history but to treat them as 'makers' of their own history-endowed with a transformative consciousness of their own.

In spelling out his 'subaltern' approach Guha naturally hits out at the conventional discourses on tribal insurgencies which hitherto have served in the colonialist historiography as merely an apology for 'law and order'. Those attempts to understand insurgent movements were simply aimed at 'counter-insurgency' to prevent their occurrence in future. The sense of history was thus converted by the conventional discourses into an element of 'administrative concern'.⁵³ At the same time Guha is equally critical of orthodox Marxist historiography for its failure to recognize the role of pure spontaneity in history. His target is clearly set on all those recent peasant studies (i.e., studies on peasant movements including revolts or insurgencies) which have emphasized

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ranajit Guha (ed.), 1983, op.cit.

⁵³ Ibid, pp.3-4.

'organization', 'leadership', and 'ideology' as the key elements in the formation of rebels' consciousness and have tended to treat the insurgencies as 'pre-political' phenomena.⁵⁴ Guha observes that those who do not recognize the first glimmer of consciousness in apparently spontaneous and unstructured movements of the peasant or tribal masses and often brand them as 'pre-political'.

Are the tribal insurgencies in colonial India 'pre-political' or 'political' phenomena? To Guha the term 'pre-political' is as misleading as it is value-laden; it helps us the least in understanding the experience of such movements in colonial India. Tribal insurgencies have to be understood in the backdrop of the attempts of the colonial State to revitalize landlordism and to promote parasitic landlordism. The peasant and tribal tenantry rebelled against *sarkari*, *sahukari*, and *zamindari* oppression to which they were subjected. The uprisings of Bhumij, the Kol insurrection, the Santal revolt of 1855, the indigo disturbances of 1859-62 and the Deccan riots of 1875 in the nineteenth century come to mind almost immediately. The subaltern insurgents were then trying to break and destroy the then existing structure of power relationships.⁵⁵ Hence the insurgents' action was no less political than the politics of the liberal reformist struggles of the 'no-rent' or 'no-tax' variety under the banner of the Congress or the Left-wing insurrectionary struggles of peasants (such as the Tebhaga or Telangana struggles) of the twentieth century in India. Guha, however, admits that 'none of the basic elements (i.e., leadership, aims, programmes and ideology) of the insurgencies of the 1793-1900 period (roughly from the Rangpur uprising to the Birsa Munda movement) could compare in maturity and sophistication with those of the historically more advanced movements of the twentieth century'⁵⁶ (emphasis added). Thus, he too accepts the fact that the twentieth century movements of the peasantry and tribals have been qualitatively different and decisively more advanced-which hopefully refers to the level of consciousness, organization and ideological articulation. If the argument is that the difference between the two sets of movements that we designate 'pre-political' and 'political' is to be seen

⁵⁴ D.N. Dhanagare, *Peasant Movements in India 1920-1950*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1983

⁵⁵ Ranajit Guha (ed), 1983, op.cit. p. 8.

⁵⁶ Ranajit Guha (ed.), Vol. II, op.cit.,p. 10.

essentially in relative degrees and not in absolute terms, then one can have little disagreement with Guha. But if he is suggesting that such a qualitative difference does not exist then it is difficult to agree with him. Those who treat the nineteenth century peasant or tribal insurgencies as 'pre-political phenomena' would also agree that just because the sporadic and spasmodic revolts failed to rise above localism, sectarianism and ethnicity does not take away from them either their essentially political character, or their significance in history.

Six Forms of Insurgencies

Guha's main objective in studying insurgencies of the colonial period is to show how patterns of subordination and insubordination have run on parallel tracks throughout the colonial history of India, and how affirmation of domination or resistance, or insurgency and counter-insurgency have reinforced each other. It is not difficult to see the influence of Hobsbawm's works⁵⁷ and also of George Rude's⁵⁸ work on Guha's study. Guha has abstracted certain common forms and general ideas in the rebels' consciousness. These six forms are: 'negation' (implying formation of negative identity), 'ambiguity', 'modality', 'solidarity', 'transmission' and 'territoriality'. He draws his evidence to construct these paradigmatic forms from various tribal movements of the 1793-1900 period studied extensively by anthropologists, ethnographers and historians. Since Guha's framework has a heuristic value in studying a variety of tribal/ethnic or peasant movements it is necessary to deal with these six forms at some length.

1. Negation

The first elementary form of peasant or insurgent tribal consciousness is 'negation' which connotes that the rebel's identity is first found by him not in his own properties, but by the diminution and negation of those of his superiors. Such negativity may not be a fully developed class-consciousness; but taking a cue from Gramsci again, Guha regards

⁵⁷Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels*, Manchester University Press, 1959; *Bandits*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972.

⁵⁸George Rude, *Crowd in History-A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England 1730-1848*, John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1964.

negativity as the first glimmer of that consciousness.⁵⁹ Accompanied by the ability to discriminate friends from foes, negation often results in selective violence only against the perceived enemies. The *jaqueries* in France, the peasant wars in Germany⁶⁰ and also the famous Luddite machine-breaking riots or Captain Swing type movements in England during the early phase of the Industrial Revolution⁶¹ portrayed the same negativity in which violence spread by analogy and transference.⁶² In the Indian context, peasant and tribal insurgents often reversed or rejected the homological relations in feudal society; all traditional forms of respect, dress, writing, language-styles, etc., were turned upside down. These were insignia symbolic of the exclusive preserve of feudal monarchies, nobility from which the subaltern was always debarred. The rebel's defiance of these structural rules (acts of inversion) was thus a negative assertion of his identity and consciousness.⁶³

2. Ambiguity

The second form-'ambiguity'-in Guha's scheme draws on the basic difference between 'crime' and 'insurgency', although the two have often been used synonymously in colonial historiography. To Guha, crime tends to be an individualistic or small group-oriented, but secretive or conspiratorial, action. In contrast, insurgency has a mass character which manifests publicly. The two acts derive from two different codes of violence, but since in the overt form the acted violence may be similar, there is an ambiguity in violence as an internal or integral part of insurgency.

3. Modality

'Modality'-the third elementary aspect--is a logical extension of the public character of tribal or peasant insurgencies. Drawing on the episodes of the Pabna riots

⁵⁹ Ranajit Guha, 1983, op.cit. pp. 19-20.

⁶⁰ Frederick Engels, *Present Wars in Germany*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1969.

⁶¹ George Rude, *Crowd in History.*, 1964, op.cit.

⁶² Ranajit Guha, 1983, op.cit., pp. 21-26.

⁶³ Ibid, pp. 54-56, 61-64.

(1873), the Santal hoot (1855) and the Deccan riots (1875), Guha shows how by electing 'rebel *nawabs*' and the like, the insurgents truly searched for an alternative source of authority. It is often formalized by the general body of insurgents through ritual presentation of *nazranas* which marks validation and scarification of the rebel violence as a public service.⁶⁴

In the actual autonomous process of mobilization, the pull of primordial loyalties or sentiments of kinship, ethnic community ties and co-residence often play a significant part. However, Guha has stressed the fact that 'it was only rarely that the mobilisation of an insurgent peasantry or a tribal group adopted so explicitly a religious form in colonial India as one might expect'.⁶⁵ The observation both sweeping and hasty, is actually falsified by Guha's own evidence on the 1857 Mutiny and of course on the Birsa Munda movement which clearly showed the religious overtones of their agrarian distress coupled with ethnic identity.⁶⁶ Moreover, if Guha had carefully looked at the Moplah insurgencies from the 1830s to 1921⁶⁷ then he would have certainly qualified his claim regarding the strikingly 'secular' modality of such peasant or tribal uprisings.

It is true that no narrowly conceived economic interpretations can possibly explain some of the forms in which the rebel activity manifests. Guha has asserted that when subaltern sections resorted to burning, wrecking and destroying, the considerations of economic gain did not figure very prominently. But can this modality (relating to non-economic orientation) be stated as a general law? Is economic rationality absent totally in the insurgent's action and is it always overwhelmed by motives of power as exclusively as Guha suggests? How else do we account for the umpteen instances of plunder of goods and looting of cash by the Kols in Chotanagpur and by the Santals, the

⁶⁴Ranajit Guha, 1983, op.cit., pp.112-115.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p.125.

⁶⁶ K. S. Singh, *Dust Storm and Hanging Mist-Birsa Munda and His Movement*, Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, 1966, pp. 39-53, pp. 198-199.

⁶⁷ D.N. Dhanagare, *Peasant Movements.*, 1983, op.cit.

details of which have been furnished by Guha himself?⁶⁸ The plunder and loot are far from incidental acts of negativity or inversion but can certainly be tinged by it. Tribal or peasant insurgents do not simply aim at destroying the cultural insignia and symbols of power but they also care for economic gains if and when opportunities come their way. In glorifying and sentimentalising the insurgents' actions, as Guha does, it is not always necessary to deny them their normal attributes of robust practical wisdom and economic rationality as the colonialist historiography often did. Quite paradoxically, Guha is caught in the same fallacy that his subaltern approach aims at demolishing.

In contrast to plunder and destruction as a modality, killings and bloodshed tend to be a rarer phenomenon and hence must not be treated as the principal feature of insurgency behavior. Guha argues: 'It is in fact counter-insurgency which makes killings as its principal modality.' The rarity of bloodshed in peasant or tribal insurgencies has been attributed by Guha not to their compassion but to their failure to overcome the inhibitions of the old semi-feudal culture and the spiritual conditions of their subalternity.⁶⁹

4. Solidarity

'Solidarity'-the next form in which the peasant or tribal insurgent's self-consciousness manifests itself-signifies separation of his own identity from that of his enemies. Although this form overlaps with negativity considerably, Guha has made two important points here. First, the quality of 'collective consciousness' (*a la* Durkheim) varies from one phase of insurgency to another. Secondly, class 'solidarity' and other solidarities (i.e., those emerging from ethnic, religious, caste or filial ties) are not mutually exclusive; rather 'these overlap as they did in most of the peasant uprisings or ethnic movements before 1900 because the dye of the traditional culture had not yet washed off the peasant/ethnic consciousness'. This is what Guha characterises as the duplex character of insurgency⁷⁰ in which sometimes class and religion are intertwined (e.g., as in the Moplah uprisings) and sometimes ethnicity and class identities get fused as

⁶⁸ Ranajit Guha, 1983, op. cit., Pp.149-151.

⁶⁹ Ibid, pp. 161-166

⁷⁰ Ibid, pp. 169-171.

is best illustrated by the case of the Birsa Munda movement.⁷¹ In fact, Guha goes a step forward and argues that the Kol and Birsa rebellions stand apart from the rest of the tribal uprisings in the nineteenth century in that class solidarity had triumphed over ethnicity in those cases more decisively than in any other tribal uprising. Of course, Suresh Singh, whose evidence has been used by Guha, has himself not attempted a clear-cut analysis of the Birsaite movement. Thus, Guha claims that the rebel consciousness in those instances projected well beyond the sense of tribe or caste.⁷²

The solidarity of the rebel peasant or tribal, manifests in chastisement of traitors. 'Active collaboration is sired by insurgency no is than is rebel solidarity itself. Thus solidarity and collaboration (betrayal) close on each other in a figure of perfect symmetry. The rebel's hostility to traitor is thus an articulation of the rebel's own class-consciousness'⁷³ which is similar to the identity being defined negatively.

5. Transmission

In 'transmission' as a form/aspect of peasant or tribal insurgency, Guha deals essentially with the patterns of spread of insurgency. Through iconic and symbolic signs or even rumours, other subaltern sections/groups are also contacted and drawn into uprising. Whether the rebels organise prayer meetings, beat their drums, flutes or horns, distribute branches of *sal* trees, or a fiery torch, or whether they distribute *chapatis*, *tel* (oil) or *sindur* (vermilion powder), all these were the most effective instruments of this transmission in the Kol, the Santal and the Birsaite movements, in the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, and also in the Moplah rebellion of 1921⁷⁴. What is significant is that in this transmission by verbal codes or through visual signs, the ideology of class struggle is invariably mediated by religion because Guha believes that the politics of rebellion or

⁷¹ K. S. Singh, 1966, op. cit., p. 202.

⁷² Ranajit Guha, 1983, op. cit., p. 188.

⁷³ Ibid, pp. 204-209.

⁷⁴ D.N. Dhanagare, 1983, op. cit.

tribal insurgencies are almost always expressed in sacred idioms as they are very effective in arousing mass support."⁷⁵

6. Territoriality

Lastly, 'territoriality' is that aspect or form of peasant/tribal consciousness in which insurgents get bound by blood ties (consanguinity) on the one hand and by local bond (contiguity) on the other. A sense of belongingness to a common lineage and to a shared habitat overlaps with one another. Thus, ethnic space and physical space notions are constituents of territoriality. Guha has stressed the fact that even this consciousness has often transcended the limits of ties of either blood or habitat or both. Therefore, the 1857 Mutiny could spread far beyond the heartland of the Doab region as well as Oudh.⁷⁶ In this context Guha has criticised S.C. Roy and many other anthropologists who failed to see through the anti-colonial content of the tribal revolts or peasant movements in India and who thereby have helped to perpetuate the myth that tribal/peasant insurgency was nothing more than a demonstration of ethnic antagonism against the *diku*-(i.e., outsider)⁷⁷ and that peasant movements were nothing but 'disturbances' that created law and order problems for the colonial administration. But, in one sense, the ethnic antagonism-expressed in idioms like '*diku*'-is also a way of redefining 'imperialism' as 'internal colonialism': a point missed completely by Guha.

The common forms or patterns of tribal insurgents' consciousness are made up not only of elements and tendencies which are mutually consistent but also those which clash and conflict with one another. Guha does not visualise the common form in which the rebels' consciousness manifests as a generality that is external to the subject or that is a *sui generis* phenomenon, nor is it any abstract quality of insurgency discovered by pure abstraction and reflection. Rather, it is what permeates and includes in it everything particular. Hence Guha's framework consists of 'abstracted elementary forms' that are firmly rooted in the concrete foundation of facts drawn from the nineteenth century tribal

⁷⁵ Ranajit Guha, 1983, op. cit., pp. 227-248, p. 251.

⁷⁶ Ibid, pp. 280-286.

⁷⁷ Ibid, p.200.

insurgencies. Therefore the impact of Durkheim on Guha's analytical framework is more apparent than real. Like formal sociologists (Georg Simmel and others) Guha does not fall into the trap of reification-a standard error in any formal analysis. Instead his sight is fixed on the insurgent Kols, Santals and Birsaites movements; it is these rebels' consciousness which Guha has analysed and it is the deep historical meaning of their insurgencies in colonial India to which his study draws our attention.

The subaltern approach, at least the form in which Guha demonstrated its use in his own study⁷⁸ of peasant insurgencies, as stated earlier, draws heavily on Emile Durkheim's notion of 'elementary forms', or George Simmel's concept of 'forms of interaction'. In substance, however, the subaltern studies approach as it developed in India clearly represents a synthesis of four major streams within contemporary Marxism: (i) First and the most obvious of these is Gramscian Marxism which emphasises the role of pure spontaneity of the action of subaltern masses in history in general and under a hegemonic State in particular. For theoretical justification, conceptual/analytical tools, and also for abstractions of general explanation, the subaltern approach draws obviously on Gramsci. (ii) No less obvious is the influence of Trotskyite-Marxism-particularly in terms of consciousness (i.e., necessary consciousness as opposed to contingent consciousness). Guha's subaltern studies approach treats consciousness the way Trotsky did. For Trotsky, objective theoretical positions reigned supreme and these must be judged objectively, rather than shifting them pragmatically, as the Stalinist politicians often did, by twisting their theoretical pronouncements guided by personal power ambitions or political motivations.⁷⁹ Following Trotsky then, the subaltern approach to history considers the role of party, strategies and tactics as important, no doubt, but not as prior to 'necessary consciousness'. (iii) The third Marxist stream which Guha's own approach draws inspiration from is represented by Eric Hobsbawm, George Rude and E.P. Thompson, who through their studies⁸⁰ have shown the indispensability of the material

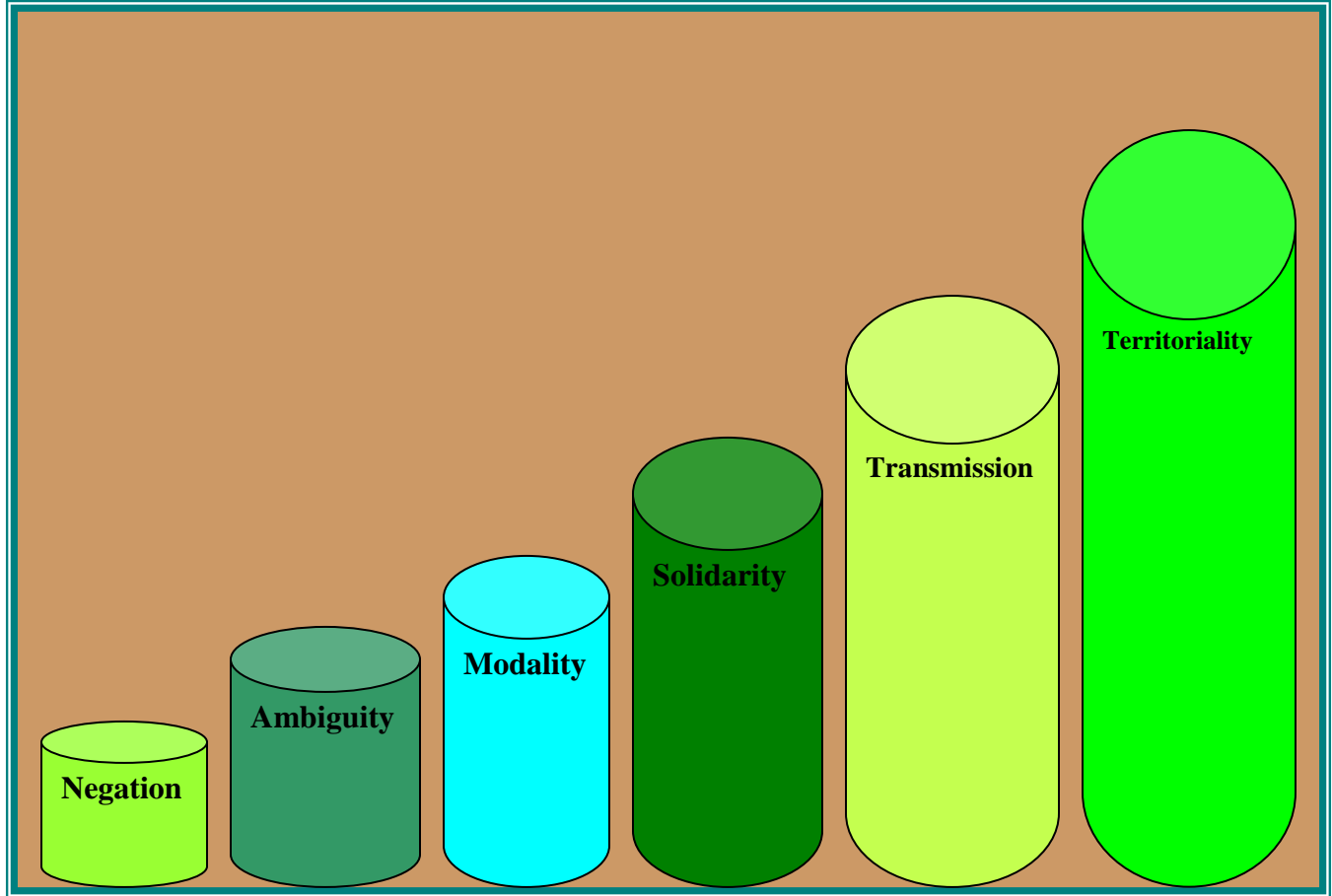
⁷⁸ Ranajit Guha, 1983, op. cit., p.200.

⁷⁹ J. Areh Getty, 'Trotsky in Exile: The Founding of the Fourth International', *Soviet Studies*, V ol. XXXVIII n. 1, January 1986, pp. 24-36.

⁸⁰ For example, see Hobsbawm's *Primitive Rebels*, (1959) and *Bandits* (1972), Rude's *Crowd in History* (1964) and E.P. Thompson's *Making of the English Working Class*.

force and actors of history. And finally, (iv) in terms of the directions in which subaltern struggles develop, or the forms in which they manifest, Guha and his associates have clearly tended to model their arguments on the lines indicated by the 1968 Paris Uprising (i.e., the massive student and youth protest that finally brought the downfall of Charles de Gaulle), the Latin American movements-particularly the experience of Che-Guevara in Bolivia and the like. It is a blend of these four traditions in contemporary Marxism that Guha's subaltern studies approach to history represents.

Subaltern Typology: Six Forms of Insurgencies



(Diagram: 2:1)

The 'subaltern studies' approach earned critics as fast as it gained a following, particularly among young historians from both India and abroad, though not so much among other social scientists. These historians have focused their attention on peasants, workers and other subaltern elements, in an attempt to show how their protests have been spontaneous and traditional and yet far more radical in their methods of resistance, sometimes even in their goals, than the elite and middle-class dominated nationalist movement in India was. Above all, in conformity with Ranajit Guha's contention, these studies-the results of which are now available in a series of five volumes⁸¹-also argue that such spontaneous movements were independent of the nationalist leadership which

⁸¹ Ranajit Guha (ed.), *Subaltern Studies-Writings on South Asian History and Society*, Vol. I, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1982-1987.

often tried to control them if possible, or even to suppress and subvert them whenever necessary.⁸²

Critics of the 'subaltern studies' approach have attacked precisely the whole notion of 'autonomy' of the subaltern consciousness. Irfan Habib and many others have questioned the validity of such an attempt to study subaltern groups and their protest movements in isolation from other parallel political processes. A struggle or a protest movement that appears to be autonomous is in reality preceded by several changes in the consciousness of its principal participants. Such changes often emanate from wider political processes, including the elite politics which the subaltern approach followers have decried. In the Indian context the interface between the national movement led by the Indian National Congress and the grassroots level protests and resistance movements is too significant to be ignored, because the latter was a prime source of ideas for the former.⁸³

Another major difficulty with the subaltern studies approach pertains to the lack of precise meaning and scope of the concept of 'subalternity' as an analytical category. In a separate note on the term by Guha⁸⁴ he admits that the composition of this category is not homogeneous. The term is more residual in its connotation as it includes practically all non-elite sections of the people. Guha treats the lowest strata of the rural gentry, impoverished landlords, rich and upper-middle peasants as all belonging to the category of 'people' or 'subaltern classes'. But then he has left it to individual researchers to investigate, identify and determine the specific nature of subalternity by situating it historically. With this rider it should be possible to consider *adivasis* (tribals), untouchables or *dalits*, sharecroppers, and agricultural labourers, as well as other marginalised sections with specific ethnic, non-class characteristics (caste, religion, clan, language or regional identity of a minority group) as 'subaltern classes'. But then by no stretch of imagination can the class outlook and interests of these immiserated and

⁸² Kapil Kumar, *Peasants in Revolts: Tenants, Landlords, Congress and the Raj in Oudh, 1886-1922*, Manohar, Delhi, 1984.

⁸³ Irfan Habib, *Interpreting Indian History*, North-eastern Hill University Publications, Shillong, approximately 1986

⁸⁴ Ranajit Guha (ed.) op. ct., Vol. I, p. 8.

marginalised groups be compatible, let alone identical, with those of the lowest strata of rural gentry, the rich and upper-middle peasantry whom Guha treats as the ideal components of 'subalternity'.

More importantly, the subaltern studies approach to historiography in a way confines itself preferentially to the colonial period, though not all the adherents strictly do so. In addition to this, at least by implication, the approach is applicable only to those mass mobilisations which took on the insurgent character, and hence it is inapplicable to those tribal/peasant or any other protest movements which were not truly insurgent in character. This again, by implication, severely restricts the scope of Gramscian formulations. If, however, members of the 'subaltern studies' group (or maybe school) insist that the concept should be used for studying only the insurgent responses of the people during the colonial period, then the approach excludes all those ethnic/tribal, peasant, or any other protest movements which are not necessarily insurgent in character but which can be called as 'revolutions of rising expectations'.

IV. Perspectives on Tribal Revolts

The Anthropological and Sociological writings dealing with tribal movements have been classified under two categories viz Macro and Micro perspective.

Stephen Fuchs and Ghurye's⁸⁵ studies on the tribal movements are the example of the first category mentioned above. Stephen Fuch's⁸⁶ concern is to delineate the general pattern of a tribal movement. He tries to understand tribal movements with reference to the messianic movement His list out fourteen traits of a messianic movement found universally. According to him presence of large populous groups itself provide the ground for more movements in India. According to Fuchs these two large groups are primitive tribes officially known as aboriginals; while the other group is called Scheduled caste. They are underprivileged sections of Indian population who have experienced social, economic and political oppression. Besides, social, economic and political

⁸⁵ Ghurye, G,S, 1963, op.cit.

⁸⁶ Stephen Fuchs, *Rebellious Prophets: A Study of Messianic Movement in Indian Religions*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1965.

oppression, the relationship with the colonial ruler itself was exploitive and oppression in nature. The oppressive colonial rule to exploit tribal community also led to the emergence of messianic movement. Fuch's study of messianic movement tries to analyze different cultural and social factors on wider scale.

In the light of the observations made by anthropologists regarding the rebellious tendencies among the tribal it is obvious that the tribal movements were studied both by incorporating micro and macro perspective. Therefore, there is a need to study the structural constrains that force the tribals to rebel. And for this, both the kinds of perspectives i.e., micro and macro are required.

Social anthropological studies of tribal movements found wider acceptability since the Second World War. The upsurge of interest in studying tribal movements in Africa and America paved the way for attempting paradigmatic shift in the approaches of studying tribal movements. The conceptual and methodological approaches saw new leads by the French, Italian and German historians of Socio-cultural studies and anthropologists. Stephen Fuchs' study provides an exhaustive account of the Messianic Movement in Indian context.

Since the colonial rulers extended patronage to the non-tribals settled on tribal land, they became the direct target in most of the armed uprisings of the tribal protest movement. Fuchs have also pointed out the characteristic of tribal movements suggesting that, the tribal movements in the 19th and first half of the 20th century can be regarded as anti-colonial at their core, but the actions of resistance and revolt were primarily directed against the non-British local exploiters. He also suggests that one may distinguish three main approaches in the study of tribal movements in British India. They are,

1. Tribal movements has reaction to a clash of cultures and related deprivation (The Messianic Movements);
2. The tribal movement as expression of social disorganization (The Revitalization Movements)
3. The tribal Movements as resistance of the 'subaltern'.

The subaltern manifest in dual way in tribal areas: Tribals were opposed outsiders who threatened their territory and customary ways of life and on the other they were themselves divided into a local elite with wealth, status and political influence and the other peasantry.⁸⁷ David Hardiman in his study of ‘Devi Movement in South Gujarat mentioned social reform (Observing new rules of purity such as temperance vegetarian and cleanliness) as another possible strategy of resistance.⁸⁸

B.K Roy Burman’s⁸⁹ study on ‘*Challenging and Responses in Tribal India*’ identifies eight kinds of responses of the tribals to the different challenges that faced:

1. Response to threats to the privacy of habitat,
2. Response to threats to access to and control of resources,
3. Response to description of traditional roles in the total interaction set-up
4. Search for new meanings of the relationship between man and nature,
5. Search for new meanings of the relationships between individual and society,
6. Search for new frontiers of identity,
7. Search for a more satisfactory system of control of resources,
8. Search for a more satisfactory system of organization of community at all levels.

Roy Burman⁹⁰ shows that, during British rule, alienation from land, due to faulty legislation pertaining to forest lands and lack of understanding of the social organization were responsible for tribal uprisings. Although they had diverse ideological overtones, the main theme was the millenarian – waiting for the day of deliverance from an acute situation of relative deprivation.

⁸⁷ David Arnold, “Rampa Gudem Rebellion :!839-1924”, in *Subaltern Studies-I*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi,1982

⁸⁸ David Hardiman,1984, op.cit.

⁸⁹ Roy Burman, B.K ‘Challenging and Responses in Tribal India’ in Rao, M.S.A, (ed), *Social Movements in India*, Manohar Publications, , New Delhi, 1984, pp.xxvii-xxviii.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

The Anthropological Survey of India⁹¹ in one of its surveys of the tribal movements identified the following types of movements:

1. Movements for Political Autonomy
2. Agrarian and Forest based Movements
3. Cultural Movements based on Script and Language

Reiterating the importance of colonial system in triggering tribal movements, Singh observed⁹², “the colonial system bore harshly on the tribal communities who with a sensitivity born of isolation and with a relatively intact mechanism of social control revolted more violently than any other community including peasants in India”

Classification of Tribal Movements in India

This part discusses the variety of tribal resistance movements in Agency areas in keeping with the transformation of tribal society brought about by colonialism. The tribal laws, framed in the background of the rebellion, incorporated new agrarian concepts. The Agency administration established with the objective of quelling rebellions was the earliest mode of protective administration.⁹³ For example, one agency was set up to pacify the Bhils in 1825, the South –West Frontier Agency in 1833 in Chotanagapur, a third in the Meriah Tract in 1839 to abolish the practice of human sacrifice, and fourth one was The Ganjam and Vizagapatnam Agency Act in 1839, which has survived longest. The first three wound up as soon as the objective for which they were formed was achieved. The Agency settled tribes, opened up the tribal world, laid lines of communication, established *chatties* along highways to supply the army which brought in merchants, traders and peddlers and which developed into market later, and set up cantonments and centres of administration and trade.

As K.S. Singh divided the tribal movements of Central India into three phases. It helps to understand the nature of the movement, and its leadership in India in general.

⁹¹K.S Singh, K.S, *Tribal Society in India: An Anthro-Historical Perspective*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1985, pp.269-88.

⁹² Ibid, p.18.

⁹³Ibid, p.9.

The First Phase: (1795AD-1860AD)

The first phase of tribal movements from 1795 to 1860 coincided with the rise, expansion and establishment of the British Empire.⁹⁴ It saw the rise of what we may call the primary resistance movements. Resistance is inherent in all movements but during this phase it was spontaneous, elemental and widespread involving not only one tribe but many. The tribes played a dominant but by no means an exclusive role in it. There were also large sections the non-tribals who joined in it and lending the movements the character of a regional upsurge. These movements were led by the traditional chiefs and their subordinates, who had been dispossessed of their property and thrown out of their occupation by the new classes of the people who were inducted by it, namely, the system of local administration and taxation, evangelization and humanitarian measures, the new land lords, money lenders and government officials, all of whom were to be thrown out in a violent upsurge. The major uprising of this phase were Pahariyas in 1778, Bhil Uprising in 1818, the Chuar rebellions (1795-1800) , Khond uprising in 1855, Kol & Ho uprising in 1831, the Khonds resistance to the abolition of the Merih sacrifice from the mid-1830, Gond uprising in 1840. The Santhal insurrection also occurred in 1855 in this phase but it represented a transitional phase and partook of the characteristic of both resistance and agrarian-cum revivalist movements of the second phase. The following is the summary the nature of first phase of tribal movements;

.The movements of the this phase were primarily politico-religious led by tribal heads

1. The movements occurred due to the resentment against disruption of tribal economy.
2. Usually, not all outsiders were targeted as enemies. Non-tribal poor and service castes were spared.
3. The Movements began normally when the tribes felt oppressed and had no alternative.
4. These rebellions were centered on the issues of tribal identity.

⁹⁴Ibid,pp 20-22.

The Second Phase: (1860-1920)

The second phase from 1860-1920 coincided with the intensive phase of colonialism, which saw a much deeper penetration of tribal and peasant economies by merchant capital, higher incidence of rent, etc. All the gains registered during the first phase of the movements were washed away. Not only those who had been expelled came back but many more also came, intensifying the exploitation of tribes. As a result of this, there were not only a larger number of movements, represented by such evocative native terms as *mulkui larai*, *fituri*, *meli*, *ulgulan* and *bhumakal*, involving many tribes but also a far more complex type of movements, a curious mix of agrarian, religious and political issues.⁹⁵ The major movements of this phase were the Santhal Munda-Oraon Sardar Movement (1869-1895) by Birsa Munda and Tanabhagath's reformatory stir (1895-1921), Rampa rebellion in 1879 in Andhra etc. The summary of this phase is;

1. The second phase changed from politico-religious to economic also that means inter mixture of the cause responsible for the revolts. The penetration of outsiders resulted in the misbalancing of tribal economy.
2. The leaders of the movements emerged from the ranks of the peasants, educated tribal or offered by those outsiders who had gained a footing among the tribes.
3. In this phase also, non-tribal poor & service castes were spared.
4. The leaders of this phase had chosen priorities attack on colonial symbols.

The Third Phase: (1920-1947):

The third phase saw the rise of the movement of a secular and political nature even though movements of the type above mentioned to occur on a smaller scale. The influence of Mahatma Gandhi in the process of the mobilization of the tribals during the freedom struggle⁹⁶ can be noticed in this phase. The Gandhian reconstruction programme started the process of the politicization of the tribals, nurtured a generation of tribal

⁹⁵Ibid, pp.9-10.

⁹⁶ Singh, K.S, "From Ethnicity to Regionalism: A Study in Tribal Politics and Movement in Chotanagapur from 1900 to 1975" in Malic, S.C, (Ed), *Dissent, Protest and Reform in Indian Civilization*, Indian Institute of Advance Study, Simla, 1977.

leaders, and provides a common political platform for the tribal and non-tribals, thus bringing the tribals into the mainstream national politics⁹⁷. There were evidences of tribals' participation in the local level action organized by the Congress came in from Bihar, Central Provinces and Bombay. The summary of the nature of this phase is;

1. These movements coincide with the national movements and hence the leadership also came from non-tribal educated groups.
2. This phase saw the transformation of tribal movements into mass movements. Now, the movements were largely political in nature.
3. Various legislature and administrative measures were adopted by the British government to suppress the movement.

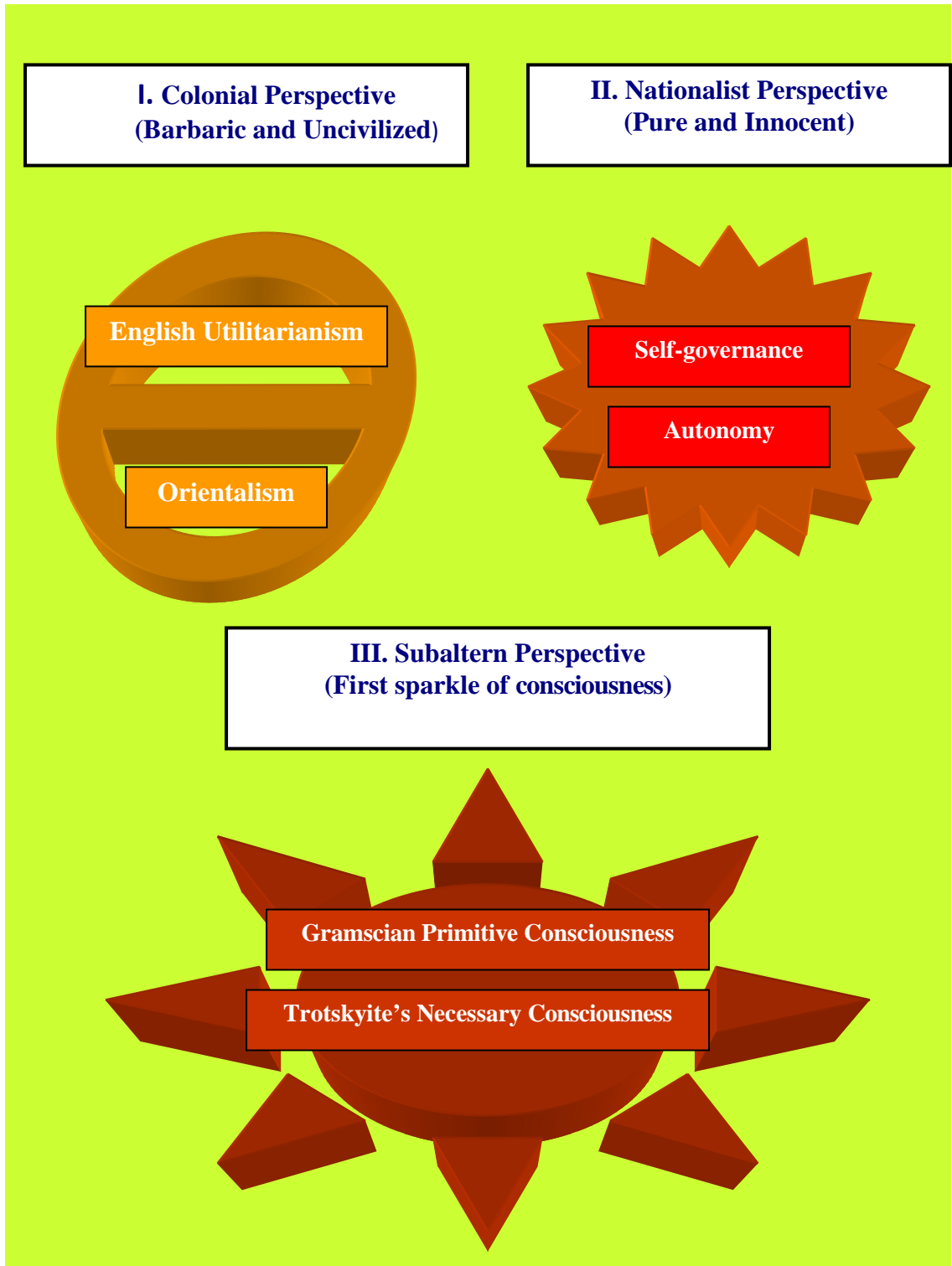
When one assesses the nature of the tribal movements in Andhra, there was problem in the division of the movements. Since its nature was differed from the tribal movements in general in India. However, there was some similarities existed in the tribal movements of Andhra. In keeping of the above, this thesis would like to asses the nature of tribal movements in Andhra.

To surmise from the above discussion, studies on tribes and their resistance movements are thus far carried out by scholars with 'Perspectival Discourse'. In the context of Indian Social system, the term 'tribe' attains an important meaning for it represents a distinct group of people whose social formation is totally different form the other social groups whose identity lies in 'caste hierarchy' for which, occupation and division of labour becomes the basic parameters. The tribe constitute isolated autochthonous communities living in the hilltops and forest regions with communal property holding as the primary mode of production with little social ranking. The social ranking too is attributed not to occupation but to assigned ritual obligation that a kin group is assigned with. Hence, they are treated distinctly and given a separate status in the Constitution. Studies on tribal communities being mostly Perspectival resorted not only to define the term 'tribe' as a social category but also conceptualized the nature of tribal societies and their response to the State authority interns of subjugation and

⁹⁷ Jitendra Prasad, *Tribal Movents in India*, Kilosa Books, New Delhi, p.295.

incorporation. The following diagram shows major Perspectival positions of different schools of thought in Indian historiography.

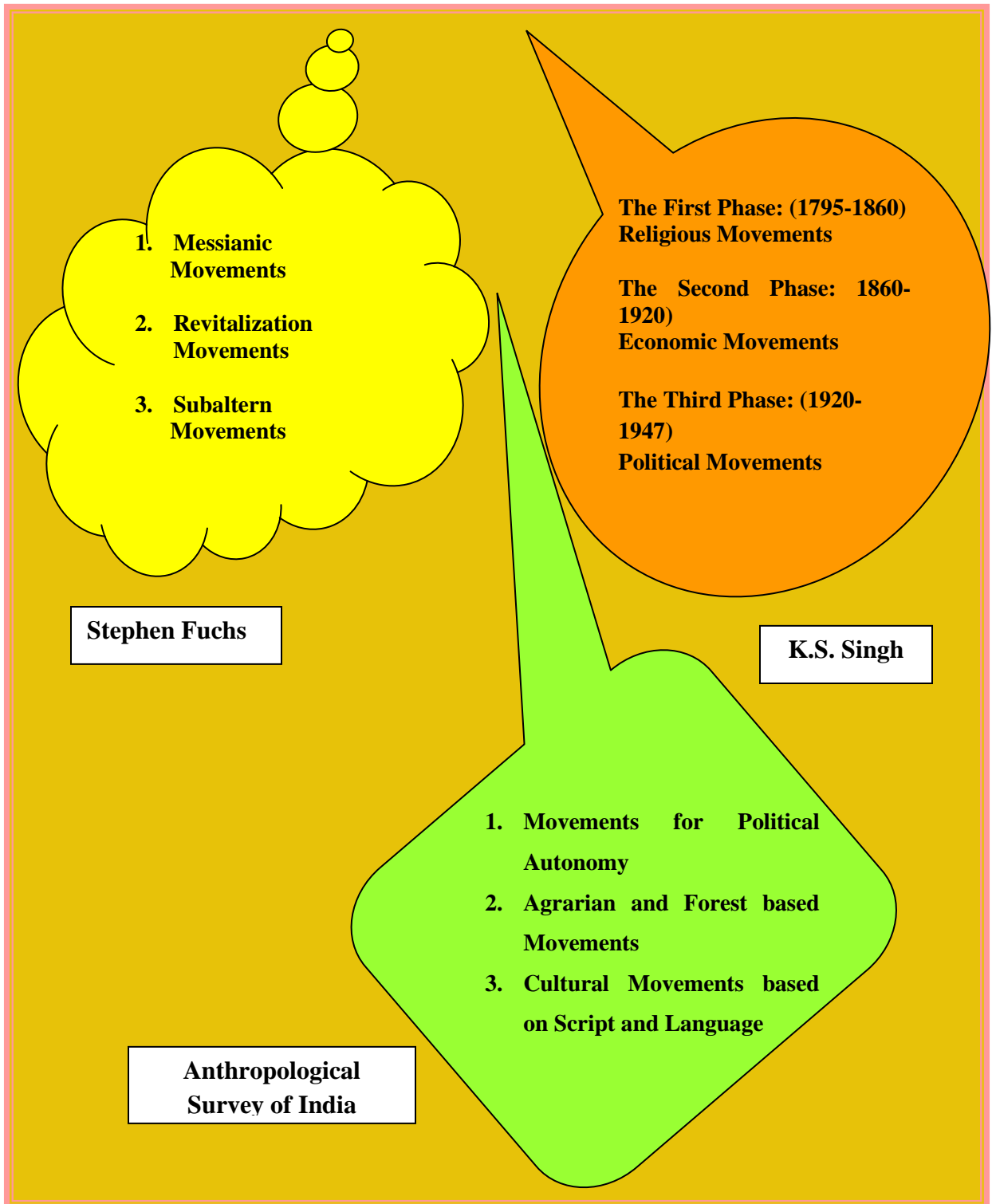
Major Perspectival Discourse in Tribal Studies



(Diagram: 2:2)

As seen from the above diagram different schools of thought such as Colonialists, Nationalists and Subalternists viewed tribals from their own perspective which often negated the reality but represented the tribes as what they conceived to be. Therefore, the tribe is not constructed as an objective phenomenon but as a subjective and imaginary idea generated out of their own academic and analytical category. The Colonialists' views were largely drawn from the English Utilitarianism and Orientalism wherein the tribals were depicted as Innocent, barbaric and uncivilized and therefore to be brought into the fold of development; where as the Nationalists' perspective appreciated the tribal system of self governance. The Subaltern perspective only analyzed the tribal insurgencies and put forth a framework for studying such tribal revolts as an academic discourse. This was further taken up by the anthropological studies and they too categorized the tribal revolts from the ethnographic perspective. The following diagram illustrates different views of academic scholarship on tribal movements in India.

Anthropological Typology of Tribal Movements in India



(Diagram: 2:3)

As evident from the above diagram the anthropologists who did much contribution to tribal studies than any other disciplinary scholars viewed the tribal revolts types as if they are they are uniform and spread across the subcontinent alike. This misnomer is perhaps due to methodological error caused by universalisation of the data. No single tribe or tribes of a single geographical local were taken for in-depth the study to assess their resistance movements from an historical perspective. Deeper structural levels on which the tribal societies are organized would perhaps give a clue to the tribal movements in India and hence, the ensuing chapter an attempt is being made to study the tribal communities from the frame work of 'social formation'.

Chapter-III

Tribal Social Formation in India

Social Formation: A Theoretical Perspective

Social Formation owes its theory to historical dialectical materialism with which Marx's theory of the stages of social development as well as a society in any of the stages in time is formulated. Marx used the term 'social formation' first in his economic manuscript to mean society as a system constituted by the economic, political, and ideological aspects in their interconnection.¹ Marx and Engels used the term to designate society in terms of its mode of production. Social formation is, therefore generally defined as a concept of the social whole consisting of the same structural levels that figure as part of the characteristics of the mode of production.² Historical materialism, the actual science of history constructed through the use of Marxist categories of knowledge derived through dialectical materialism, is distinct for the teleology of social developmental sequences and the dynamic of change unfolded through the theory of mode of production. Mode of production may be briefly defined as a systemic combine of forces and relations of production presupposing given labour processes institutional forms of appropriation.³ Broadly, it means a combination of structures of levels or instances such as the economic, juridico-political, ideological and theoretical, determined in the last instance by the economic. The theory of mode of production presupposes three

¹ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, Introduction, Berlin, 1953, p. 104. And also see in Rajan Gurukkal, *Social Formations of Early South India*, Oxford University Press, 2010, pp.1-16. See relevant extracts in E.J.Hobsbawn (Ed), *Pre Capitalist Economic Formations*, London, 1964, p.16; Perry Anderson, *In the Tracks of Historical Materialism*, London, p.14.

² Rajan Gurukkal, *Social Formations of Early South India*, Oxford University Press, 2010, pp.1-16, Also see in Dominique Legross, 'Economic Base, Mode of Production, and Social Formation: A Discussion of Marx Terminology' in *Dialectical Anthropology*, Amsterdam, 4, pp.243-249.

³ See relevant extracts in Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst, *Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production*, Routledge & Kagan Paul, London, 1975.

things: the economic base, the juridical-political superstructure, and the ideological super-structure. The economic encompasses the social strategies of subsistence and survival, and the ideological, the entire gamut of cultural aspects including religion. Base-superstructure correlation and the schema of sequential stages, often made undeservedly rigid, the former to the extent of mistaking the analogy and the latter, the illustration, for theory.

Any attempt at defining the concept of social formation should begin with the often-quoted passage in Marx's preface to *The Critique of Political Economy* which is the ever-best expression about it. Marx says- "An aggregate of human beings constitutes a society when, and only when, the people are in some way related. The essential relation is not kinship, but much wider; namely, that developed through production and mutual exchange of commodities. The particular society is characterized by what it regards as necessary; who gathers or produces the things buy what implements; who lives of the production of other, and by what right, divine or legal-- cults and laws are social by-products; who owns the tools, the land, sometimes the body and soul of the producer; who controls the disposal of the surplus, and regulates quantity and form of the supply. Society is held together by bonds of production".

The term society in the passage stands for social formation this is clear when he says, "In the social production of their means of existence, men enter into definite, necessary relations which are independent of their will, productive relationships which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The aggregate of those productive relationships constitute the economic structure of the society, the real basis on which a juridical and political superstructure arises and to which definite forms of social consciousness correspond. The mode of production of the material means of existence conditions the whole process of social, political, and intellectual life".

The nature and basis of human relations are made clear by Engels in his remark that the most common feature of all social formations is ‘**surplus labour**’ (labour beyond the time required for the labourer’s own maintenance), and appropriation of the products of this unpaid surplus labour.⁴ Structuralist Marxist theorists endeavored to restate the theory of mode of production by putting its science first, and its knowledge application as a powerful instrument of analysis primary, in order to check its uninformed usage for mechanical typological reduction. It was structuralist Marxist theorist like Louis Althusser and Balibar⁵, Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst⁶, Maurice Godelier⁷, Nicos Poulantzas⁸, and a few others who have the expression ‘social formation’ a more specific technical connotation.⁹ In *Reading Capital* Althusser and Balibar define social formation as a ‘totality’ of “instances” articulated on the basis of a determinate mode of production, which is an explanation of complex associations in a society.¹⁰ They specify three ‘instances’: the economic, political, and ideological, signifying ‘practices’ as essential constituents of a social formation since they refer to basic ‘functions without which human social existence cannot be conceived’. The economic practice refers to ‘the transformation of natural resources into socially useful products’, political practice to ‘the reproduction and administration of collective social relations and their institutional formats’, and ideological practice to ‘the constitution of social subjects and their consciousness’. The ‘instances’ are themselves distinct structural levels of ‘social relations’ and ‘practices’, each of which possesses a functional unity across more specific structures. Practice is central to the concept of every ‘instance’ for all levels of social existence are based on social practices, but this hardly implies autonomy of human

⁴ Rajan Gurukkal, op.cit., pp.1-16.

⁵ Althusser and E. Balibar, *Reading Capital*, 1970, London.

⁶ Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst, op.cit, 1975.

⁷ Maurice Godelier, *The Mental and the Material: Thought Economy and Society*, Verso, London, 1986.

⁸ Nicos Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes*, Verso, London, 1973

⁹ For details of conceptualization see in Etienne Balibar, ‘The Fundamental Concepts of Historical Materialism’, in Louis Althusser and E. Balibar, *Reading Capital*, 1970, London, pp.31-33.

¹⁰ See discussion in Louis Althusser and E. Balibar, *Reading Capital*, 1970, London.

agency. It is not the human agency that is decisive about ‘instances’ and ‘practices’, for they are relations determined ‘in the last instance’ by the economic.¹¹ This is opposed to the humanist readings of Marx offered by Georg Lukacs¹², Gramsci¹³, and others, which on the contrary stress the role of human agency in the history of social development.

A variety of diverse practices exists for all time in the ‘complex unity’ of any given social formation. The economic, political, and ideological ‘instances’ function as a system of interrelated and interdependent ‘practices’ and institutions as an ‘articulation’, of unified relations of domination and subordination. Althusser calls this homologous unity of distinct and uneven manners of determination, ‘structural causality’. Nevertheless, he is sure of the ‘relative autonomy’ of ‘instances’ in the case of particular social formations of any region, which have unique patterns of development, thanks to the specific historical matrix and cultural conditions of existence. While Althusser recognizes the decisive role of the mode of production in determining the nature of the social formation, he rejects the mechanical presumption that the economic instance invariably determines the exact nature of other instances like superstructures, because of the relative autonomy of each instance as exemplified and illustrated by the difference empirical experiences across regions¹⁴. He maintains that each instance has its own relative autonomy securing a place and function in the unity of the social formation. The ‘instances’ are invariably ‘uneven’ and the consequences of contradictions inherent in the assemblage of the variety of articulations are beyond prediction. At the same time the theoretically accessible link between the two and the primacy of the economic ‘in the last instance’ cannot be overlooked. Althusser’s argument is that there exists a structured hierarchy of determinations in relatively autonomous institutions and practices and that therefore one cannot characterize social formation as a system in which everything causes everything else. One cannot characterize it as a structuralist-essentialist totality where

¹¹ Louis Althusser and E. Balibar, 1970, p.58

¹² Georg Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, Merlin Press Limited, London, 1975.

¹³ Antonio Gramsci . *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1971.

¹⁴ Rajan Gurukkal, 2010, op.cit., pp.1-16.

every practice as a part signifies the whole ether. Althusserian 'structural causality' thus makes typological reduction of social formation unacceptable for its mechanistic determinism.

Social relations are manifestations of concrete relations engendered by the economic practice that is realized, reproduced, and transformed through a relatively autonomous process. In economic practice, contradictions exist within and between subsistence strategies of social groups, in spite of the fact that the dominance of one or the other in terms of productivity is explicit. In political practice, contradictions exist within and between antagonistic interests of those who effectively control the institutions of collective social organization, and the social groups within the social formation lacking such control. In ideological practice contradictions exist within and between relations that empower and enable individuals as social subjects and relations of subjection, which restrict individuals to specific role and capacities. Althusser emphasizes the contradictions between and within the structured relations and practices that constitute human beings as social subject and places, positions, and roles as the social space within which all human practice necessarily occurs'. In short, any social formation is a complex hierarchy of functionally organized institutions or instances whose unity can be neither ignored altogether nor reduced to a single closed system.¹⁵

Godelier¹⁶ makes distinction between the concepts of social formation and mode of production. He argues that 'in defining a social formation, one must produce a synthetic definition of the precise nature of the diversity and unity of the economic and social relations which characterize a society at a given epoch'. He prescribes the following scientific steps to produce such synthetic definition: first of all, it is important to identify the number, character of the various modes of production which are found combined in a particular way within a specific society, and which constitute its economic base at a specific period. The next step is to identify various elements in the social and

¹⁵ Althusser, *For Marx*, London, 1969, p.87-128; Emmanuel Terray, *Marxism and Primitive Society*, 1974, London, p.79; Also see in Rajan Gurukkal , 2010,op.cit., pp.1-16.

¹⁶ Maurice Godelier, 1986, op.cit.

ideological superstructure whose origin and function correspond to various modes of production. The final step is a 'define the exact form and content of the articulation and combination of these various modes of production in hierarchical order, in so far as one mode of production dominates the other, and in some way subjects them to the needs and logic of its own mode of functioning, and integrates them, more or less, in the mechanism of its own reproduction'.

In Godelier's formulation a social formation is a combination of more than one mode of production, of which one dominates. Any social formation therefore, presupposes at least one mode of production to be subordinate. Godelier points out that when a mode of production, whether dominant or subordinate is surrounded by the limiting forces of other modes of production within the social formation, its functioning necessarily differs from what it would have been, had the mode of production existed in autonomy. The argument is that any mode of production is a constituent element of a social formation and therefore, it is determined by the properties of the ensemble in which it is situated. According to him what we find in empirical research are not modes of production, but social formation, the structure of which is the result of the combination of at least two distinct modes of production, one of which is dominant and the other subordinate. He argues that it is in this way the 'concept of social formation is most useful in the analysis of particular, concrete, historical realities captured in the real, irreversible time of given period of history'. Structuralist Marxists like Nicos Poulantzas¹⁷, Pierre-Philippe Rey¹⁸, Emmanuel Terray¹⁹, and Claude Meillassoux²⁰ presume that in pre-capitalist social formations, alternative sources of contradiction originate from the universality about the co-existence of the several unevenly evolved

¹⁷ Nicos Poulantzas, 1973, op.cit.

¹⁸ Pierre-Philippe Rey, 'The Lineage of Modes of Production', *Critique of Anthropology*, 3 (1), pp.27-79.

¹⁹ Emmanuel Terray, *Marxism and Primitive Society*, London, 1974.

²⁰ Claude Meillassoux, 'Kinship Relation and Relations of Production', in David Seddon, (Ed), *Relations of Production*, London, 1978.

modes of production that are imperfectly articulated rather than integrated.²¹ They codify the special relationship between the forces and relations of production by arguing that the former were determinants and the latter, dominant.

Poulantzas²² observes that it is through the study of the structure, constitution, and functioning of various modes of production and social formations, and the forms of their transition from one type to another, that historical materialism 'has its object, namely the concept of history. He shows how concepts like mode of production and social formation in historical materialism are effective in analyzing particular situations of regional history through the study of 'the elemental structures and practices whose specific combinations constitute a mode of production and a social formation.' It has been pointed out that 'only impure social formations actually exist, and these will contain several coexisting modes of production with all their constituent levels or even several relatively autonomous fragments of mode of production'. Poulantzas maintains that it is the dominant mode of production that confers fundamental unity on a social formation.

Pierre-Philippe Rey maintains that a mode of production is dominant within a social formation when it subjects functioning of other modes of production represented in the social formation to the requirements of its own reproduction.²³ Foster-Carter opines that the precise definition of the social formation therefore, depends upon one's understanding of mode of production and articulation, that is, the exact combination of forces and relations of production or the connections among structural level or the connection of a mode of production to a social formation or the connections among modes of production within a social formation.²⁴ According to E.Terray²⁵, a social

²¹ Nicos Poulantzas, 1973, op.cit., pp.42-45; Pierre-Philippe Rey, 'The Lineage of Modes of Production', *Critique of Anthropology*, 3 (1), pp.27-79; Emmanuel Terray, *Marxism and Primitive Society*, London, 1974, pp.13-16; Claude Meillassoux, 1978, op.cit., pp.231-235; Emmanuel Terray, 1974, op.cit.

²² Nicos Poulantzas, 1973, op.cit.

²³ Pierre-Philippe Rey, 'The Lineage of Modes of Production', op.cit., pp.27-79

²⁴ Aidan Foster-Carter, 'The Mode of Production Controversy', *New Left Review*, No: 107, 1978, pp.117-119.

²⁵ Emmanuel Terray, op.cit., 1974.

formation cannot be understood except by beginning with an analysis of the relations of production, which form its base, influencing the system as a whole. He establishes the decisive importance of productive relations by showing the crucial that the institutional form of labour expropriation plays in the functioning of the social formation. He argues that to understand the structure of relations of production, it is necessary to begin the analysis not only from the mode of production but also from the social formation of which it is a part. Not only the economic infrastructure but also the political and ideological superstructures must be taken into account. Althusser's application of the Freudian concept of over-determination that refers to the complex set of elements and associations in the context of causation, in fact, precludes the questions as to whether the relations or the forces have primacy in a social formation. Nevertheless, he maintains that in any given historical epoch, one of the three structural levels that is, the economic, the political, and the ideological in a social formation, may have greater influence and determinacy than the rest.

There are far more theoretical insights to be drawn from the writings of Marx himself, which help deeper probing into historical social formations. Marx's observation is that at the level of features and manifestations of any social formation one can see coexistence of the old and the new as an example. His contention is that no social formation ever perishes before all the productive forces have developed for which it is wide enough; and a new, higher productive forces never come into being before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself, is another example. A very significant lesson that a historian has to draw from Marx is what Althusser has noted as 'a central epistemological premise of Marx's social theory, that is the cognitive insistence up on other difference between phenomenal appearances and the basic underlying reality- "the difference between surface appearances and underlying theoretical truth."²⁶ Likewise, it is essential for a historian to bear in mind Marx's distinction between the universality of economic, political, and ideological practices, and variety of determinate institutional forms, which can be located

²⁶ Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', in his *Lenin and Philosophy*, London, p.17.

historically. Re-reading Marx, we learn to avoid the mistaken notion that there exists a single institutional form within every social formation that will correspond to the European historical experience. Also we recognize that while there are differences of economic relations across social formations, there is theoretically accessible universality about the interconnection between every social formation and its set of economic relations. The point is that concrete historical social formations are composed of elements whose inner structural logic is theoretically determined, while historical processes simply break up and recombine these elements in various ways. Theoretically the number of instances in a social formation is open rather than closed, and it is not the specifications of distinct practices thereof, which are the historian's interest, however important it is heuristically, for the principal objective should be the hermeneutics of the structural truth. It is important that such features of the social formation are borne in mind at the time of historical analyses of a given period and place.

The central theoretical insight that the historian seeking to analyze the transformation of a social formation is Marx's 'primacy thesis' that theorizes the process of one mode of production dissolving into another impelled under the dynamic of incompatibility between forces and relation of production.²⁷ Cohen observes that over a period of time the productive forces with the inherent potential go on developing as long as the relations of production are compatible. For the forces of production to develop further from the point of incompatibility, the relations of production should change. If there is an objective interest in transforming the relations of production to restore compatibility with forces of production, the capacity for bringing that change about will ultimately be brought into being. When forces and relations of production are incompatible, the relations change in such a way that compatibility between forces and relations of production is restored.²⁸ The social formation cannot be more advanced than its force of production. Similarly the forces of production cannot be more advanced than what their relations of production can support. Forces of production in any social formation require from time to time alterations in the relations of production ensuring

²⁷ G.A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence*, London, 1978, pp.151-19.

²⁸ Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History*, p.152.

development compatibility, the absence of which sets in use-incompatibility and production crisis and the subsequent dissolution of the social formation.²⁹

The historiographical advantage of the concept of social formation is its capacity to provide a framework of comprehension enabling holistic perception of history. It helps us view past life as a totality without its being compartmentalized into aspects such as the social, economic, political, cultural, religious, and so on. Althusser's definition of 'social formation' as the total complex of economic infrastructure and superstructure renders plausible a very powerful framework of comprehension for understanding historical societies. It encourages focusing on the interfaces of well represented social systems, especially their transitional phases with greater significance, a practice not often followed in the textbooks of history. The perspective enables incorporation of insights from cognate disciplines and auxiliary branches of history. There is the possibility of maintaining a better integration of historical narrative with social theory, a method that provides the discipline intellectual depth.

The definition and framework of the concept of social formation adopted in this thesis are derived from the theory of mode of production restated by the structuralist-theorists and anthropologists of Marxian tradition. Instead of viewing social formation as a combination of 'modes of production', it can be defined as an ensemble of a few unevenly evolved 'forms of production' interconnected to one another and structured by the dominance of one form that need not necessarily be superior to the rest in terms of technology and productivity. The expression 'mode of production' is widely in use to mean a specific social totality of epochal identity almost on a par with 'social formation'. The concept of social formation is to illustrate and exemplify in the light of the theory of mode of production, how the regional particular history in terms of specific concrete details, in their interconnections constitute the abstract totality, the system, and render concrete knowledge possible. Historical analysis can, then, reach out beyond mere description and classify the combinations of forms of production and fragments of forms of production, which go into the making of any given social formation. Kosambi's

²⁹ See the analysis and diagrammatic representation of Cohen's interpretation in E.O. Wright et al., *Restructuring Marxism*, pp.19-46.

observation is relevant here: “No single mode prevailed uniformly over the whole country at any one time; so it is necessary to select for treatment that particular mode which, at any period, was the most vigorous, most likely to dominate production, and which inevitably spread over the greater part of the country, no matter how many of the older forms survived in outward appearance.”³⁰

It is to emphasize that centrality of productive forces in productive forms join together to accomplish the social formation and go about examining specific practices, relations, ideas and institutions attached to each form as well as those that dominated the rest and characterized the social totality through the articulated features, processes, and dynamic thereof involving the tension of incompatibility between forces and relations of productions.

Non-Marxist Perspectives on Social Formation

Non Marxist perspective on the mode of production in Indian agriculture is represented by Andre Betelle, K.C. Alexander and Gunnar Myrdal. They prefer to avoid analysis of production relations with the help of ‘feudal’ or ‘capital or ‘progressive’ modes of production, which are locally found in Thanjavur district.³¹ In fact, these are not modes of production as such, but forms of tenancy. On the basis of these tenancies, Beteille mentions a number of social categories such as landlords, owner- cultivators, tenants, sharecroppers and agricultural labours. In fact, Beteilli is not concerned with the modes of production thesis. His main concern is a crude hierarchy of agrarian structure and class relations between landlord, tenant and wage-labourer.

An Anthropological approach will have to be based on (1) some kind of ‘ Functional Approach and (2) ‘the technological process have to be studied in their concrete and detailed operation.³² Division of work, according to age and sex, social

³⁰ D.D. Kosambi, *Culture and Civilization of Ancient India in a Historical Outline*, New Delhi, 1976, p.14.

³¹ Andre Betelle,, “ Class Structure in an Agrarian Society”, in *Society and Revolution: Essay in Honour of Engels*, People’s Publishing House, Bombay, 1970. Also see in K.L.Sharma,, *Caste, Class and Social Movements*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 1986, p.93.

³² Andre Betelle, *Studies in Agrarian Social Structure*, Oxford University Press, 1974, Delhi, 1974, pp.26-27. K.L.Sharma,, 1986,op.cit.p.93.

strata, and the nature of work, is the most important factor in the anthropological approach. Beteille refers to a multiplicity of factors responsible for changes in agrarian social structure. The present situation is a result of the general differentiation of social structure in India.

K.C. Alexander states that the theoretical section of his paper is based on Talcott Parson's paper 'A Revised Analytical Approach to the Theory of Social Stratification'. The agricultural groups are; landlord, owner-cultivators, tenant cultivators, free and tied agricultural labourers. These groups are ranked in a hierarchical order on the basis of a common value system. Barrington Moore Junior also takes a 'functional view' of agrarian class structure. He writes: "Although class relationships in the countryside are very important, they fail to make sense until they are set against a larger background. Agrarian conditions, especially in India, cannot be separated from caste and religion as they all together formed a single institutional complex."³³

Debate on Colonial Social Formation as a whole in India

The debate on the mode of production has generated doubts regarding whether Indian society is characterized by one or several modes of production. It would therefore be useful to examine what constitutes the mode of production.

The debate started with a report published by Ashok Rudra³⁴ in the Punjab region. His argument based on the sample survey in Indian agriculture. His main objective was to identify the trends emerging in Indian agriculture. The survey was conducted during 1968-69. Ashok Rudra says that the Indian rural society is characterized by the capitalist mode of production. He suggests following five criteria for identifying capitalist mode of production: The capitalist 1) tend to cultivate his land himself rather than to give it out on lease; 2) tend to use hired labour in a much greater proportion than family labour; 3) tend to use farm machinery; 4) delivers to market an important share of his produce; and 5) so organize the production as to yield a high rate of return on his investments.

³³ K.L. Sharma, 1986, op.cit. p.94.

³⁴ Ashok Rudra, "In Search of the Capitalist Farmer", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol: 26, 1970.

According to Utsa Patnaik³⁵, since India is an ex-colonial country, it is characterized by a limited and distorted development of capitalism which has not revolutionized the mode of production. She counters the proposition of Ashok Rudra by stating that the capitalist development in agriculture in India rests neither on the employment of hired labour nor on production for the market. Utsa Patnaik's contention that there is limited and distorted development of capitalism is further elaborated in her empirical study. She maintains that the imperialistic design of the British regime was the root cause of pauperization and proletarianisation of the peasantry. The use of cheap labour to be hired was based on the circumstantial factors such as their availability in a particular locality at a particular time. According to her the capitalist development in agriculture can be recognized when there is accumulation and reinvestment of surplus value so as to generate more surpluses on an ever-expanding scale.

Paresh Chattopadhyaya, while taking part in this debate, cited Lenin's definition of capitalism according to which capitalism, "was the highest stage of commodity production where labour power itself becomes a commodity". Commenting on Utsa Patnaik's argument he suggested that Lenin's definition of capitalism was wide enough to accommodate her emphasis on the criteria such as accumulation and reinvestment of surplus value. Responding to Chattopadhyaya's comment, Patnaik once again clarified that Chattopadhyaya had not tried to make a fair distinction between capital in the sphere of exchange and capital in the sphere of production.

Some economists are of the view that the development process of the eastern regions could not be characterized as capitalist mode of production and, rather, they identified it as semi-feudal with the following features: 1) High incidence of bonded labour, 2) Usurious form of credit system, 3) Non-monetized mode of wage payment, 4) Underdeveloped market, 5) Relations of production bordering around master-serf based on sharecropping, 6) Feudalistic power arrangement 7) under-utilization of resources with less investment in agriculture, and 8) dependence of agricultural labour on

³⁵ Utsa Patnaik, "Capitalist Development in Agriculture: A Reply", *Economic and Political Weekly*, VII (40), 1970.

consumption loans leading to perpetual indebtedness of the people depending on agriculture.

According to Amit Bhaduri³⁶ there are four prominent features of the semi-feudal type of agriculture and characterized them as:

1) share cropping, 2) perpetual indebtedness of the small peasants, 3) concentration of two modes of exploitation, namely, usury and land ownership in the hands of some economic class, and 4) the lack of accessibility for small tenants to the market.

However, a few scholars have criticized the conception of the semi-feudal mode of production as the dominant mode. On the grounds of its internal logic and on the ground that the political power of the landlords does not rest on the debt bondage alone, they contest the semi-feudal mode of production in the agriculture.

Apart from the economists' characterization of a particular type of mode of production, the historians have also expressed their views about the mode of production in a wider context.

Hamza Alavi, in his influential article on the colonial mode of production, begins by postulating that neither 'feudalism in colonial India nor contemporary 'rural capitalism' can be theoretically grasped except in the world wide structure of imperialism into which India was, and is, articulated.³⁷

Further Alavi observes³⁸ that the term 'mode of production' designates the coherent structures within the social formations, *i.e.*, societies conceived of as systematically structured entities. It designates social relations of production and identifies fundamental classes that are embedded in them, *i.e.*, for each mode of production a class of exploited producers and a corresponding class of exploiting non-

³⁶ Amit Bhaduri, "A Study in Agricultural Backwardness under Semi-feudalism", *Economic Journal*, LXXXVI, 329, 1973, pp-120-121.

³⁷ Hamza Alavi, "India and the Colonial Mode of Production", *Economic & political Weekly*, Special Number 10 (42), 1975. p .1235.

³⁸ Ibid and Tendor Shanin (Ed), *The Structure of Peripheral Capitalism in Introduction to the Sociology of Developing Societies*, The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1982.

producers. Other auxiliary classes in social formations derive their significance from their relationship with either the pre-existing fundamental classes or new ascendant classes in a social formation in which a mode of production develops.

Hamza Alavi also emphasizes the nature of class alignment in social formation in a particular mode of production. It is this concern which necessitates a discussion of structural features which are specific to the colonial mode of production. He strikes a word of caution when he stated that: “it is wrong to describe colonial economies as those in which pre-capitalist relationships co-exist with capitalist relations.³⁹” A particular feature of the colonial mode in India has been the creation of “large number of destitute small holders – 75 percent of all farms in modern India”. Since these holdings are too small to assure even a bare subsistence, they serve as a valued supplier of cheap labour” both for agriculture and for urban industry. In this way the class of smallholders is integrated onto the colonial mode of production, and cannot be described as a pre-capitalist survival.⁴⁰

According to Eric Hobsbawm⁴¹, the mode of production constitutes the structures which determine what form the growth of productive forces and distribution of surplus will take and how, at suitable moments, the transition to another mode of production can take place. It also establishes the range of the superstructural possibilities. Therefore, it is the base for understanding variety of human societies and their interactions as well as of their historical dynamics.

On the basis of a distinctive relations of exploitation and relations of production and rejection of co-existing modes of production, Jairus Banaji⁴² argues for the

³⁹ Alice Thorner, “Semi-Feudalism or Capitalism? Contemporary Debate on Classes and Modes of Production in India”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol: 17, No: 50(December, 11), 1982, p.1997.

⁴⁰ Hamza Alavi, “India and the Colonial Mode of Production”, *Economic & political Weekly*, , Special Number 10 (42), 1975. p .1235.

⁴¹ Eric Hobsbawm, ‘Introduction to Karl Marx’, in *Pre - Capitalist Economic Formations*, Lawrence & Wishart, 1964, p.46.

⁴² Jairus Banaji, “For a Theory of Colonial Modes of Production”, in *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol: 7(52).

recognition of a specific entity, the colonial mode of production. The distinguishing characteristics of colonial modes of production were their subordination to metropolitan accumulation and pre-dominance of semi-feudal relations of exploitation in agriculture. Banaji stresses the recognition of colonial mode of production but sees it as induced through metropolitan accumulation. For Banaji, this metropolitan accumulative capitalism led to the predominance of semi-feudal relations in the agriculture.

Another historian, Bipan Chandra,⁴³ has examined the role of colonialism in modernization and development process of Indian economy. He considers the impact of colonialism to be vital and, therefore, it may be regarded as, well structured whole which intervened in the process of India's passage from the semi- feudal to the capitalist stage of development.

A.K Bagchi⁴⁴ thinks that the colonial period was marked by the de-industrialization and de-commercialization of agriculture. In fact he is of the view that complete disappearance of pre-capitalist relations has not taken place even in contemporary times. Therefore, he talks about a symbiotic relationship between pre capitalist and capitalist mode of exploitation. Over population and low rate of capital accumulation, according to him, have accounted for this continuity. Therefore, according to him, any label such as semi feudalism, semi- capitalism, neither feudalism nor capitalism, with the exception of colonial mode of production could be possible so long as the basic laws of motion of society are correctly understood.

The economists and the historians, whose studies have been referred here, have not only raised theoretical issues but also marshaled data from field research. Sociologists and Social Anthropologists too have not remained indifferent to the issues

⁴³ Bipan Chandra, *Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India*, Allied Publications, New Delhi, 1979, p.27.

⁴⁴ Bagchi, A.K, "Relations of Agriculture to Industry in the context of South Asia", *Frontline*, Calcutta, 7, 1975.

raised on mode of production. However, the concern assumed importance after 1975 and during 1980s it became predominant among those who analyzed the Indian situation.⁴⁵

Kathleen Gough⁴⁶ conducted a study on social structures and political economy of Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu and identified several modes of production over time. She observed: “I choose to refer to three modes of production - Asiatic, Feudal, and Capitalist - because it did seem to me that they hit upon essential difference between the states of Kerala and Thanjavur in the 15th to 18th centuries and between them and the modern period.”

She stated that the social organization of Thanjavur district reflected the characteristic features of Asiatic mode of production where the exploitative mechanism and its operational dimension rested on the mode of surplus appropriation which existed both in kind and in the form of labour. Similarly, according to her, Kerala state was feudal in character because land was privately owned and serfdom and service tenures of households were the basis of production relations in village. As per her observation, the contemporary situation reflected the pre-dominant characteristic features of the capitalist mode of production as it is integrated with the world market having commodity production by wage labour. She stated the evolutionary changes in the mode of production in India.

Colonial exposure caused infrastructural changes resulting in the emergence of an elite group, that is, national bourgeoisie, which was interested in capital growth. Therefore, the post-independent period saw a new class contradiction leading to the polarization of peasantry on the one hand and immiserisation of working class groups on the other. She also acknowledged the continuation of pre-capitalist features in production relations in agriculture. Along with the pre-capitalist features in India, the close links between Indian political economy and colonialism before independence and now the neo-colonial set up have all put India on capitalist path.

⁴⁵ Y. Singh (1986) has made a pointed reference of ‘Sociologist and Social Anthropologists’ studies on mode of production by providing a synoptic view of their positions on it.

⁴⁶ Kathleen Gough, “Modes of Production in South India,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, February, 1980. Pp. 337-338.

Gail Omvedt⁴⁷ thinks that such contacts with capitalist economy have reinforced the feudal arrangements with some modifications. While studying agrarian structure in the context of social movements of the Dalit Panthers in Maharashtra and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha in south Bihar, she found closer links between class and caste identities. Class identities have not crystallized independent of caste identities. Therefore, the class-based exploitation has found its expression through the feudal structures. In the Indian situation class based exploitation is complicated by caste oppression. Mobilization of the oppressed caste groups alone can bring about revolutionary transformation.

Some sociologists and social anthropologists, (while analyzing social structures by using the concepts of mode of production), have included class among the bases of their analysis.

Joan Mencher's⁴⁸ "Problems in Analyzing Rural Class Structure" study of class analysis and its social formation in analyzing the contradictory features of South Indian society provide a good example. After having compared the development of peasant organization and movements in the Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu and Kuttanad in Kerala with the Chingleput district in Tamil Nadu, she found out the middle peasants as the critical group who took key roles in activating peasant uprisings. Like Eric Wolf's⁴⁹ hypotheses (that middle peasant has a crucial role in activating peasant uprising), she tried to work out a classification of groups in order to identify the class structure. Her six fold classification included: the landless; poor peasant; middle peasant; rich farmers; capitalist farmers and traditional landlord and an intermediate class of large landlords. Joan Mencher's classification comes closer to the three-fold classification of occupational groups by Ramkrishna Mukherjee⁵⁰ viz., the landholders and supervisory farmers; the self-sufficient peasantry (viz., the cultivators including the artisans and traders) and the

⁴⁷ Gail Omvedt, "Towards a Marxist Analysis of Caste", *Social Scientist*, VI (11), 1978.

⁴⁸ Joan Mancher, "Problems in Analyzing Rural Class Structure" *Economic & political Weekly*, Vol:IX, 35., 1974.

⁴⁹ Eric Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the 20th century*, New York, Horper & Row, 1973.

⁵⁰ Ramakrishna Mukherjee, *The Dynamics of Rural Society: A Study of the Economic Structure in Bengal Villages*, Akademie-Verlag, Berlin, 1957, p.93.

sharecroppers, agricultural labourers, service holders etc. He found a close relation between the economic structure (i.e., class-based hierarchy) and the caste based hierarchy and therefore, concluded that caste hierarchy had dovetailed itself into the economic structure. Joan Mencher's study concluded that caste loyalties penetrate and subjugate class loyalties and that the caste and class hierarchies overlap. That means the affluent sections of the society come from the higher caste groups whereas the poor and underprivileged groups largely come from the lower caste groups. The tribal communities belong to this category, as they share the misery of the low caste people.

P.K. Bose⁵¹ in his study of four villages from Birbhum and Purulia districts of West Bengal has provided a five-fold classification of rural classes: the landlords; the rich peasants; the middle peasants; the poor peasants and the agricultural labourers. While formulating the structure of classes he considered the relations, the modes of production and the levels of class-consciousness. He also noticed that the upper classes belonging to the upper caste groups enjoy powerful positions in the villages despite increasing opposition from the lower classes. The agrarian structure and the modes of production evident in villages testify to the continuation of pre-capitalist characteristics which are neither capitalist nor feudal in pure form.

T.K. Oommen⁵² states that the entire debate is about the nature and directionality of social transformation in India and in a meaningful discussion of the process of social transformation three points, i.e., the point of departure, the prices of displacement and the point of destination must be kept in mind. So far as the displacement of any mode of production is concerned that has not yet occurred. The point of destination cannot be analyzed unless one understands the participants' (the oppressed sections of society) involvement and goal in the process of social transformation.

So far as the role of middle peasant as advanced by Eric Wolf and Alavi is concerned, its involvement in social transformation is not significant on the basis of both

⁵¹ P.K. Bose, *Classes and Class relations Among Tribals of Bengal*, Ajantha Publications, Delhi, 1985, pp.51-52.

⁵² T.K. Oommen, *Protest and Change: Studies in Social Movements*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1990, p.232.

logical and empirical grounds. While putting forward the thesis of class collaboration and the dominant peasant being the driving force in the context of the peasant movement even Pouchepadass⁵³ disproves the role of middle peasant on the ground of their revolutionary potential being uncertain. Having discounted the middle peasant and dominant peasant thesis, T.K. Oommen has grouped agrarian classes under five major heads: landlords, rich farmers, middle peasants, poor peasants and the landless agricultural laborers. During pre-independence phase the peasant movement saw the mobilization of agrarian classes, because the colonial rulers were identified as the primary enemy and the secondary enemy included the landlords, the *mahajans* and the merchants. The mobilization of the agrarian classes among the tribal groups took place in terms of primordial identity.

The application of mode of production approach to identify the structures of exploitation actually leads one to examine the social formation in colonial India. Those involved in the debate have tried to produce empirical proofs in support of the domination of capitalist, semi-feudal or colonial mode of production. There are others who have found co-existence of capitalist and feudal modes of production as well. Since the position taken by various scholars on this issue pertains to the contingent (or, context-specific) social formation, it is not possible to generalize their contentions either in favour of dominant mode of production identified by them or rejected by them.

An analysis of the mode of production debate help in locating the multiple dimensions of domination, exploitation and marginalization of a particular class engaged in organization of productive activities. The major arguments on the debate about the mode of production fell into multiple dichotomies and analyses. The major characterizations of the mode of production in agriculture were weaved around semi-feudal, semi-capitalist, feudal and capitalist. But, as a whole, these differences in characterization were endorsed to the specific social formation, which came to be significantly stressed as the 'colonial economy'. Thus the next level of arguments had to

⁵³ Jacques Pouchepadass, *Land, Power And Market : A Bihar District Under Colonial Rule 1860-1947*,

concern various ways in which this colonial economy or colonial social formation had to be understood and thereby explained.

Dilemma on Colonial Tribal Social Formation in India

The major ways of explaining the colonial social formation came to be stressed in a spectrum:

1. First, the center-periphery analysis which underlined the metropolitan accumulation as the basis of semi-feudal nature of agriculture;
2. Second, the symbiosis or mutual reinforcement of colonized and colonizer in sustaining the social formation of the colonial economy; and,
3. Third, the intermingling of caste and class on the one hand, and the persistence of kinship structures on the other in the colonial social formation.

In this debate, one can find that a straightaway application of Marxist's Mode of Production in tribal social formation would not hold since their social formation is based on kinship relationship, ancestral relations and traditional customs (laws) etc. The communal mode of production plays a significant role in the shaping of tribal society which is marked by the absence of private property and division of classes. In this light, it is important to appreciate the fact that, though Marxist mode of production cannot be the sole theoretical frame to capture the tribal society, yet we can not overlook the location/situatedness of the tribal social formation within the overall colonial economy. This raises the need to combine Marxist mode of production with the communal mode of production formation to understand the holistic and historical interaction between tribal social formation and colonial social formation. The primacy of Marxist mode of production in this context lies in its theoretical use to understand the contradictions brought in by colonial socio-economic structure into the indigenous tribal societies for example their exploitation of labour and forest produce towards the accumulative appetite. On the other hand, the tribal social formation would offer insights into the self-sufficient and kinship-oriented tribal social economy and their various ways of encounter with the colonial accumulative economy. Therefore, though not 'class' and 'capital', but

‘labour’ and ‘accumulation’ as the conceptual frames in Marxist mode of production can be useful in our understanding of the ways in which colonial economy aggressively attempted to appropriate the tribal mode of production. At the same time, ‘community’ and ‘kinship’ as the major concepts of tribal social formation offered the tribal society a space to negotiate with the colonial economy.

These theoretical and conceptual issues bring into focus the nature of contradictions that are built into the structure of a social system. Its comprehensive mapping in economic, socio-cultural and political domains overtime would require a great number of subjects with a variety of methods.

Mode of Production of Tribals

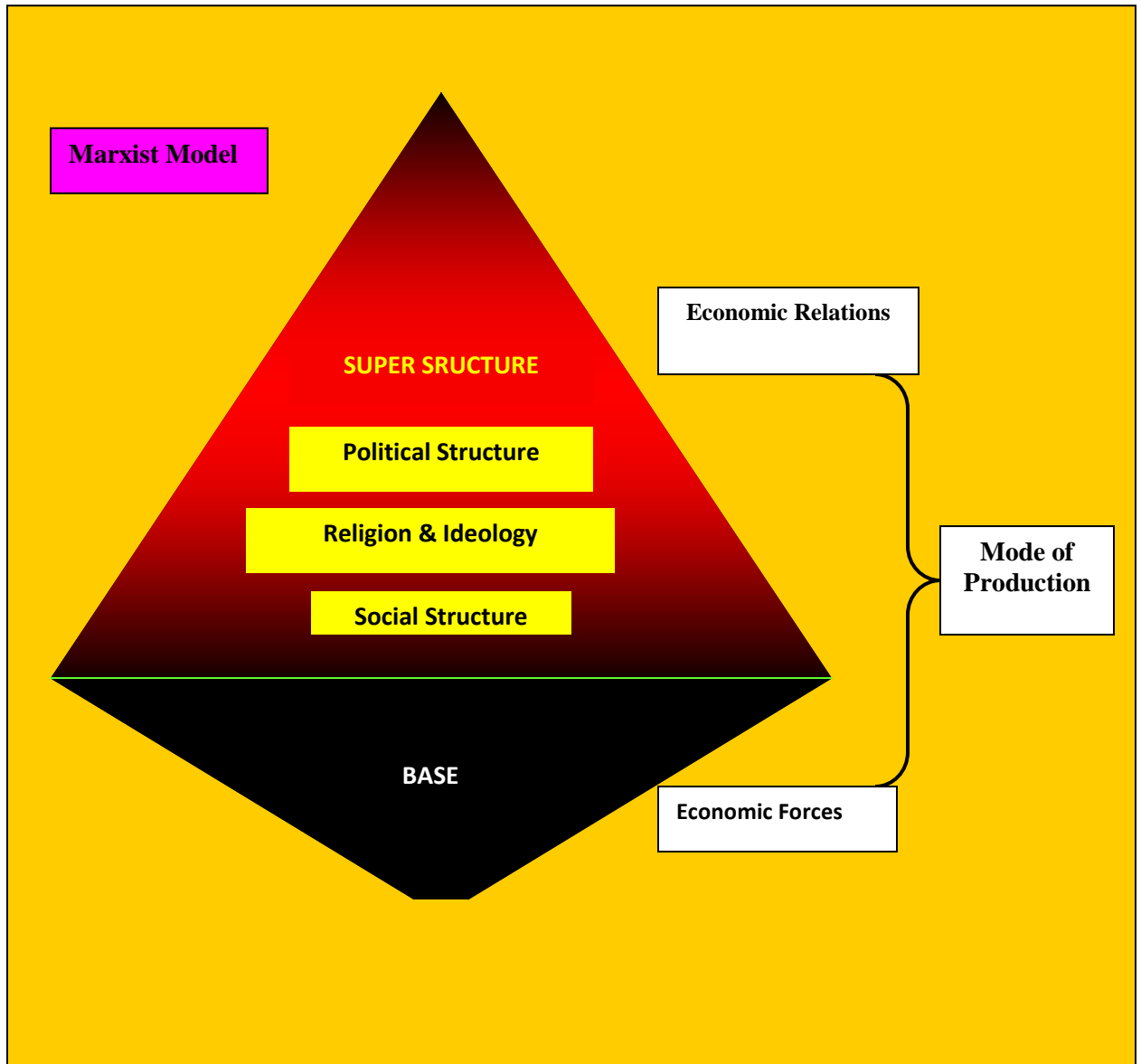
S.No.	Subsistence Type	Subsistence Nature
1	Gathering	Major dependency on food gathering
2	Hunting and Gathering	Hunting and gathering
3	Simple Agriculture	Without animal husbandry
4	Simple Agriculture	With animal husbandry
5	Horticulture with Fishing	Tree cultivation with animal husbandry & Fishing.

(Table: III.1)

To sum up from the above explanation, the concept of social formation is found to be a useful tool to study scientifically the social groups which are at different levels of development in terms of civilizations. The Marxist apparatus of ‘Historical Dialectical Materialism’ contributed much to the epistemology of human originations and their progression from simple to complex societies in a given historical frame. For Marx and Engles the analytical tool, ‘Historical Dialectical Materialism’ showed the path from primitive communism to full blown communism for the welfare of all sections of society wherein the ‘state’ and ‘class’ withers away leaving all resources to be shared by all in utmost egalitarian manner. The ‘Base and Superstructure model’ as well ‘Two-class theory model’ propounded by Marx and Engles has become the foundation for

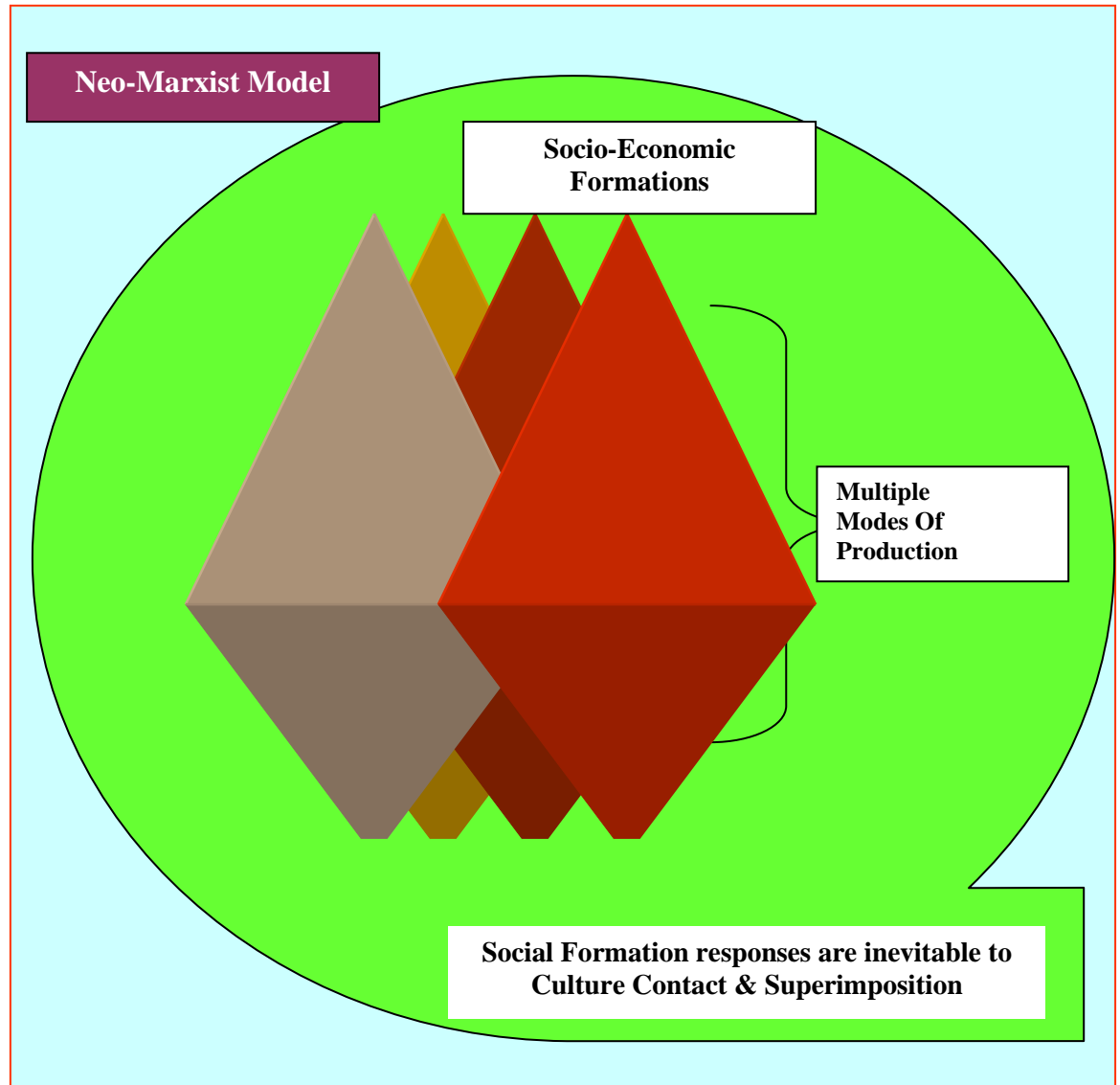
understanding social formation of a given stage of cultural advancement of a society. The following diagram point up the deeper structural phenomena of the social formation.

Structural Representation of Social Formation



(Daigram:III.3)

The above diagram is self evident that production forces at the base would result in production relations and thereby manifest in superstructure as politico-religious ideology and socio-economic organization. All together make social formation as a distinct entity to comprehend the stage of progression that a given culture is achieved. However, the monolithic construction of a given culture is too simplistic and therefore negated by neo- Marxists. They came up with the other model which explains presence of multiple modes of productions at a given point of time in a given cultural system. The following diagram exemplifies this phenomenon.



(Diagram:III.3)

Any society in a given culture is not in isolation but cohabits with other and therefore, there bound to different modes of production giving vent to different politico-religious ideologies and socio-economic organizations thus making the social formation a complex phenomenon. However the dominant one tries to subvert the other modes of productions thereby results in clash and resistance. In the case of tribal societies of the Agency areas of the Andhra Pradesh, the inroads of the British brought in the interests of capitalist of mode of production and this resulted in the tribal resistance giving no scope for the British to change the very fabric of the tribal social formation. The colonial mode

of production has initiated a proto capitalist socio economic formation in urban and semi-urban centres. The rural India too responded to this process through commercialization of agriculture to some extent. As a result absentee landlordism and middle class grew to a considerable extent and challenged the inroads of colonialism. However, the tribal societies being semi-nomadic and practicing communal ownership of land remained single entity groups without having class formation as such and hence, primitive. Even the colonial regime failed to alter the situation and Infact worsened the life style of the tribes by displacing them form their communal ownership. The next chapter deals with ethnographic account of selected tribes of the Agency areas in order to understand the nature and structure of tribal social formation. It is pertinent to mention here that the data on the tribes is not based on the fieldwork but grossly drawn from the works of other anthropologists.

Chapter-IV

Tribes of Andhra Agency in Madras Presidency: **An Ethnographical Account**

The Madras Province occupies the Southern portion of the Indian peninsula. The Madras Presidency, officially known as the Presidency of Fort St. George, occupies the southern portion from latitude of 20° , 18° on the eastern coast and latitude on the western coast to the Cape Comorian in latitude 84° ; the longitude range from $74-90^{\circ}$ to $84-15^{\circ}$. The extreme linear of the Presidency, from north-east to south-west, is 950 miles. Excluding the five native states, the area of Presidency was 141,075 square miles.

The present study area known as Andhra Agency area is situated between 17° N and 15° latitudes and 18° E and $82-45^{\circ}$ E longitudes and falls in the present districts of East Godavar, Kammam, Vizagapatnam and Srikakulam district. Bulk of the area 72% lays Kakinada and Visakhapatnam divisions. The forest divisions included in this area are Badrachalam (South), Eluru, Kakinada, Khammam, Palvanha and Visakhapatnam.

Physical Features

The tract is generally hilly. The southern portion is plain and gradually becomes hilly forming the Eastern Ghats range of hills. The elevation varies from 150 mts. to 1600 mts. The slopes are gentle to moderate but at places are quite steep. The area forming coastal agency is situated by the river Godavari. Numerous small streams and Nullahs drain the area. Most of the small streams are seasonal and drain into the big perennial tributaries of the Godavari. The important tributaries are Palmaleru, Sabari and Sileru.

The agency areas which are part of the Northern Circars included the present Srikakulam, Vizayanagaram, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari and West Godavari, Krishna and Guntur districts of Andhra Pradesh and Ganjam and some parts of the Koraput districts of Orissa. The 470 miles of coastal area comprising of above districts lay between the Gundlakamma in the Guntur district of A.P and Chilaka Lake in Orissa. The

area was known as the Northern Circars owing to its geographical location to the north of the English Fort St. George at Madras and the French possession of Pondicherry.¹

The climate is tropical and humid. The summer is severe and winter frosty. Average rainfall is about 1500 m.m, bulk of which is received during July and September. A few pre-monsoon showers are also received and winter rains are scanty.

It is needless to say that forests played an important role in the life of the tribal's. They loved the jungle and was in turn loved and adorned by it. Nature fed him. Nursed him, lulled him and protected him as mother². He was the flower of the forest. It was his cradle, home and grave. It was the god or ghost, anything and everything. Transactions of every sort including the settlement of marriages took place in the interior. They never asked nor sought the help from, the plains people. They were unconnected with what was going on beyond their territory, collecting the minimum of what they wanted in daily life at their free will and cultivating small patches of land to raise the grains. The ideology, philosophy and worldview nurtured in the forest. Geography of the region helped in strengthening such views and in maintaining the relative isolation from the plains³.

Since ages Andhra Pradesh has been the melting pot of many cultures, religions and ethnic groups. It has the largest component among the states of South India. Almost all tribal's live in settlements either in hill-tops or neatly tucked in the valleys and jungle clearings starting from Adilabad in the North-West to Srikakulam in East covering the hilly and forest regions of Warangal, Khammam, West and East Godavaries and Vizagapatnam districts all along the borders of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa.

These tribal communities which lived close to the plains had a semi-tribal economic and political life and in course of time they lost their identity on account of

¹C.D. Mclean, , *Standing Information Regarding the Official Administration of the Madras Presidency*, Madras, 1877.

² V.R.Raghavaiah, "Background of Tribal Struggles in India", in A.R. Desai, (Ed), *Peasant Struggles in India*, Bombay, OUP, 1979, p.15.

³ To the British such traditional practices appeared totally inconsistent as it effected their forest resources, Neeladri Bhattacharya, "Colonial State and Agrarian Society", in S. Bhattacharya and Romilla Thapar (Ed), *Situating Indian History*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1986, p.121.

being assimilated by the plains world⁴. But the tribal's who opted to remain in the interior hilly regions could retain their cultural impact. The kingdoms or empires surrounding these tribal regions could not assimilate these regions for obvious reasons, because these regions were quite inaccessible. Therefore the kings adopted the policy of non-interference towards the tribal communities⁵. This isolation was shattered progressively through the 19th century with the establishment of British control over this region. The dictates of colonial control and interest gradually necessitated more and more direct intervention and control of the tribal world. This intervention was total unlike previous intrusions from the plains. It brought in its way new forms of exploitation.

It is evident from the available historical documents that at one stage of time, tribal communities of India had control and freedom over large parts of the country. During the 17th & 18th centuries there were many tribal kingdoms in central India known as Gondwana and Bhil which had Gond and Bhil chieftain's respectively⁶.

Tribal Population of Agency Areas

Agency tracts are the home lands of the primitive tribes of the country, these tribes belong to different technological levels depicting varied patterns of existence, they are not a homogenous ethnic stock, but have, in the course of their long history of social contacts and racial fusions, become a heterogeneous lot. Anthropologists have classified the tribal strata of Scheduled Areas, into three main branches namely, Proto-Australoid, Mangoloid and Negroid. The aboriginal groups of Andhra Pradesh mostly represent the physiognomy of Proto-Australoid type being marked by average height sturdy stature, copper brown to black skin colour, dolichocephalic heads, curly or wooly textures of hair, supreme orbital ridges, slit eyes, broad nostrils and sunken nasal & roots.

⁴ The tribes like Asmaka, Bhojaka, Andhrika who are referred in the edicts of Asoka developed semi-tribal culture, and inhabited the Deccan Plateau. They resisted the Aryanisation of the region in South of the Vindhyas.

⁵ The eulogy of Harisena on Allahabad Pillar Inscription which refers to the independence of such tribals in all matters of trade.

⁶ D.Kosambi, , *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India- An Historical Outline*, Vikas Publications, New Delhi, 1970, pp.166-175.

The President of the Republic of India notified that the following tribes in the Agency areas should be declared as Scheduled Tribes.⁷

Agency Tribes

Bagatha.	Koya or Gand.	Kammar
Bhottada.	Manya Dora.	Khond.
Bhumiya	Mukka Dora	Jatap.
Gadaba.	Muria.	Kotia or Khond
Gondi.	Gand (Kosal and Magadha)	Reddi Dora
Kodu	Konda Dara	Savara
Khatti.	Koda Kapu	Konda Reddi.
Kemmar	Parjas.	-----

(Table: IV.1)

In the above list several aboriginal tribes have been omitted and it is not clear on what basis the present classification of tribes has been made. Some of the tribes like Koyas, Gondi, Muria, are identical in so much as them belong to the same racial group, having similar patterns of social and religious life. Similarly some tribes say Konda Reddi and Manya Dora, should be treated as one and the same, Kodu, Koya, Gond, all come under one branch of race. Karmmar and Kommar are of the same descent.

Earlier in 1946, in the Report of Dr. A. Aiyappan, the following tribes were considered as fit subjects for inquiry and all these belong to the scheduled areas of the four districts.⁸ These are;

District	Names of the Tribe
Godavari district	Koyas, Konda Reddis.
Srikakulam district	Jataps, Savaras, Paidis, Kondalus
Visakapatnam District	Bhagathas, Khonda Kapus, Khondas, Gadabas, Khonda Doras,

⁷ Report of the Special Agency Development Officer, Malayappan Report, 1952, Madras, pp.136-137.

⁸ A. Aiyappan, *A Report on the Socio-Economic Conditions of the Aboriginal Tribes of the Province of the Madras*, Madras, 1948.

	Muka Doras, Ghazis, Jutas, and Dombos, Dhulias, Valmikis, Kammars, Ojas, Mulias, Ojinbes, Ronas and Gnads.
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(Table: IV.2)

Even this list is comprehensive, and sometimes it is overlapping. There are tribals like Runas, who are identical with the Bagathas. The tribes like Ojas and Runas are not found in the agency parts. The former belongs to northern area of the Orissa province while the latter are essentially a matter of Karaput Agency. Nevertheless Ayappan's list would be taken as the criteria in the matter of giving protection to the agency tribes. The government should revise the list and include all the tribes that have been omitted in the schedule of the list. No accurate figures were available with regarding to the population of each of the tribe. Since the estimation of the census was not readily available, the figure of the 1941 census alone should be accepted. According to the information received from taluk offices about agency population shows an increase of 10% over the figure recorded in 1941 the total then being 498,026. The population figures of some of the tribes, according to the census report of 1941 are mentioned as follows: ⁹

Tribe	Population (in numbers)	Percentage (%)
Bagatha	14,642	6.18
Domb	20,305	8.58
Gadaba	11,190	4.73
Gond	480	0.20
Jatap	12,453	5.25
Khond	39,648	16.75
Knda Dora	19,843	8.38
Parja	14,080	5.95
savara	12,842	5.43

⁹ A.Aiyappan, 1948, op.cit.

Koya	91,279	38.55
Total	2,36,762	100

(Table: IV.3)

Social Organization, Customs and Beliefs:

The social structure of the tribals was similar to the egalitarian structure of tribal groups in general. The absence of private ownership of land within the body of tribal society formed the basis for a sense of solidarity among the village community. They recognized no private ownerships of forestland. However, each village community possessed, commonly a tract of land, whose boundaries were usually marked by hill ridges, watercourses or prominent trees.

Just like economy, tribal society was organized after some fixed rules. A tribe is a socio-economic unit with territorial jurisdiction. But this may not be always true, as the same tribe may be distributed in more than a taluk or a district. Each tribe is divided into several exogamous and endogamous sects or clans. For instance the Koyas are divided into Kammara, Musara, Gampa, Oddi, Pattidi, Doli, Kaka, Matwa, Gutta, Linga, and Raja sects each being named after the occupation it follows. The Parjas of Visakhapatnam district are divided into Jodia, Barang, Pengu, Khondi, Bondo, Nonda, Lenja groups and each name signifies sub-sect or tribal sect that joined the mother group. The parjas are not a single body-politic. The name denotes Parja or servant or slave, a term extensive used during the time of Ramayana to denote all the non-Aryan Dravidian black people. The Parjas told to be the oldest inhabitants of the land. The Gadabas are organized into five main sects among whom, but in two cases, marriages are prohibited. These sects are Parang, Mudili, Ollero, Gutob and Kaspa. These sects are organized on account of occupation territorial and dietetic differences. Each sect of clan in the trite is made up of several gotras. A gotra includes a number of cognate families held together by the belief of common ancestry worshipping particular house of Gods often called "Sapade". Marriage within a gotra, and outside the sect are prohibited. Thus gotra exogamy and clan endogamy are the basic principles of social structure of the primitive tribes.

The social pyramid of the tribals of the area could be broadly divided into three strata taking into consideration their commensal patterns and the prevailing concepts of relative community social status. Bagatas, Nooka Doras and Kotiyas occupy the highest stratum of the social pyramid as eating beef is tabooed among these tribal groups. These tribal groups constitute non-beef eating communities. The next stratum consists of beef and pork eating tribal groups like Konda Doras, Porjas, Gadabas and Khonds, while Valmikis belong to the lowest social stratum because of their trade in skins and hides. The tribal groups can also be classified into high and low status groups based upon the customs of acceptance of cooked food and other prevalent and generally accepted traditional concepts of status criteria. Bagatas occupy the highest step of the social pyramid followed by Nooka Doras and Kotiyas respectively in the hierarchical order of the first stratum. In spite of this structural hierarchy, these communities also follow certain egalitarian principles. The stigma of untouchability is unknown in Tribal areas. They enter into ceremonial friendship irrespective of high or low status tribe or sex. They jointly participate in village festivals and rituals.

Family constitutes the fundamental unit of the social structure of the various tribal groups. In general, immediately after marriage a son or brother establishes a separate family and as such most of the families are predominantly of nuclear type only. Joint families are also met within a number of cases. A tribal family is characterised by patrilocal (residence), patrilineal descent and patriarchal authority. Most of the tribal societies living in Eastern ghats are divided into several exogamous clans. But Savaras inhabiting in hilly areas of Srikakulam and Vizianagaram districts originally are not having clans. However, some sections of Savaras are adopting the following clans of Jatapus (which is considered as an advanced section of Khonds):

Jatapus Clan Name	Meaning
Arika	Small millets
Biddika	Earthen pot
Kumbinika	A kind of tree

Gedala	Buffalo
Konda Gorri	Wild sheep
Addakula	----
Mutaka	Moduga tree

(Table: IV.4)

The tribal groups living in Vizagapatnam Agency are organized on the basis of the following totemic clans:

Clans of Vizagapatnam Agency	Meaning
Korra	(Sun)
Pangi	(kite)
Ontala	(snake)
Killo	(tiger)
Matya	(fish)
Chelli	(goat)

(Table:IV.5)

The clan organisation of the tribal groups of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam Districts is more or less based on the principle of 'fubier' i.e. adopting the clan structure of dominant tribal group. But, the tribal groups of East Godavari viz. Konda Reddi, Koya, Valmiki, possess more or less independent clans. The Koya society is based on totemic clans, such as:

Koya Clan Name	Meaning
Murram	Tortoise

Turam	A cat family
Kurasam	Wild goat
Madakam	A kind of fish

(Table:IV.6)

The Konda Reddy and Valmiki groups are organized on the basis of surnames (septs) like any other Telugu-speaking caste and communities.

Among primitive tribes marriage is a simple affair and often implies the mutual decision of the couple to settle down as man and wife. It is mostly adult, though of late in the wealthy families, very rarely child marriages too have occurred. Marriage procedure varies from tribe to tribe. Marriage formalities are organized after environmental conditions and cultural levels. But marriage involves a procedure, propitiation of tribal gods, totemic objects and ancestral spirits, excessive drink, costly communal feasts, grand dances, and payment of heavy bride prices.

Marriages among the tribes under inquiry are both monogamous and polygamous. Polygamy or the plurality of wives is the most common form among the tribes of the scheduled areas. The number of wives determines the social status of the person concerned. Desire for a variety of taste and ambition for an economic status lead to polygamous marriages. There are some traditionally established methods whereby mates are acquired. Marriage- arranged by parents, by mutual consent, by purchase, by elopement, by capture and by service - are some of the methods whereby marital relations are established. Levirate is also in vogue among several tribes. It is a system whereby the younger brother of deceased husband has a preference, to marry the latter's widow. The Gadabas, the Parjas, the Bagathas all perform levirate. This is a secondary form of marriage.

Tribal religion is composed of three elements, the worship of Gods and spirits, the death rituals and the totemic ceremonies. The tribal man believes in the persistence of the soul after death, and this belief accounts for the institution of ancestor worship. The tribe believes that the spirits of the dead constantly watch with interest and concern the

doings if the alive, tender them advise and sometimes even revisit them in the form of human or other medium. It is this belief that mostly contributes the butchery of innocent bulls and buffaloes in the most hideous manner by the Gadabas and the Savaras during their bloody carnivals-- the Gottar and Gour.

On account of such fear and belief, the tribals aim at winning over the forces of supernatural world for their material prosperity. The same is sought to be achieved by a complex code of appeasement, worship and propitiation towards this end, priestly class has arisen in the primitive society. There are religious heads, called Poojaris, or Gunyas who resort to divination, witch—craft, sorcery and magic. Several tribes are organized after totemistic fashion. Every sector family claims its descent from an animal, plant, any living or inanimate object. This mystic relationship and various procedural aspects connected with it are known as totemism.

Every tribe has its own gods and goddesses, its own concept of demonology.¹⁰ The more advanced the tribe here numerous are the spirits and Godlings it propitiates. Tribal Gods, to some extent, are exclusive to the tribesmen. The spirits also are of the same order. All, the natural Forces like the Earth, the Sun, the Moon, etc., are defied. The processes of nature that affect their existence are personified and venerated. Some of them are treated as spirits presiding over a particular crisis of life like fever, disease, measles, rheumatism, pox, hysteria, gout, death. Their traditional religious rituals and ceremonies are connected to their economic activity. For example, *Vittupanduga*, a festival celebrated by Savara, Gadaba, Valmiki, Khond tribals is connected with their hunting. The festivals like *Nandipanduga*, *Korra Kotha panduga*, *Bhoomi panduga*, etc. are connected with their agricultural activity, The Koyas worship deities like Kommadamma, Kateredu, and Adamraj

The tribesmen of agency areas celebrate certain rituals for proper growth of crop and to protect it from pests and other natural calamities. For timely rains also, they propitiate Bheema, the second among the Great Pandava brothers. The Savaras sacrifice a

¹⁰ Report of the Special Agency Development Officer, Kakinada, Dated: 8th June, 1951.

buffalo, if they are adversely affected by incessant rains. The tribals of this area strictly observe the practice of propitiating the Gods before consuming the first fruit or grain harvested. Without performing the ceremony/rites, consumption of the fruits/crops is prohibited.

A glimpse into the social life of these tribes, is not only of academic interest, but the same provides the background of their psychological levels, and social, economic and cultural institutions which even today stand emblematic to the unimpaired life. Such a study is of course, conducive to the understanding their peculiar life moulds, problems and institutions which, in their turn form the nucleus for a proper lead in formulating a programme and plan for their development.

The primitives in their social organization and economy form a species for themselves. Generally it may be said that they are a happy folk, with irresponsible mirth and candid behaviors. They are an honest and simple folk. The Koyas and other allied hill folks are describe as possessing the characters and qualities of the purest primitive tribes, quick of observation, suspicious, sensible, exceedingly, fond of ornaments, and primitive in their habits. They are a contended people and are averse to exploitation or trustworthy profit making. They know how to recognize and respect things belonging to others, and it may be said that duplicity is almost unknown to them, unless they come contact with their plains neighbors. Even today, in some of their activities, they reveal corporate life. They drink, dance and sing, all in congregation. Games, festivals and religious celebrations are still participated communally .Crime is rare, adultery is unknown, and individual behavior is marked by honesty and truthfulness, and they are ideally hospitable exceptionally candid, and remarkably simple. These primitive tribes live a simple but natural existence, by mirth, joke, game and dance.

The primitives build their archaeology out of simple book of huts with conical thatched roofs. The patterns of housing among them are in conformity with their crude material culture. Walls are raised by mud or bamboo wattle. Usually these huts consist of only one hall. The inmates dine here and sleep. Every hut will have an enclosure and separate cattle shed with small backyard where papayas, plantains, gourds and vegetable plants and creepers are grown. The doors are seldom locked, and probably there is no

need for such a step. To the primitives, the nature is the greatest impeller, the scenery around forming the Grand arena where human nature can play the background history of vicissitudes of mortal life. Therefore, they make most out of Nature. Every Koye village in Rampa country is magnificently screened around by several fruit giving trees like Tamarind, mango and Jack formed in big troupes. These troupes serve the purpose of holding tribal court of *Panchayat*. In the centre of the village, usually an open ground is earmarked, and here at the grand tribal dances on specific occasions is performed. The grave yard or the burial ground in some villages is fixed at a distance from the village.

The dwelling of the Savaras, Jataps and Paidis of Palakonda Parvathipur and Salur Agencies have a common roof and thatch, each village being built in one or two rows. This may be treated as the relic of the communal life of the tribal groups in past days. The hill folks of Gudem agency pay good attention to the home decoration and they keep their small but well kept huts artistically beautiful decorating the wall and the floor with simple patterns. The visakapatnam agency village no doubt lack symmetry of construction, as the same is not possible in the view of the rugged nature of the tract, clothed with rocky slabs and hillocks. Such a feature impels them to raise the village on the slopes of the hills or on elevation grounds preferably under the shade giving Bunyan or tamarind tree. The nisani or the platform for the village goddess is raised and on the arena, covered with huge slabs, village panchayat is held and dances are performed.

The diet of the tribal is as simple as his existence. Whatever is given by nature he takes, Ragi, *kanji*, or grauel his staple food. Beef and pork form the most relishing dishes for several of the tribes. The Koyas, the Parjas, the Gadabas the Daras-all these eat beef. Sri V.N. Seshagiri Rao writing about the Koyas and other tribes of the Rampa country observed as the pith of sage palm, pounded mango seeds, tamarind, jack every edible root, fruit, beef and flower available in the forest form the common items of food.¹¹ The tribesmen eat anything from rat to cow. The remains of animals of tigers, panthers are also eaten. The nest of the red with eggs is made into soup, and the same is much relished. Toads, reptile, various kinds of snakes and birds are all eaten by them.

¹¹ Report of the Special Agency Development Officer, Malayappan Report-1952., Madras, pp.148-149.

Generally, the production of grain is sufficient to sustain a family throughout the year and even allowed the exchange of a small surplus to be used as barter. In the lean years, however, they lived exclusively on jungle produce¹². Ripe fruits, berries, cucumber, raw mushrooms etc., are consumed. Green vegetables and jungle produce are most plentiful during rains. Rats mice, squirrels, small birds, monitor lizards etc., are roasted and consumed. Gruel (*jawa*) is common food in the tribal livelihood. Fish is also regularly consumed.

Beside what was grown and the forest produces, toddy was important element in their subsistence economy. Men, women and children consume it. It is drawn by the hill people from date, Palmyra and sago palm trees¹³ From March to June, when the fields had been cleaned and food stocks are low. They almost lived upon Palmyra and sago palm toddy, they also prepare brew from rice and *samai*¹⁴. Whether it was in worship, ceremonies or in entertaining guests, these local drinks are served and no festival ended without drinks and dance. The tribesmen are great addicts to drink, opium, ganja, (where it is available) and any other inebriant substance. Drink is of several kinds. Toddy from Palmyra and *Jeelugu* (called Salap) is drunk to the excess. In Vizagapatam Agency, they take "Ragibeer" which is also called "*Maddi*." *Mahua* liquor is the favourite drink for the Koyas, Savaras, and of the allied tribal folk. In certain parts of the Agency the possession of number of *Salah* trees accounts for the wealth of the individual. But the tribesman is not selfish. He enjoys-company in drink.

Often it is said by the zealous propagandists that prohibition should be introduced in these areas. There are others who oppose the argument. They say that the food of the

¹² The hillmen is indeed especially blessed by the preservation in all most every jungle of fruit, vegetables or roots to help him over a period of moderate scarcity, cited in R. Guha., 'Forestry and Social Protest in British Kumaun, 1893-1921', *Past and Present*, No.121, 1990. Also see Subaltren Studies, Vol.4, pp.54-101.

¹³ W. Francis, *Vizagapatnam District Gazetteer*, Madras, 1907, p.185.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p.187.

hill men is malnourished deficient in vitamin B1 and as such drink may be permitted to be taken by them.

Though men and women are fond of personal decoration, they show little care for personal cleanliness even though calmness of the forest life and the picturesqueness of the environment made them a specimen of romantic behaviour. A life of age-long segregation and isolation, the absence of contacts due to the inaccessibility of their land perpetuated for them a life of ignorance. When raised to emotion, they reveal extreme cruelty and barbarism. The war in which they kill the cattle and sacrificial objects is so disgusting that one is compelled to feel that nature rightly kept them in this low state of life. Awfully superstitious, deplorably insensitive and highly suspicious, the aborigines are not prone to new and better ways of living. This much can be said without fear of contradiction. Ventilation in the huts is bad enough general sanitation is awfully at low ebb, costume rarely satisfies (particularly among the fair sex) the rule of decency and personal decorum is at lowest level. Loose expression is often welcome, and it is pathetic to note that congregation of both the sexes love as indulge in indecorum and vulgarity.

Tribal Organization

The village is the basic unit of social and political organization in tribal areas, whether a single tribe or the different tribes inhabit it. Customs play a vital role in many spheres of tribal life. The day-to-day activity of the tribal is inherently controlled by certain beliefs and codes of conduct prevailing in tribal society. Every village has a village council to carry out and control various activities of local interest, under the village headman. The position of the village head is generally hereditary. In multi-tribe villages, each tribe has its own tribal council and the head of the tribal council plays an important role in maintaining inter-tribal and intra-tribal harmony. In addition, there is a single village council comprising representatives from each tribal council in the village.

The common activities of the village council are preparation for festivals observed by the whole village, arrangements to assist the needy in the village, punishment of offenders and solving disputes. In taking decisions about all such matters, the members of the village council, whilst having the right, generally do not ignore the

suggestions made by any individual in the village. The deliberations of the council take place in the open, amidst all the villagers. The decisions arrived at are usually in conformity with traditional tribal practices and acceptable as far as possible to all members of the community. Thus, the headman never rules their co-villagers but acts as representative and spokesperson in its dealings with government and with the outside world.¹⁵

The village council preserves village communal property. Topes of the trees are the joint property of the villagers and the income there from, especially from tamarind, is distributed among the villagers. In this hierarchy, the burden of outside authority was never felt by the tribals.¹⁶ The tribal *panchayat* is democratic institution. Its working was based on principles in mass-approbation and consent. The trial is never irksome as the judgment is never dictatorial. It is the council of elders, of elective type, organized to decide the cases of breaches of custom, law, morality etc. Its working is simple and its execution is efficient.

Each tribe or each tribal village will have a leader Often, called “Naid”, “Naiko“, “Padal“, “Uripedda“, etc. He is the most influential man of the village and the inhabitants under his jurisdiction repose (or at least used to repose) unshaken confidence in him. He is the supreme judge and the administrator. He is the leader of the village and the presiding officer of the *panchayat*. His office is both hereditary and elective. He decides the cases with the “help of the village elders. Certain attainments and few personal virtues like initiative helpfulness and sympathy are the requisites for the tribal leadership and more often than not, whenever these are lacking, the leader is dethroned and his sway would not be tolerated. How so ever influential or powerful he may be, he cannot go against the public opinion

¹⁵ Furer -Haimendroff, *The Aboriginal Tribes of Hyderabad: The Reddies of the Bison Hills*, Macmillan and Co, London, 1945.

¹⁶ A.Aiyappan, 1948, op.cit.

Economic Organization

With the advent of civilization significant innovations had crept into the primitive society and such a phase has brought about the inevitable decay of the traditional economic behavior of these "original sons of soil". Yet the primitives had their own code of economy their principles of production and distribution, and their rules of gradation and status. Mutuality, co-operation, communal well-being are still the guiding principles of their, economy. Income, it is said, is never amassed for the sake of profit and never utilized for purpose of exploitation. It reveals an adjustment of group needs with natural potentialities. Food supply is treated as a collective responsibility. It is, as an institution, expressive of the strivings of the aboriginals towards the realization of the values of collectivism and co-operation. Days there were indeed, when to quote Rymund Firth "family ties, obligation to kinsfolk, and to neighbors, loyalty to chiefs and elders, respect for clan taboos and beliefs in the control of food and other things by spirits, ancestors and gods, were involved in tribal economy.

In Agency areas, Jatapus, Konda Reddis, Savaras, Porjas, Konda Doras and Khonds subsist mainly on agricultural activity and most of them depend on *Podu* cultivation. Besides *Podu*, they also raise horticultural crops. Their main activity is supplemented by food gathering and collection and sale of minor forest produce. The material equipment of all these communities consist of simple tools bow and arrow for hunting, digging stick, '*Konki boriga*', hoe and sickle are used in agricultural activity.

Even though dress, decoration, political structure and behaviour patterns of Tribals in this State are undergoing rapid changes due to long standing and increased contact with the general population, their agricultural practices and other methods of exploiting nature remained relatively un—changed. Both advanced and primitive tribal groups still subsist on '*Podu*' cultivation. In the tribal areas of this State especially, in the hilly and forest region of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam and East Godavari, there are small but innumerable problem areas where the tribals practice shifting cultivation which is locally known as 'Podu'. The shifting cultivators are at subsistence level that is at a level where every family must produce whatever is required for consumption.

There were two types of 'Podu', namely 'Chelaka Podu' and 'Konda Podu' are in vogue. While the *podu* practiced in plain jungle clearance and flat lands is known as 'Chelaka Podu', the *Podu* confined to hill slopes is called 'Konda Podu'. Both the types involve shifting of cultivation site from one patch to another after the fertility of the patch is exhausted. The cycle of shifting is determined by agro climatic conditions locally prevailing. In *Konda Podu* primitive implements like hoe, digging stick hand axe and sickles are used, for 'Chelaka Podu' the implements employed by the settled cultivators are used. 'Konda Podu' operations start with the onset of summer to the accompaniment of certain rituals. After selecting a patch of land the trees and bushy growth are cleared and allowed to dry. Before the onset of monsoon this is burnt. This process marginally increases the fertility.

The *Podu* cultivation essentially provides the bare requirement of tribals for survival rather than generating surplus and profit, nevertheless, it plays a vital role in the economy of certain tribal groups as it ensures food supply almost round the year. Over the ages it has become an inalienable part of their life and culture with a number of ceremonies built around it.

Women and children play a vital role in the economic activity of the tribal household. Women participate in every economic activity particularly in agriculture (except ploughing) and non-agricultural activities. They freely accept wage labour when opportunities are available besides collecting forest produce. The tribal children from 10th year onwards help their parents in family pursuits by tending cattle, weeding fields, chasing birds on the standing crops, etc. When the parents are engaged in their family occupation, the younger children are left to the care of the elder children usually girls.

The geographical location and the tracts of wooded hills offered little scope for stable forms of agriculture other than shifting cultivation or slash and burn cultivation on hill tops, which was practiced from time immemorial called *podu* in the Andhra area. After reaping few harvests the land was left fallow and agricultural work started a fresh on new ground. This practice of shifting cultivation patterned semi-nomadic life. At each new place, they erected field houses or thatched huts for living, out of material taken from the surrounding jungles. After selecting hill-slopes, they felled trees and then burnt

a part of that jungle which was followed by sowing. The plough was not used but they used digging sticks for making holes to sow-seeds of jowar and pulses. The crops grown were jowar, melt (*jonna*) redgram (*Kandi*) maize, *korra* and other kinds of grains and pulses

Ever since they learnt the use of metal implements, the tribal's depended on crafts-men of plains, living on the fringes of the forest. These contacts led no doubt to the other exchanges with more advanced civilization. The tribal's exchanged neither luxuries nor armaments, but only necessary goods and even that too on occasional transaction. In fact, they carried on little or no commerce¹⁷.

The malas, the low caste in the plains were active in the trade with the tribal's.¹⁸ They were regular traders, touring the interior of the hills. They collected cater seeds, soap nuts, tamarind, turmeric, honey wax etc., and occasionally grain from the hill people in exchange for goods like pots, clots, salt, etc., but the mala and kumara traders from the plains in no way intruded directly into the moral economy of the tribal's. Their interest did not necessitate the upsetting of the tribal world. Their barter trade was carried on within the framework of the tribal economy and hence resulted in no confrontation with the tribal's. Given the situation, the revenue being a simple one, the *muttadar* collected rents from the lands actually cultivated and also got some presents annually in the shape of fruits or other hill produce or birds like parrots, hilliness, cranes, etc. To this were added a host of special fees on account of marriages, fines for offences, presents of game killed in the chase, etc., which were paid by the villager¹⁹.

Muttadari System

The polity of the hill men was hierarchical. At the apex of this polity stood the *masabdar*, followed by the *muttadar* and the later were the rest of the tribal's. The

¹⁷ The Fifth Report of the Select Committee on East India Company Affairs, 1812, Vol-II, New York, 1969 (Republished), p.110

¹⁸ Proceedings of Judicial Department, 111, A, Dated, 16th January, 1880, p.87.

¹⁹ Proceedings of Judicial Department, 111 A, Dated, 16th January, 1880, p.99.

masabdars generally live in the plains. The *mansabdar* exercised primarily adjure supremacy over the hills and never intervened in the internal affairs. He, however, excused minimal control in revenue collections, which were rather meager As Haimendorf feels that the *muttadari* system had a considerable influence on tribal life²⁰. The origin of the *muttadari* system is obscure, but it was fairly established in the region by the time of British arrival. The *muttadari* system might have therefore resulted from extraneous influences which penetrated the more inaccessible hill regions. Gradually, they were assimilated into the tribal society and were cut off from the low land civilization, by the 19th century they were so fully assimilated that all trances of a non-tribal identity was disappeared,. This penetration was in striking contrast to the intrusion of the 19th century, when the very foundations of tribal society were shaken. Having entered the tribal region and established themselves as *muttadars*, the intruders became part and parcel of tribal society.

In the villages all the settlements of minor disputes were left to the normal village *panchayat* and the *muttadar* intervened as a rule only when he was called by the headmen. The chain of contact between headmen and *muttadar* extended the *muttadars* influence into even the remotest villages. Further the celebration of feasts and presence during festivals brought him much closer to his subjects. It should be noted that the *muttadars* depended not only on any legal right but on the actual influence exercised over village communities²¹. Though the *muttadar* is politically above his subjects, socially he was considered one among the tribal's. Inter-dining and inter-marriages were common. Through the *muttadar* paid fixed revenue to the *masubdar*. It was a very insignificant amount²². He had to maintain law and order, settle disputes, perform rituals and act as a link between the hill men and their over lord, the *mansubdar*. All these functions established his power over the hill people. The village headman was responsible to the *muttadar*. Infact, the *muttadari* system united various hill communities into compact

²⁰ Furer- Haimondorf, 1948, op.cit.p.154.

²¹Ibid.

²² A Aiyappan, 1948, op.cit, pp.25-26.

groups²³. In this hierarchy, the burden of outside authority was never felt by the tribal's. The gradual extension of either the *muttadar* system or *mansubdaries* authority did not bring any radical change in tribal society. Through the tribals had to recognize the authority if an outside power and yield to the demand for revenue this was accepted because it did not result in direct interference with the tribal mode of life.

The *Muttadari* system provided the institutional structure that formally united various hill communities. Its origin cannot be stated with any certainty. Haimendroff suggests that it was introduced in Rampa by the Reddy kings of Rajahmundry during the 14th century.²⁴ When the Northern Circars were ceded to the East India Company, the Rampa country was in the possession of the ruling chiefs, alternatively called Zamindars or *Mansabdars* or Rajas. Earlier records described the Rampa Mansabdar as an independent ruler and *Muttadars* recognized him as their overlord.²⁵

The Mansabdar exercised primarily *de jure* supremacy over the hills and never intervened in the internal affairs. The interior mountainous region of Rampa enjoyed relative freedom. The Muttadars were not landed proprietors. They could not sell exchange or in any other way alienate *muttas*.²⁶ Though the *Muttadar* was politically above his subjects, socially he was considered as one among the tribals. Inter dining and inter tribal marriages were common. There were no restrictions on the tribals in expressing their opinion in their social organisation which allowed every individual to follow his interests as long as these did not conflict with the concerns of his fellow tribesmen.²⁷ The Muttadar used to maintain law and order, settle disputes, organize ceremonies, perform rituals and act as a link between tribal and their overlord, the Mansabdar. Generally, the settlements of minor disputes were left to the village council,

²³ David Arnold, 1982, op.cit. p.98.

²⁴ Furer Haimendorf, 1945, op.cit.

²⁵ F.R. Hemingway, *Godavari District Gazetteer*, Provincial Gazetteers of India, Madras, 1915.

²⁶ David Arnold, 1982, op.cit., pp.82-142.

²⁷ A.Aiyappan, 1948, op.cit.

and the *muttadar* intervened as a rule only when the headmen of the village council called him.

Besides these functions, *muttadars* used to collect rent from the tribals for the land cultivated. Each village used to pay its share, which was fixed according to the number of households and the village headman, collect the rent on a joint rent basis. The *muttadar* also use to get some presents annually either in the form of fruits or other forest produce or birds like parrots, cranes, storks, etc. The villagers also rendered vetti (unpaid labour) to the *muttadar*, like fire woodcutting, fetching water, sweeping and carrying loads. However, the *muttadar* exercised minimal control in the collection of revenue which itself was rather meager. For his services he retained the land revenue collected in excess of the fixed revenue and enjoys free land.²⁸

The gradual extension of either the *muttadari* system or the *mansabdar's* authority over a period brought small changes in the tribal society of Rampa. However, such geographical and political isolation was progressively reduced with the establishment of the British control over this region. The dictates of colonial control and interests gradually necessitated more and more direct intervention and control of the tribal society, mostly the forests. This intervention was totally unlike previous intrusions from the plains, which brought in its wake new forms of exploitation against which the tribals struggled throughout the 19th century.

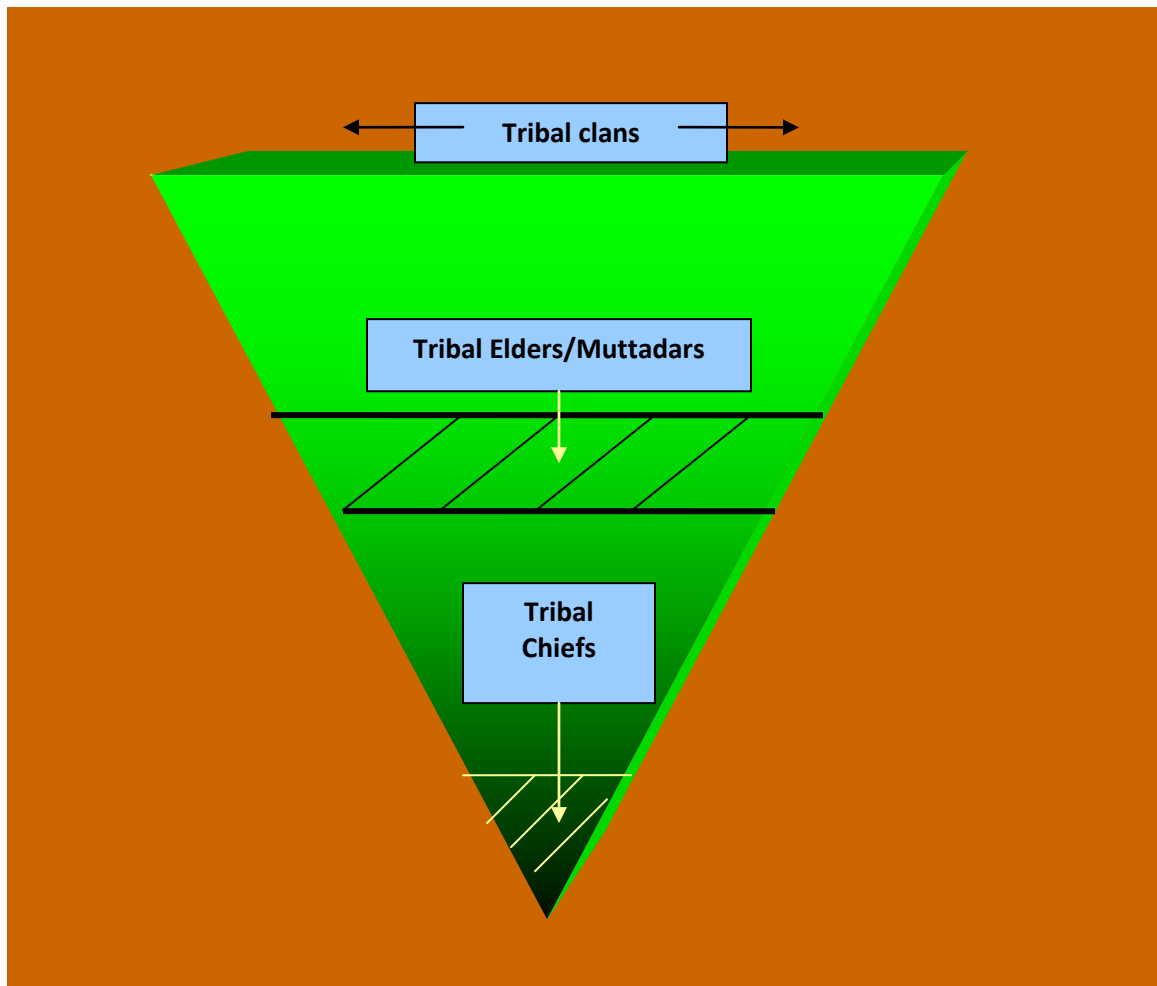
To recapitulate The agency areas which are part of the Northern Circars included the present Srikakulam, Vizayanagaram, Visakhapatnam, East-Godavari and West Godavari, Krishna and Guntur districts of Andhra Pradesh and Ganjam and some parts of the Koraput districts of Orissa. The 470 miles of coastal area comprising of above districts lay between the Gundlakamma in the Guntur district of A.P and Chilaka Lake in Orissa. The hill tracts of Andhra were the home of many tribals like Koyas, Konda Reddys, Bagathas, Kondadoras or Konda Kapus, Badabas, Ghonds, Savaras, Jatupas,

²⁸ A.Aiyappan, 1948, op.cit.

Valmikis, Mudodaras, Parjas, Kotias, Ghasis, Dombas, Erukulas and Yanadis Gadabas, Gonds, Valmikis, Erukulas and Yanadis as well as small groups like Ronas, Pattunayakas and Bhils. Few dominant tribes such as Konda Reddys, and Koyas were taken for a detail study in order to show the salient features of the tribal social formation in the Agency areas.

Understanding of contemporary tribal societies requires a basic appreciation of the historical processes that have determined the course of successive changes which have affected the peoples of India, including the tribal societies. Gradually, the demand was generated to define the tribe as a type of distinct social formation. However, it has always been difficult task before the scholars. The conceptual understanding of the tribe by the scholars was based attributes such as - the stages of evolution and type of society and other features like relative isolation, common territory, common name and a common language, simple social formation, strong kinship bond, single social rank, distinct customs, existence of youth dormitory, common ownership over land and the natural resources and low level of technological development. These features resulted in the structure of social formation of tribe as 'Reverse Pyramidal power structure' model. The following diagram depicts the structure of tribal social formation

'Inverse Pyramidal Power Structure Model' of Tribal Social Formation



(Diagram – IV.7)

Thus far, tribal social formation as an epistemological category is not considered by the existing literature and hence, the process of analysis is devoid of deep structural implication in the tribal studies. As depicted in the above diagram the social formation of the tribes in Madras Presidency was semi nomadic and consequently represents “inverse pyramidal structure” wherein the tribal clans enjoyed freedom from the impositions of clan elders and chieftains. The clan elders and chieftains quite often than not exhibited ceremonial power and exerted power at times of dispute to solve the issues pertaining to rites of passage, customs and traditions. Though the Muttadar was politically above his subjects, socially he was considered as one among the tribals. Inter dining and inter tribal

marriages were common. There were no restrictions on the tribals in expressing their opinion in their social organization which allowed every individual to follow his interests as long as these did not conflict with the concerns of his fellow tribesmen. The Muttadar used to maintain law and order, settle disputes, organize ceremonies, perform rituals and act as a link between tribal and their overlords. Owing to the communal ownership of land, the tribal society by and large failed to generate any classes within. It does not mean that the tribal society is not divided into groups. In fact it is the ritual compulsion that stratified the tribal society into different groups. Since it is not the economic base that divided the tribal society, it remained almost classless society. Only the outsiders as representatives of state power right from the medieval times tried to form as separate political entity and showed tendencies towards class formation. The subsequent chapter on the British administration shows the tendency of the external powers intervention into tribal society and tried to disrupt the tribal social formation.

Chapter-V

British Administration in Madras Presidency: A Special Reference to Agency Administration in Andhra

Tribals in India have been socio-economically oppressed, culturally subjugated and politically marginalized for centuries. Time to time they rose up in armed rebellion against the perpetrators of exploitation. During the pre-colonial times when they lived in isolation in dense forest, hilly and inaccessible terrain, their socio-economic and cultural life was not in danger and therefore, their existence was not threatened by outsiders' encroachment on the land that they occupied. It was during the colonial rule when the imperialistic regime led to the encroachment upon their land and they were left with no option but to either withdraw themselves further in the dense forest for their survival or fight relentlessly against the colonial hegemonic rule.

The Mughal Empire declined and disintegrated during the first half of the 18th century. The emperors lost their power and glory and their empire shrank to a few square miles around Delhi. In the end, in 1803, Delhi itself was occupied by the British army and Mughal Emperor was reduced to the status of a mere pensioner of a foreign power. Analyzing the strength of the British power over the Mughal Empire, Bipan Chandra writes;

“.....the Europeans knocking at the gates of India had the benefit of coming from societies which had evolved a superior system and which were more advanced in science and technology. The tragedy of the decline of the Mughal Empire was that its mantle fell on a foreign power which dissolved, in its own interest, the centuries old socio-economic and political structure of the country and replaced it with a colonial structure. But some good was destined to come out of this evil. The stagnation of Indian process, because it grew out of a colonial contact inevitably mention economic political and cultural backwardness. But it was precisely these knew forces of change which were to provide the dynamism of modern India.”¹

¹ Bipan Chandra, Modern India, National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi, 1971, p.15.

When the Mughal empire and its political system declined and the British made its entry, there were a large number of independent powers, namely, Bengal, Avadh, Hyderabad, Mysore, and the Maratha. These powers challenged the British supremacy in the second half of the 18th century. Besides these powers, there were the Rajput states around the areas of Delhi. The Rajput and the non-Rajput states at Amber, Marwar, Gujarat and Malwa continued to survive as before. The internal politics of these states was often characterized by corruption, intrigue, and treachery as prevailed at the Mughal court. For instance, Ajit Singh of Marwar was killed by his own son. The Jats, Sikhs, and the Marathas also constituted separate power structures. In fact, the people inhabiting the princely states resided both in a colonial and the feudal situation. At the parochial level they had the Rana, Maharana or the Rao and at the lowest grass-root level, there was *jagirdar* or *thikanedar*. There was a treaty between the British Raj and the princely states which guided relationship between the two power structures. Normally the British *Raj* did not intervene in the affairs of the princely states' administration but the influence of the British was always over social and economic spheres.

Establishment of British Power in Andhra

The present area of research is connected with the British control of the tribal populace by beginning of the 19th century. The Anglo-French struggle known as the Carnatic wars is started for the control of the seas and more particularly for possessions of Coromandal coast, where important trading factories were established in the places such as Machilipatnam, Madras and Pondicherry. It is not surprising that power slipped from native rulers, since they could not be a match to the enterprising and encroaching foreigners. With the decline of Mughal hold on the country after Aurangzeb, the ambitions of the company officers found ample scope for exercise, as the Mughal emperor a helpless spectator with no apparent strong man on the horizon to restore the political equilibrium, the field was open to the boldest and strongest hand².

It took an altogether different turn with their military involvement in the contest then going on between the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Marathas and the Nawabs of

² Frykenburg, *Guntur District: A History of Local Influence and Central Authority in South India*, Oxford University Press, 1965, p.24.

Carnatic with varying fortunes. The rivalry was, therefore, first commercial and then both military and political. By 1763 French power declined. However, this did not automatically result in the establishment of British hegemony over Andhra, for most of the Andhra regions had been under the defector rule of the Nizam since 1724³.

In 1765 Robert Clive, the then Governor of Bengal succeeded in securing a *firman* from the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam who gave the Circar districts except Guntur to the British for their support in his misfortunes. The Nizam of Hyderabad unwillingly confirmed the secession of the circars to the British through a treaty in 1766. The British from that date became masters of Coastal Andhra region stretching from Ganjam to Guntur. The latter was occupied by them in 1788. In 1800 the Nizam a year after the close of the Fourth Mysore war (1799) (in which he fought in alliance with the British) had entered into a treaty with the British under the system of Lord Wellesley's subsidiary alliance and ceded to the Company all the territories he acquired from Mysore earlier in 1782 and 1799. These included the districts of Bellary, Kurnool, Cuddapah and Anantapur which since then came to be known as Ceded Districts. In 1801 Wellesley annexed the Carnatic region to the British Dominion as a result of which the districts of Nellore and Chittoor were brought under British power; with this the British conquest of Andhra was complete. The Permanent Settlement was extended in 1802 and 1804 to some of these areas. In the early years, colonial intervention was rather superficial and left the forest world relatively untouched. All this was to change by the end of the 19th century.

The Andhra became a part of various kingdoms but no record was available to show the status of the tribal areas in their respective periods. But the Gajapathi kings of Orissa were perhaps the first rulers who held sway over the tribal areas of Vizagapatnam and Ganjam districts. The Rajas appointed their own men as smaller Rajas in tribal areas to collect rents and also to check the tribals from plundering plains villages. The smaller Rajas in turn appointed Muttadars for groups of villages⁴. These Rajas were called as Zamindars (owners of land) by the Muslim rulers. Similar system existed in tribal areas of Godavari ruled by Rajas of Badrachalam, Polavaram, Gutala etc. These Rajas also

³ M.Venkata Rangaiah, *The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra)*, Vol: I, Hyderabad, p.11.

⁴ V.N.V.K Sastry and K.V. Subba Reddy, *Evolution of Scheduled Areas and Changes in Muttadari System in Andhra Area*, Tribal Cultural Research and Training Institute, Hyderabad, 1991, p.75.

called themselves as '*Dev*' meaning god. These Rajas were receiving ceremonial payments during festivals and they were also reciprocating. The tribal tradition was incorporated by great tradition. Some of the important aspects of great tradition, therefore, found its origin from tribal tradition. The important tribal group of the area 'Khond' even called themselves as Samantha (meaning subordinate king) in the process of *Sanskritization*. This close relationship between the tribals and Hindu rulers was exploited for the latter's advantage, especially after the advent of British.

Land Revenue Settlements in Tribal Regions

The present work examines the colonial revenue policies applied to the tribal areas of the Andhra in Madras Presidency. It seeks to demonstrate the operation of colonial policies on the surveying and settlement of tribals and attempts to analyze the impact of such policies on the tribal society during British colonial rule. By providing insights into colonial land revenue policies such research help us to understand their negative consequences on the local tribal economy between 1776 and 1947. It is argued, in particular, that colonial land revenue policies did not consider the living standards of the tribals and the poor infrastructure facilities in the hill regions while imposing land revenues that became exploitative.

The consequence of the colonial policies were the emergence of various revenue officials in the society such as Zamindars, Munsabdars, Muttadars etc. their main duty was to collect revenue and favour the government. The Muttadari system played an important role in the tribal society, which strengthened the feudalistic nature of administration that new social formation took, had taken place. The main parts of the work focus on the colonial revenue policy and elucidate the survey and settlement techniques in different hill areas.

When the tribal areas came under the English control, there was no regular survey of the hill areas for a long time. Uncultivated and wastelands were given to the Zamindars perpetually and without extra rent. The land survey was arranged in the agency in 1792, the court of directors particularly ordered⁵ that "this should be a more

⁵Letters from Court of Directors to Madras, Dated: 16-05-1792, Also seen in L.Manhamma., *Alluri Sitaramaraju*, A.P State Archives, Hyderabad,1983, p.5.

land survey, expressing the kind of land, without why reference to the value, which might rise jealousy and discontent”⁶. The burden on the hill Zamindars was more as their income was limited to the resources of the poor farmers for the areas, who themselves struggled for their existence. Not only the poor peasants, but even the Zamindars many a time, had to borrow from traditional moneylenders to pay their own rents in time to the Government. Many times the survey could not be completed because of the nature of the land and people.

Towards the end of the 1815 a small survey party was sent to the Northern Circars. The survey officer himself reported about the wilderness of the country beyond Rajahmundry by stating that “the tract of the country among the hills ...constituting a part of the boundary is wild and uncultivated, with here and there a few huts huddled together not deserving the name of villages, and thinly inhabited by a race of people as wild as the country...The difficulty of procuring supplies, the wild and inaccessible nature of the country, with the want of roads and its.. noxious climate, have rendered the survey hazardous and laborious.”⁷

“Ganjam, Vizagapatam, and Rajahmundry and countries different from all other territories dependent on fort St. George chiefly because, bounded to west ward by a wide tract of hill and jungle, inhabited by uncivilized and indeed unconquered barbarians, many of them not even dominantly depend on any government, their climate and their poverty have secured them from conquest—nobody seems even to ken the boundary—this tract has never been explored –there is a blank here left in the maps ---”.⁸

It took nearly a hundred years for the British to enter the areas with the help of the Muttadars. Though the surveyor made a preliminary visit in 1815, the actual survey of this difficult terrain began in 1820 and continued for 15 years. An assessment was made on the basis of old record, and revised periodically. At the close of the Rajahmundry survey in 1824 one of the Surveyors wrote that “the features of the country are very

⁶ Letter from the Court of Directors to Madras, Dated, 16-05-1792.

⁷ Phillimore , Historical Records of the Survey of India 91815 to 1830) , Dehradun , 1954, p. 102, Also see in J. Mangamma, *Alluri Sitaramaraju*, A.P State Archives, Hyderabad, 1983, pp.6-7

⁸ Ibid, pp. 6-7

minutely and well delineated. It is to be regretted that there is a blank space in the map which should have been occupied by the Rampa Jagir, but the tract being considered very unhealthy, the survey of it was never under taken...”⁹

In 1822 Sir Thomas Munro, the Governor of Madras, examining the causes for agitations in the hill areas attributed much of it to the attempts of Government to enforce the rights of traders and other speculators who had lent money to the Zamindars and the proprietors on the security of their estates. His warnings were not heeded by the Company. Further in the name of containing the raids of tribals on villages in the plains, it started tightening its control over the hill areas. Even if one assumes that they were raiders, it was not at all difficult for the plain people to repel such attacks with their superior arms. And strictly speaking there was no need for the English to extend their authority over the hills through the Mansabdar, just for checking these incursions¹⁰. Even in this case, it was like giving the keys to the thief, as it was the Mansubdar himself who raided and annexed few villages in the plains.

He stated that “they consider themselves disgraced by seeing the abodes of their ancestors become the property of low traders. As the Regulations now stand, we must, whenever a *sowcar* obtain a decree against a Zamindar for a part, or the whole of the Zamindari, support him by force both in getting and maintaining possessions of it; and hence we are every day liable to be dragged into a petty warfare among unhealthy hills, where an enemy is seen, where numbers of valuable lives are lost from the climate, and where we often lost but never gain reputation”.¹¹

The extension of authority in the name of checking incursions can be seen as a deliberate and determined attempt of the British government in order to plunder the forest wealth. This enabled the plains trader to exploit the tribals under the cover of judiciary and official machinery. The English who came as merchants and settled as rulers in the great Indian plains, in this hill region too, gradually expelled the local authority in a phased manner. The alien administration surrounded the hill people, shook their

⁹ Phillimore., 1954, op.cit, p.102.

¹⁰ F.R,Hemingway, *Madras District Gazetteers* , Godavari, Government Press, Madras, p.260.

¹¹J. Mangamma, J, 1984,op.cit. p.8

economy, and shattered their social fabric. The tribals caught between their different exploiters eventually had two alternatives, rebellion, or migration. Migration from the forest was unthinkable and hence an armed uprising was almost inevitable¹².

In his Minute on the relative advantages of the Ryotwari on Zamindari systems, Munro spells out his opinion on the ownership of land: ¹³ “It may be said in favor of the Zamindar or Muttadar that he becomes at once a great proprietor and relieves the Government of the trouble of making settlement with ryots: that having a deeper interest in the cultivation of the country than the revenue officer, he is better qualified to direct it; that being more intimately acquainted with the circumstances of the ryots, and having grater interest to prevent their failure or desertion, he is more likely to grant them such remissions, as may occasionally be necessary; that he will require no remissions in his rent to government as he will be able to make up for his loss in one place by his gain in another; that he will stand between government and the cultivator; and , finally that by conducting most of the details formerly entrusted to the revenue officers, he will greatly lessen the number of accounts, and the charges of collection.” This is how Muttadars were justified by Thomas Munro as they were to help the government by their position.

Thomas Munro in his Minute of 1824 observed on the survey assessment: “when completed they will furnish a ground work on which the land revenue of the country may with safety.... be lowered or raised according to circumstances.” He also mentioned that the thirty years in which they had come to know the country was nothing in the existence of a people. “We proceed in a country of which we know little or nothing, as if we know every thing, and as if everything must be done now and nothing could be done hereafter. We feel our ignorance of Indian revenue and the difficulties arising from it... We endeavour to get rid of the difficulty by precipitately making permanent settlements which relieve us from the troubled task of minute or accurate investigations and which are better adopted to perpetuate our ignorance than to protect the people.” Munro also wished for a fixed and moderate money assessment to be introduced everywhere

¹² Guy Standing, Migration and Modes of Exploitation, Social Origins of Immobility and Mobility, *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol-8, No: 2, January-1981, p.193.

¹³ J.Mangamma, 1984,op.cit, pp.8-9

gradually. But before making such change, it was absolutely necessary to survey the lands and ascertain the average revenue for a long series of years.

Munro suggested that a Zamindar was to be disarmed after his authority was done away with, and a strong military force stationed in the area. Martial law was to be imposed and punishment inflicted for concealing of arms. A guard with a revenue servant was to be placed in every village for the purpose of facilitating the receipt of arms seized or surrendered. The people were not happy to have the police around. Munro in his minute mentioned about the discontent among the hill men: - ¹⁴ “The district in which plundering and gang robbery are most prevalent are some parts of the Northern Circars, and the crime itself is occasioned by our want of control over the petty native chiefs and by the vicinity of their unhealthy hills and jungles facilitating the escape of the offenders.” Munro supported the ideas of *panchyats* as they would be in closer union with the leaders thus making the government more acceptable to the people. The attitude of the British on the whole was to alienate the people from the Zamindars and eliminate the Zamindars themselves to take complete control over administration of the area.

Muttadari System

Before discussing about the colonial intervention in agency areas, it is necessary to discuss about the traditional land revenue systems in tribal areas as to understand the conflicts that have arisen with the land tenure systems introduced by Musalman rulers and followed by British rulers.

The Andhra area prior to the invasion of Golconda rulers of Deccan was ruled by several kings. The Golconda kings who invaded the Circars preferred to continue the administration of these regions through local chiefs and Hindu rulers.¹⁵ The Hindu rulers who earlier subjugated hill chief were collecting *Swatantams* (Fees to village officers) from the local crops and the subordinate chiefs were paying annual tributes to the Hindu rulers. The Hill chiefs also followed this process while administering their own areas.

¹⁴ Munro's Minute on the Judicial Administration and on the Police, Madras, Dated 31-12-1824.

¹⁵ V.N.V.K Sastry and K.V. Subba Reddy, 1991, op.cit, p.75.

They were also paying tributes to the Hindu rulers on all Hindu festivals and Hindu rulers were reciprocating with gifts and were honoring the chiefs on all-important occasions.

Some of the Tribal communities of like the Khonds had even adopted the Sanskrit names like Samantha to their tribe meaning subordinate king. Elsewhere in the country also, the tribal committees like Raj Gond claiming Kshatriya (ruling class) status. Therefore, the relationship between the Hindu rulers and the Hindu Chiefs was in the manner of reciprocation. In the process of interaction, the tribal tradition was recognized as an important aspect of Hindu tradition and was even to had originated from the tribal tradition. It is sufficient here to say that the tribal society became a part in overall Hindu tradition. As the time passed, the frequency of interaction of tribal society with larger society increased thereby the tribal economy also became a part of a larger economy.

The Muslim rulers of Golconda first gave the name Zamindar to the Rajas meaning possessor of land. These Zamindars or Rajas were asked to pay fixed rent and the administration of Zamindaries was left to the Zamindar. The big Zamindars or Rajas appointed by Muslims were reported to have in turn appointed smaller Zamindars for tribal areas who in turn appointed Muttadars or Samuthudars to collect rents fixed by Zamindars. While Muttadar was a head of the Mutta, referring to group of villages in Rampa area in Godavari district and Golconda and Madugala areas in Visakhapatnam district, the Samuthudar refers to head of group of Koya villages (*Samuthu*) in Badrchalam areas of Godavari district.¹⁶ So far no records available to know about Muttadari system during Muslim period, but the available records of British period have thrown some light on this subject.

The area was ruled by various Zamindars since Muslim rulers came to power. The important Raja as far as tribal areas of former Visakhapatnam district comprising of present day Visakhapatnam, Vijayanagaram and Srikakulam districts appears to be the Raja of Jeyore.¹⁷ The Jeyore estate was part of Vishapatnam district till 1936 when it

¹⁶ V.N.V.K Sastry and K.V. Subba Reddy, 1991, op.cit.

¹⁷ The Zamindari System in Madras Government Proposal For Abolition, Director of Information and Publicity, Fort St. George, Madras, Not Dated.

was transferred to the newly formed state of Orissa. Most of the Zamindars in these two tribal areas owe their existence to the Raja of Jeypore who appointed them.

In case of Godavari district including the present day East Godavari and West Godavari district, the links of smaller Zamindars seems to be with Zamindar of Badrachalm. The reason for not extending the rule of Raja of Jeypore to these areas was perhaps due to the fact that Godavari district was separated geographically by mighty river Godavari.

The smaller Zamindars also called themselves as he traditional setting collected the rents from Muttadars or Samuthudars. These Muttadars appears to have come from upper strata of tribal society of the area. In Godavari district where the Koya and Konda Reddi tribal inhabited areas were more or less mutually exclusive, the Muttadars or Samuthudars were from Koya or Konda Reddi tribal communities. But in the multi -tribal areas of Visakhapatnam district, most of the Muttadars were from the Bagatha tribal community which claims highest social status in the tribal hierarchy of the area. The British records referred the Bagathas as plains Kapu caste men who migrated to tribal areas.

Below the Muttadar was traditional tribal chief at village level. The tribal areas were sparsely populated and rents were paid only as symbolic act of recognition of authority of Zamindar; it was a very informal traditional organization below the Muttadar especially at village level. In fact, the concept of village itself did not exist then as tribals lived in an area migrating with in it depending on availability of food resources. The following were the ancient Zamindari in tribal areas.¹⁸

Vizagapatnam District

1. Andra,	9. Merangi,
2, Belgam,	10, Pachipenta,

¹⁸. The Zamindari System in Madras Government Proposal For Abolition, Director of Information and Publicity, Fort St. George, Madras, Not Dated.

3. Chemudu,	11, Palakonda,
4. Gulugonda,	12, Saluru
5. Jeypore,	13. Sangamvalasa
6. Kasipuram,	8. Madugole,
7. Kurupam,	-----

(Table:V.1)

Godavarai District

1. Polavaram,	8. Devipatnam,
2. Gutala,	8. Peddapuram,
3. Kothapalli,	10. Munsabdars of Rampa
4. Bayyanagudem,	11. Tetapalli and Jaddangi
5. Billimilli,	12. Korukonda
6. Billamilli	13. Bhadrachalm.
7. Jangareddigudem,	-----

(Table:V.2)

Almost all these plains Zamindars maintained very good relationship with the hill chiefs and also with intermediate Zamindars. For example, almost all Zamindars in present Srikakulam and Vizayanagaram districts like Andra, Salur, Pachipenta, Chemudu, Sangamvalasa, Merangi, Kurupam and Palkonda were appointed by the Raja Jeypore. (Presently located in Orissa State).¹⁹ The Zamindars of Vizayanagaram belonging to

¹⁹V.N.V.K Sastry and K.V. Subba Reddy, 1991, op.cit, p.22.

Prajapathi family also maintained good relationship with the tribal chiefs. Similarly, the Zamindars of Polavaram, Gotal, Bhadrachalm and Korukonda were having good relationships with the tribal chiefs and Muttadars.

The Madugula Zamindari consisted of Hill Madugula, Ghats and Lova country (Valleys), the Hill Madugala of the Zamindari consisting of tribal areas was mortgaged to Raja of Jeypore. Some times, Zamindari were also purchased by another Zamindar or taken on lease. Rekapalli Estate was thus leased in A.D.1574 to Korukonda Zamindars who were said to have enjoyed it for nearly 250 years. Similarly Gutala estate was purchased by Polavaram Zamindar. In spite of all this, tribal chief Zamindari relationship did not change much.

As per as gifts from Zamindars were concerned, the Muttadars and smaller Zamindras were giving presents to the Raja of Jepore during *Dessera* besides providing military services.²⁰ He was collecting these feudatories by sending 'Kola' (a bow and arrow) as a symbol. This symbol was forwarded from one Chief to the other and the messengers were given a feast before paying the rents and presents called 'Anjali'.²¹ Similar relationship existed in other Zamindari in Godavari district who used to receive 'Rajalanchanalu' (symbolic gifts to the rulers) even though they did not have control over the hill chiefs. Thus the relationship between the hill chiefs and Zamindars and Rajas was cordial even during the Musalman period as it was only the Raja who was defeated by Musalman rulers and the smaller Zamindars continued to be under Rajas.

During the British period, unlike the ancient Zamindars, they tried to interfere in the way of life of the tribals. It is to be mentioned here that the tribal areas which were endowed with large potentates attracted the attention of the British rulers as they thought that revenues can be raised from these areas by establishing direct rule over these areas. They also wanted to lesson the control of the Zamindars of plains areas over the hill

²⁰V.N.V.K Sastry and K.V. Subba Reddy, 1991, op.cit, p.23.

²¹ "Selections from the Records of the Madras Government: A Collection and Precise pf Papers about Jaypore" No. L.XXXI United Scotch Press, Government of Madras, Madras, 1864.

chiefs and hill areas as the Zamindars were treated as mere agents of Musalmans who were created for the sole purpose of collecting the revenue.²²

Nature of the Muttadari System

After the Zamindari system, the next important administration in the Agency was the Muttadari system. The '*mutta*' means small district or sub-divisions of a country.²³ Groups of villages in the accessible and backward hill tracts came to be held as revenue units called '*muttas*' and the intermediary who collected the revenue and paid a certain amount of it to the government was a Muttadar. A Muttadar was only a revenue collector and not a cultivator of land. To ensure against losses in revenue collections he got a percentage as commission.

Between 1802 and 1804, the northern districts of Madras Presidency got permanently assessed when the lands were already in the hands of Zamindars and were confirmed again to them in perpetuity.²⁴ The assessment was fixed at two-thirds of half the gross produce estimated on an average of the thirteen years. Half of the produce was left to the cultivator; one sixth was the Zamindar's share and the remaining two sixth was government revenue. The Regulation XXV 1802 provided for the system of Zamindaries and smaller estates called *muttas*. Owing to lapse in payments by the purchasers, lands came back to the Government who settled them temporarily as there was none to repurchase them. In 1802 when the joint – rent system was introduced, the farmers refused to rent their villages as the amount was high. As a result outsiders rented the villages and government collected a bigger sum than the villages could normally yield and this led to troubles. The land rent to be paid by the individual cultivators increased.

When the agency came under the British there was a long drawn out battle between the government who were forcing their way into the forest area and the people of the hill areas who resisted the move. There were as many as villages in the *muttas* and when they came under the British, the Governor of Madras wrote, "a system which is

²² F.R.Hemingway, op.cit, p. 168.

²³ C.P. Brown's Dictionary Dialects, p. 95

²⁴ J. Mangamma, , 1984,op.cit, p.10-11

adopted to districts where the authority of government is paramount cannot fail to be those mountainous tracts where, up to the present period, after a lapse of more than thirty years, we, in truth, possess no police and no power.²⁵

As Haimendorf feels that the Muttadari system had a considerable influence on tribal life²⁶. The origin of the Muttadari system is obscure, but it was fairly established in the region by the time of the British arrival. The Muttadari system might have therefore resulted from extraneous influences which penetrated the more inaccessible hill regions. Gradually, they were assimilated into the tribal society and were cut off from the low land civilization. By the 19th century they were so fully assimilated that all traces of a non-tribal identity was disappeared. Having entered the tribal region and established themselves as Muttadars, the intruders became part and parcel of tribal society.

In the villages all the settlements of minor disputes were left to the normal village *panchayat* and the Muttadar intervened as a rule only when he was called by the headmen. The chain of contact between headmen and Muttadar extended the Muttadars influence into even the remotest villages. Further the celebration of feasts and presence during festivals brought him much closer to his subjects. It should be noted that the Muttadars depended not on any legal right but on the actual influence that they exercised over village communities²⁷. Though the Muttadar was politically above his subjects, socially he was considered one among the tribals. Inter-dining and inter-marriages were common. The Muttadar paid fixed revenue to the Masubdar and it was a very insignificant amount²⁸. He had to maintain law and order, settle disputes, perform rituals and act as a link between the hill men and their over-lord, the Mansubdar. All these functions established his power over the hill people who accepted his sovereignty. The village headman was responsible to the Muttadar.

²⁵ J. Mangamma, ,1984, op.cit, p.11

²⁶ Furer- Haimondorf, 1948,op.cit, p.154.

²⁷ Ibid, p.154.

²⁸ A.Aiyappan., 1948, op.cit, 25-26.

In fact, the Muttadari system united various hill communities into compact groups²⁹. In this hierarchy, the burden of outside authority was never felt by the tribals. The gradual extension of either the Muttadar system or Mansubdaries' authority did not bring any radical change in tribal society. Though the tribals had to recognize the authority of an outside power and yield to the demand for revenue, this was accepted because it did not result in direct interference with the tribal mode of life.

Practice of Muttadari system

In the Visakhapatnam agency, the Muttadari system had its beginning in the Golugonda and Madugula areas³⁰. On the condition that they paid their revenue partly in cash and partly in kind to the Raja of Vijayanagaram, two cousins of the Raja of Jeypore (Orissa) were made Muttadars of the two villages. In the crucial battle of Padmanabham in 1794, the Raja of Vizayanagaram was killed and his lands came under British control. The Muttadar of Golugonda agreed to pay Rs. 10,000 as *peshcush* (tribute) to the East India Company and a *Sanad* (letter of permission) was granted to him in 1802. As this huge amount could not be realized year after year, the *mutta* fell into arrears and the British government purchased it for a nominal amount of Rs. 100 in 1837. In the *mutta* of Golugonda there were 60 villages excluding the hill area. A commoner was appointed to collect rent and the agency farmers refused to recognize him as the representative of the collector and thus began the confrontation.

In the Golugonda hills there were ten *muttas* were leased out to hereditary Mokhasdars. These are as follows; 1. Dutcherti (Rs.1200), 2. Makavaram (Rs.500), 3. Koyyur (Rs.400), 4.Gudem (Rs.857), 5.Dhrmakonda (Rs.857), 6. Antada Kottapalli(Rs.130), 7. Guditur (Rs.80), 8. Lotugadda (Rs.30), 9. Chittempadu (Rs.30), 10. Bandivalasa (Rs.20). Dutcherti and Guditur *muttas* were transformed to Rampa Agency in the Godavarai district in 1881.

²⁹ David Arnold, 1982, op.cit, p.98.

³⁰ J. Mangamm , 1984, op.cit.p.10

In Godavari Agency the institutions of Muttadars seems to have been created only the 'Rampa Rebellion' of 1879.³¹ Rampa continued for a long time as an independent Zamindari and no tribute was received either by the Nizam's Government or the Company. During the permanent settlement of 1802-1803, Rampa was not considered for any settlement or assessment and the Zamindar was made to acknowledge the sovereignty of the company in 1813. The Zamindar was satisfied as the land and power were retained by him but he did not foresee that his successor generations would lose land, property, freedom and all.

No hereditary right to the office of Muttadar was recognized and on his death, registration, dismissal or removal the Agent was to personally investigate all claims and submit his report, whereupon the government selected the successor. The Muttadar was empowered to suspend any munsif for not more than twelve months and could even dismiss him but such a munsif could appeal to the Special Assistant Agent within three months. The Muttadar could not impose any fine on the munsif. The Muttadar was to assist the authorities in the upkeep of roads and travelers' bungalows, and in keeping the principal forest paths cleared so as to enable the elephants to pass. He had to provide the necessary labour for carrying luggage and supplies. He had no right to the revenue from duties, akbari or taxes on the sale of spirits and liquor or from market and fairs. The Muttadar was to maintain registers of births and deaths in villages.

In Agency areas lands were not surveyed and the farmers were to pay the same amount as they paid when the government took over. Same rate of rent prevailed for the newly occupied lands and the adjoining lands of the same class. The Muttadar did not improve the lands and farms finally turned into Ryotwari farms. Munro foresaw rebellions with petty armed chiefs, who may here after combine to disturb the public tranquility; and that the system is, on the whole detrimental to the country and dangerous to the government.

³¹ Report of the Abolition of the Muttadari and Malguzari Tenures in the Andhra Pradesh, 1970-71.

The meaning of Agency

The official meaning given to the term Agency as follows, “A country inhabited mainly by a simple and ignorant people who by reason of their ignorance and excitable temperament need handling with tact and sympathy by reason of the backward conditions and required to be sheltered from the subtleties of the law and the wiles of the more civilized traders and lawyers of the plains³².”

There were three important agency districts in the coastal region of Andhra during colonial period. The agency administration was changed from time to time.

Agency Administration Acts: At A Glance

S.NO	Agency Acts	Important Features
1.	The Ganjam and Vizagapatnam Act, 1839	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• According to this act a separate system of administration was established in the agency areas.• The operation of rules for the general administration of civil and criminal justice as well as those for the collection of revenue in the state shall cease to have any effect except those mentioned in the Act.• The administration of civil and criminal justice and collection of revenue shall, be vested in the collector of district and shall be exercised by him as ‘Agent’ for the state government concerned. The areas administered by Agents came to be known as ‘Agency’ areas since that enact of this act.• The state government is competent to prescribe such rules as they deem proper for the guidance of such agents and also determine the extent of jurisdiction of agents in civil suits.

³² Furer-Haimondorf, 1948, op.cit, p.35.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The act also empowered the government of Madras to prescribe such rules as they might deem proper for the guidance of the agent and his subordinates in judicial and other matters.
2.	The Scheduled District Act of 1874	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most of the areas notified were inhabited predominantly by aboriginal tribes as the other areas were deleted in 1864. Second important aspect was that this Act owes its origin from Ganjam and Vizagapatnam Act, 1839. The third important aspect to be noted was that the Act itself comes into existence as a Government of India Act as a result of growing unrest in tribal areas of the country and the need for separately administering these areas. As for the Godavari agency, the tracts ceded by the Nizam in 1862 became part of the Madras Presidency in 1874 and in 1879 these tracts together with certain portions of the Vizagapatam agency were formed into the Godavari agency and placed under the collector of Godavari under the scheduled districts Act XIV of 1874. In the agencies both civil and criminal justices were differently administered. These tracts were covered with hills and jungles had scarcely any communications
3.	The Agency Tracts Interest and Land Transfer Act ,1917	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The agency tracts for the purpose of implementation of this Act means Scheduled Districts as defined in Acts XIV and XV of 1874 (Act XIV refers to limitations Act while refers to the scheduled districts Act of 1874.) The Agents means Agent to Governor in the districts of Ganjam and Vizagapatnma and Government Agent in the district of Godavari. The Hill tribes is defined under section 2 (C) as anybody or class of persons resident in agency tracts that may from time to time

		<p>notified as such purpose of the Act by the government in council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The immovable property does not include standing timber, growing crops or grass. The ‘transfer’ was defined as mortgage with or without possession , lease, sale, gift, exchange or any other dealing with property not being a testamentary dispossession and includes a change or any contract relating to immovable property.
4	The Government of India Act, 1919 (Wholly Excluded Areas and Areas of Modified exclusion.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By Government of India Act, 1919, the areas were removed from purview of Legislatures but limits of exclusion deferred in their extent and degree. Thus arose two categories namely “wholly excluded areas” and “Areas of modified exclusion • The Godavari and Visakhapatnam Agency areas were declared as backward tracts and were included in the constituencies returning members to the provincial Legislature and also nominated members to represent the tribals.
5	The Government of India Act, 1935	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct that whole or any specified part of an excluded area shall become or become part of partially excluded areas. • Direct that the whole or any specified part of a partially excluded area shall cease to be partially excluded area or a part of such an area. • Alter but only by way of rectification of boundaries any excluded or partially excluded are, • On any alteration of the boundaries of a province or the creation of a new province, declare any territory not previously included in any province to be, or to form of an excluded area or a partially excluded area.

(Table: V.3)

The Permanent Settlement in 1802

The Madras Permanent Settlement, 1802, (Regulation No: XX1802) was promulgated to declare the proprietary rights of the lands to be vested in the individual persons and for defining the rights of such persons under a permanent assessment of revenue³³. In the same year, the new act was made *i.e.*, Regulation No. XXIV of 1802, according to this act Karanams were appointed but this was also not made applicable to the tribal areas. Therefore, the traditional chiefs continued to have the hold over the population and they were paying tribute to the Zamindars who in turn paid the revenues to the British government. However, the hilly and thinly populated tribal areas were not brought under the permanent settlement for following reasons:

1. The revenues were not many
2. The lands were only cleared for temporary cultivation and abandoned after a year or two for fresh ones.

There are two important aspects to be noted here:

(I) The plains Zamindars took refuge in the hilly areas, whenever a problem occurred to them.

(ii) They also took the help of hill chiefs to attack the Government whenever there were threats to their estates. The attacks on government were made with the vested interest of protecting their own zamindaries. When the rights over their zamindaries were finally established in permanent settlement in 1802, the disturbances subsided.

Almost in this period of history the Pahariyas of the Rajmahal hills revolted against the landlords. Augustus who was deputed to handle the situation has laid foundation to the policy embodied in the regulation – I of 1796.³⁴ According to this, special arrangements were necessary for the isolated tribal regions to control them.

³³F.R. Hemingway, *op,cit*, pp.164-165/

³⁴ Dhebar Commission, Government of India, New Delhi, 1962, p. 37.

Vizagapatam and Ganjam Agencies Act in 1839

Meanwhile disturbances again started in 1839. This necessitated state intervention more cautiously. In these circumstances the government accepted Russell's proposals which formed the basis of the Act XXIV of 1839, leading to the formation of Vizagapatam and Ganjam Agencies Act in 1839³⁵. It was an important Act for the administration of justice and collection of revenue in certain parts of the districts of Ganjam and Vizagaptnam.

The settlement was an occasional gesture, a part of British strategy which was considered necessary in securing submission, placating emotions at moments of crisis and restoring certain confidence in the legitimacy of this rule³⁶. In fact, the colonialists were not new to forest administration. They had vast experience of tapping rich resources from jungle produce, from as early as last decade of the 18th century A.D., and had faced and tackled a number of tribal uprisings in the process³⁷.

Important features of Ganjam and Vizagaptnam Act, 1839

- (i). In the tracts mentioned in the Act, the operation of rules for the general administration of civil and criminal justice as well as those for the collection of revenue in the state shall cease to have any effect except those mentioned in the Act.
- (ii). The administration of civil and criminal justice and collection of revenue shall, be vested in the collector of district and shall be exercised by him as 'Agent' for the state government concerned. The areas administered by Agents came to be known as 'Agency' areas since that enact of this act.

³⁵ Government of Madras, Vizagapatam and Ganjam Agencies Act ,1839 (XXIV of 1839)

³⁶ A.R.Desai, (ed), 1979 op.cit, p.23.

³⁷ Provincial Gazetteers of India, Vol-I, Madras, p.235.

(iii). The state government are competent to prescribe such rules as they deem proper for the guidance of such agents and also determine the extent of jurisdiction of agents in civil suits.

(iv). Appeal on a decree of any agent lies in High Court and;

(v). The State government is competent to alter the limits of tracts.

The act also empowered the government of Madras to prescribe such rules as they might deem proper for the guidance of the agent and his subordinates in judicial and other matters. They are: The civil cases to be tried by *panchayats*, but they were frequently revised. They empowered the District Muncifs (who are the Deputy Tahsildars) to try cases up to Rs.500/- in value. The divisional officers (who have the civil powers of Sub-judges) those between Rs.500/- and Rs.500/- and the agent those above the latter sum in value³⁸.

The following observations are to be made on this Act

The Act excluded certain specified areas from purview of normal administration. The compelling factor behind this was to maintain law and order as the report of George Russel clearly says that “these mountainous tracts, where up to the present periods, after a lapse of more than 30 years, we in truth, possess no police and no power”³⁹, as it was often believed by the British that traditional bonds between the non-tribal Zamindars in tribal areas and the hill, chiefs are often misused by the non-tribal Zamindars to create law and order problems for British in the inaccessible jungle areas. But the important issues not noticed by the British was that most of the Zamindars of Vizagaptnam and Ganjam derived their power and estates from the Gajapati kings of Orissa who granted them their lands on conditions of feudal service and of keeping a check on the aboriginal tribes of the hills the Khonds and Savaras.⁴⁰ The selfishness of the zamindars can be clearly seen from the fact that they themselves have taken shelter and instigated

³⁸D.F. Carmichael, *Madras District Gazetteer*, Vizianagaram, Vol:I, 1907 p.197.

³⁹ Full Report of George Russell Commission, 1832, Government of Madras.No.XXIV, Vol.I.

⁴⁰ T.J. Maltby, *The Ganjam District Manual*, Lawrence Asylum Press, Madras, 1882, p. 18.

the tribal chiefs to fight against the British and at the same time wanted to check the hill chiefs when it came to maintain their authority over hill areas.

Mariah Sacrifice

The Special Agency was created by the British during this period to completely stop the practice of human sacrifice which was supposed to be under practice among the hill tribes of Ganjam Agency. George Russel's report in 1834, on Mariah sacrifice, gave a good account of this practice which is briefly follows;

The hill tribes called Khonds were said to be in the habit of offering human sacrifices to the Goddess Jankiri with a view to secure good crops. Goddess Jankiri was believed to be Sankari also called Parvati. For performing the ceremony after pongal feast the victim was procured by purchase, he was immediately carried before the God, and some quantity of rice coloured with turmeric was put upon his head. It was believed that this would prevent him from escaping even though he was set at liberty. This escaping was, however, a remote possibility because he was kept to wander about freely in the village, he can eat and drink anything he may take fancy to and even have sexual relations with any women whom he may like.

In the morning set apart for the sacrifice, he was carried before the idol in a state of intoxication. One of the villagers who officiates as a priest, cuts a small hole on the stomach of this victim and with the blood that flows from the wound, the idol was to be smeared. Then the crowds from the neighboring villages rush forward and the victim was literally cut into pieces. Each person carries away, a morsel of flesh to present it to the idol in his own village.

The Meriah Agency, under Lt. Colonel Campell, to control this practice appears to have visited Jeypore in 1831 and this agency was abolished in 1834.⁴¹ Even though, the practice was reported in all details, no body had clear evidence of its occurrence in the known past as the descriptions appear to have been constructed from stories

⁴¹ Full Report of George Russell Commission, 1832, Government of Madras.No.XXIV, Vol.I.

circulated in those areas. While, these were going on Ganjam Agency, disturbances locally called '*fituris*' continued in the Golgonda taluk of Vizagapatnam district.

Deletion of some areas from Agency Areas

In 1864, the law and order improved in some plains areas. Moreover, it was also felt necessary to reduce the burden of work on the Agent especially in civil cases from non-tribal areas. Therefore, the following areas were deleted in 1864.

1. Kurupam (except Gumma and Konda Mutta), 2. Sangam Valasa, 3. Chemudu, 4. Pannipenta (below the Ghats), 5. Andra, 6. Sarapalli Bhimaram, 7. Saluru, 8. Madugole (below the Ghat), 9. Belgam, 10. Merangi (except Mondemkallu and Konda Mutta), 11. Golugonda (except the Mutta).

The Scheduled District Act of 1874

When the British took over the agency tracts along with the Northern Circars they were in the hands of Zamindars and so the permanent settlement was introduced. It was settled with these zamindars for an annual pucker. The tracts were however, so vast and inaccessible and the tribes so rude and excitable that it was found impossible to govern them by the ordinary laws and by the ordinary system of administration adopted for the plains.

The wide terms of the Act XIV of 1839 coupled with the uncertainties of the two subsequent enactments of 1874 called the laws as 'Local Extent Act and the Scheduled District Act'.⁴² Lent so much doubt as to what laws are actually in force in the agency and in 1898, after prolonged correspondence with the government of India, was Scheduled District Act which did much to set the matter at rest⁴³. The rules for implementation of Ganjam and Vizagapatnam Agency Act of 1839 were framed only in 1860. Accordingly, in 1839 a separate system of administration was established in the agencies. But the procedures for separate treatment were not laid down. Therefore, Ganjam and Vizagapatnam Agency Act of 1839 became ineffective. This had led to a

⁴² Scheduled District Act, 1874, Government of Madras.

⁴³ D.F. Carmichael, 1907, op.cit, p.197.

detailed review by the British government and the Scheduled District Act, 1874 was enacted.

The Scheduled District Act of 1874 was a landmark in the administration of tribal areas as this act has laid down procedures for separate treatment for the areas notified under the provisions of the Act. Most of the areas notified were inhabited predominantly by aboriginal tribes as the other areas were deleted in 1864. Second important aspect was that this Act owes its origin from Ganjam and Vizagapatnam Act, 1839. The third important aspect to be noted was that the Act itself comes into existence as a Government of India Act as a result of growing unrest in tribal areas of the country and the need for separately administering these areas. As such, even though exclusion of the area started as a measure for maintenance of law and order, it assumed protective aspects also.

It was further enacted that the collectors as agents to the governor should have the power of making laws; accordingly, the collector of Vizagapatam, became the agent to the governor in respect of all the agency tracts included in his district. While the collector of Ganjam became the agent to the governor in respect of all the agency areas included in his district.

As for the Godavari agency, the tracts ceded by the Nizam in 1862 became part of the Madras Presidency in 1874 and in 1879 these tracts together with certain portions of the Vizagapatam agency were formed into the Godavari agency and placed under the collector of Godavari under the scheduled districts Act XIV of 1874. In 1879 under section 6 of this act rules were framed for the guidance of the Government agent in the administration of the Godavari agency.

In the agencies both civil and criminal justices were differently administered. These tracts were covered with hills and jungles had scarcely any communications. In such a country it was felt the ordinary law of the land was unsuited and a special system had consequently been introduced⁴⁴. A precedent existed in the case of the agencies of Vizagapatam and Ganjam. In consequent of the nearing turbulence in these districts

⁴⁴ F.R.Hemingway,, 1907, op.cit, p.190.

which led to the appointment of a special commission under the chairmanship of Russell in 1832. On the recommendations of the committee, these two tracts were excluded, by act XXIV of 1839. From the operation of the ordinary law and were placed under the direct administration of the collectors of those districts, who were empowered with special and extraordinary powers, within them in their capacity as Agents to the Government⁴⁵.

1. Vizagapatam Agency

The tracts in the district which were thus removed from the jurisdiction of the ordinary courts and laws consisted of both zamindaris and talukas. They are: **Zamindaries** : 1. Vizianagaram. 2. Bobbili, 3. Jeypore, 4. Kumuram, 5. Sangamvalasa, 6. Chemudu, 7. Pachipanta, 8. Andra, 9. Sarapalli 10. Bhimavaram, 11. Salur, 12. Madgole, 13. Belgam, 14. Merangi,

Talukas : 1. Palkonda, and 2. Golconda.⁴⁶

In the First Schedule Part-I Scheduled districts Madras, the following areas were notified; They include Zamindaries of Vizianagaram, Bobbili, Palconda, Madgole, Golconda, Salur, and Pachipenta, Jeypore and Kasipur. It was consisted of 7/8 of the district. In other words, the above portions of the district were turned into a non-regulation area and placed under a special system of administration. In June 1863, in view of the improved condition of the district the Vizianagaram, Bobbili zamindaris and Palconda were withdrawn from the charge of the agency and in the same year it was decided to introduce the British administration into Jeypore. In December 1864, as a result of the heavy work arising in so large an agency, a further reduction in its limits was made by the exclusion from it of the estates noted below. They are; zamindaries : 1. Kurpam (Except the Gumma Kondamuthas), 2. Sangamvalasa, 3. chemudu, 4. Pachipenta (below the Ghats), 5. Andhra, 6. Sarapalli-Bhimavaram, 7. Saluru, 8. Modgole (below the Ghats), 9. Narangi (except the Mondenkallu and Kondamuthas).

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ C.D.Maclean, *Standing Information Regarding the Official Administration Madras Presidency*, Madras, 1877.

Talukas : 1. Golconda (except the hill Muttas). By 1865 the limits of the agency were further contracted or reduced. It consisted of Jeypore those portions of Vizianagaram, Modgole, Pachipenta, cooraopuram and Marangi zamindaries which are situated within the hills and also the *muthas* of Palconda and Golconda and the hill Zamindary of Causipore⁴⁷.

2. The Ganjam Agency

The modern districts of Ganja, Phulbani and Koraput formed a part of the Northern Circars under the Qutub Shahi King, Golkonda. In 1766 a treaty was concluded between the British and the Nizam of Golconda by which former took the actual possession of northern Circars. As a result Ganjam and Jeypore zamindaries came under the British occupation by the end of 1766⁴⁸. It remained under the administrative division of Madras presidency till 1936 when a separate province of Orissa came into existence.

The Ganjam Agency terrain of the southwestern part has rolling uplands with scanty rainfall resulting in less agricultural grounds. However, the rivers like Rushikulya, the Vamsadhara, and the Nagavali in the coastal landscape at the Bay of Bengal gave this Agency an outlet to the over-seas countries for trade and commerce. The tracts of south Orissa was the adobe of many tribal people, as it is today, who continue to maintain their primordial economic and cultural traits unto recent times. There already existed two types of land classification in south Orissa such as zamindari land and haveli land (crown lands) in revenue collection⁴⁹.

In between 1802-1805, Permanent Settlement was introduced into the district of Ganzam along with other districts of Madras Presidency. In 1805, the Chicacole taluk was incorporated with Ganzam district which included Parlakimidi and Tekkali, two important Zamindaries⁵⁰. But the system also did not work properly and ultimately failed

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ K.M Patrey and B.Devi, *Advanced History of Orissa (Modern Period)*, New Delhi, 1983, pp 1-6.

⁴⁹ T.J. Malthy, 1918, op.cit, p.170.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p.134.

to give any good result. The reason being it contained the rights and interests of three groups of beneficiaries, the government, the owner of the land and the tenants.

After this, the government introduced Ryotwari system as a political remedy. The main intention of the government was to deal with the people directly and to check the powers of the Zamindars. In 1877 land settlement was made on the principle of the Ryotwari system, classifying the land into wet and dry land on the basis of irrigation facilities⁵¹.

3. Godavari Agency

A similar method of administration was extended to the greater part of Godavari Agency in 1879 by the Scheduled District Act of 1874 (India Act XIV of 1874). More areas in Godavari district were brought under the purview of the Act by notifications as per provisions of Section (3) of the Act which empowered the local government, from time to, by notification in the local Gazette as follows:

- (i). Declare what enactments are actually in force in any of the Scheduled District or in any part of such districts.
- (ii). Declare any enactment that it is not actually in force in any of the said districts or in any such districts and
- (iii). Correct any mistake of fact in any notification issued under the section.

The local Government also empowered under section (5) of the Act to extend to any Scheduled District or to any part of such District any enactment which was in force in any part of British India at the date of such extension. The section (5 A) provides for imposing restrictions on the applicability of General Acts and Regulations when they were extended to Scheduled districts, under section (3) and Section (5) of the Act.

The local Government was empowered to appoint officers to administer civil and criminal justice and to superintend the settlement and collection of the public revenue

⁵¹ Manual of the Administration of the Madras Presidency, Vo: II, Madras, 1886, p.410.

and all matters relating to rent and otherwise to conduct the administration, within Scheduled District.

The Godavari Agency comprised of Bhadrachalam and Rekapalli taluks which include the Rampa country, the Dutcherty and Guditeru *muthas* and the hill villages or hill *muttas* of Yelmagudem and Peddapuram taluks. The taluks of Bhadrachalam and Redapally which are ceded by the Nizam by the Treaty of 1862 were transferred to the Madras Presidency and ceded to the Godavari district on the 1st April 1874 and together with the Rampa Country, which had hitherto been included in the Rajahmundry taluk. In 1879 they were constituted under the authority given by the Scheduled District Act as Agencies, under which the Collectors of the districts were styled as Government Agents⁵². The agency thus formed had been three times extended, namely in 1881 the *Muttas* of Dutchety and Guditeru which had been until that time administered by the government agent at Vizagapatam were transferred to the Godavari Agency and in 1883⁴²; the villages of the ex-mansab of Jaddangi and the *muthas* of Bayanagudem, Billamilly, Jangareddigudem, Gootaula, Gungolua, Pattesam, Pettah, Veeravara, Devipatnam were added and in 1891; and the Polavaram and Yellavaram divisions were also transferred to the Agency tracts under the authority of the secretary of state as given by the Scheduled District Act⁵³.

The agency areas which are a part of the Northern Circars, survey and settlement activities were carried in the second part of the 19th century. Accordingly the Godavari district was divided into the deltaic portion and the uplands. The uplands tracts are mostly un-irrigated and contain much jungle and some hills⁵⁴. The survey began in 1858. Proposals for the western delta were submitted in October 1860 and in the rest of the district in April 1861. The new settlement came into operation in the western delta in July 1862 and in the rest of district in 1865⁵⁵. In Ganjam, survey began in 1866 and the

⁵² C.D. Mclean, 1877. Op.cit., p.75

⁵³ Notifications in the Gazetteers of India for 1883, p.265.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 1891, p.248.

⁵⁵ C.D.Mclean, Manual administration of the Madras Presidency in illustration of the Records of the Government and the Yearly Administration Records, Vol: II, Madras, 1885-1893.

settlement report was submitted in 1875. The new assessments were introduced in 1878-79 and in 1883⁵⁶.

Agency Rules under Scheduled District Act, 1874

Under Section (6) (b) of the Scheduled District Act, 1874 the local governments were also empowered to regulate the procedure of officers appointed under the provisions of Section (6). Basing on this, the Governor made rules for the administration of the Agency tracts and for the regulation of the procedure of the officers appointed to administer them.

Under rule-I, the districts collectors were designed as Agents and the Sub-Divisional Officers were designated as Agency Divisional Officers to exercise the powers in the Agency portion of the Sub- Division. The Districts Collectors were as District Judges with in Agency tracts included in their respective districts. The state government was empowered to appoint any other duly qualified persons as Agency Munsif for lower court. The Rules also prescribed procedures for the valuation of suits, jurisdiction of courts, transfer of suits, appointment of pleaders, execution of decrees and orders etc.

Removal of Mansabdar and Settlement with Muttadar

By the time Scheduled District Act, 1874 was enacted, several discussions were going on in the British Government on the desirability of continuing the intermediary Zamindars in the tribal areas especially after the experience with Mansabdar of Rampa. The Government of Madras has sent M. E. Sullivan, 1st Member, Board of Revenue to enquire into the course of Rampa rebellion and suggested some remedies. He gave his report in 1879, January, 1880, Government of Madras in which he not only analysed the problem but also suggested for settlement of *muttas* directly in Agency Areas as most of these were usurped by the Mansadars resulting in conditions of unrest and loss of faith in the government.⁵⁷ He mentioned three causes for discontentment among the tribals in hill areas.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Judicial Department, Government of Madras., Dated 16th January, 1880,

1. The repeated acts of aggression and oppression on the part of Mansabdar dating from the time when under official authority the agreement of 1847-1848 was arranged between himself and the hill Muttadars.
2. The administrative error in having brought under the Rampa country under the operation of *Akbari* law.
3. The absence of proper supervision and control on the part of the European officers, in both the revenue and revenue departments.

M. E. Sullivan has further pointed out the support given to Mansabdar at the time of his restoration in 1848 was not proper since success of such an experiment was doubted even at the time of agreement as the hill chiefs were persuaded by the officers of government to agree to pay tribute to a man who they hated by an agreement that the hill chiefs and their populations will be protected by the Mansabdar on payment of rent. Simply because these tracts were wild and unproductive, it was thought an intermediary Zamindar was necessary to maintain an ascendancy over the semi-civilized tribes who inhabit these hill ranges.” Later on, the Agents were reporting not only on the incompetency of this Mansabdar but also about his mischief. But no action seems to have been taken by the Government. The observation made by Sullivan in this context was relevant even today because the positive intervention by Government at right time questioning the acts of omission by the Mansabdar (with reference to the agreement written before the hill chiefs and the British government representative) would have saved the situation. In the absence of such a watch by government, the Mansabdar with his astute advisers managed to usurp more and more *muttas*. The tribals started protesting from 1858 onwards but the appointment of Sullivan was made only after 20 years. The Mansabdari tenure was cancelled absolutely and for ever, not only for the Mansabdai of Rampa but also the Mokhsa tenure of the villages given to his forefathers” in 1879.⁵⁸

M. E. Sullivan also explained how the Muttadars and headmen who had previously stayed aloof flocked into his camp when they came to know that government

⁵⁸F.R. Hemingway, 1907, op.cit.

had taken the decisive step of removing the Mansabdar and expressed their willingness to be dealt by the Circar directly. In his report he has also enumerated the other misdeeds of Mansabdar like the toddy tax and additional tax.

Another important observation made by him pertains to Akbari (Toddy) Act which should not have been made applicable to scheduled areas especially after Scheduled Districts Act of 1874 was brought into force. He has also explained how the plains merchants exploited the hill men especially in the purchase of tamarind.

The extortions by police were also enquired into by him and he explained how a Musalman head constable by name Shike Tanny who extorted a bribe of Rs. 60/- from tribals was beheaded by the rebels at the commencement of the rising. All these also speak that separation of these areas for special treatment remained only on paper.

As per the Judicial Department 19 *muttas* were settled and 27 villages were granted to Muttadars on favorable tenures (rent-free tenures).⁵⁹ Therefore in Rampachodavaram area, there came into existence *muttas*, *mokhas* and estates after this settlement. In spite of this action by the government, six muttadars of Bogaluru, Nedlur, Yedukuru, Kakuru Kota and Chayala, who were identified as rebels by British government, did not attend the meeting meant for distribution of *Sanads* (appointment orders). Therefore, only 19 out of 26 *muttas* were settled. The Pamuleru *mutta* which was reported to be an uninhibited and infested with tigers was also not settled them.

The conditions of tenure of Muttas, Mokhasa and Inam different as follows:

The muttadar had to pay a fixed rent called '*kattubadi*' which included *Chigurupnnu* (toddy tree tax) also. He was conferred with rights and privileges over the *mutta* and the villages falling in the *mutta* were also indicated in the same *sanad* (appointment orders). The Muttadari tenure was basically a service tenure and the muttadar had to conduct himself "loyalty and peacefully affording every assistance to the Sircar in maintaining quiet and order by giving timely information of any disturbances or

⁵⁹ Judicial Department, 16th January, 1880, No.109.p.45

offence against the law and apprehending and delivering up to the authorities the robbers, rebels and other bad characters.”⁶⁰

If any muttadar failed to implement these conditions, the *mutta* was liable to be resumed. The *mutta* can be inherited by children of Muttadar at the pleasure of government. It can be allotted by government to any one else also if Muttadar does not obey the agreement. A *mutta* cannot be transferred by the Muttadar and the *mutta* can be enjoyed only under the protection of the Circar.

The mokhasas were granted by the British government to the individuals who provided services and supplies to the British and loyalty shown to the government during the Rampa rebellion. They were not required to pay any *Kattubadi* (rent) but they have to acknowledge the authority of the government by submitting one bow and three arrows every year. They have to do service to government whenever required. They can enjoy the Mokhasas as long as they continue to be loyal and faithful servants of the government failing which the Mokhasa will be resumed by government. Like the *mutta*, the mukhasa also was only heritable but not transferable.

The *Inam* was only grant for gift made by government with or without condition of service. The *Inam* also included the gifts given to service castes like Barber, washermen, village servants and also for tribal priests to conduct festivals.

The fact that these tenures were given by the Agents shows that they became important component of administration of scheduled areas.

While settlement was made with the Muttadars and favorable (rent-free) settlement was made with those who helped the government during Ramap disturbances, no settlement was made with six Muttadars who were proclaimed rebels and abstained from the meeting held to reach settlement. To them, Sullivan recommended for enhancement of *Kattubadies* by almost 1 1/2times. He also felt that it will not be possible to come to a settlement with them until the leaders were “caught or hunted clean out of the country.”

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 47

All the muttas, mokhasas , inam and villages attached to them so far discussed fall in the East Godavari district. In the erstwhile Godavari district there were several other tribal villages, especially in Polavaram area. No material so far about these villages from old records are available but only mention was made about the association of the tribals with the Zamindars of Polavaram, Gutal and Kothapalli estates and smaller estates like Bayyanagudem, Jangam Reddy gudem during disturbances. Since no settlement appears to have been reached like the one mentioned so far, it is assumed that the British government might have thought the problems in Polavaram hill areas were more due to inter-estate rivalries between Polavaram and Gutal than between Zamindars and tribals.

Establishment of Permanent Godavari Agency

In view of the disturbances, the Guditheru and Dutcharthi Muttas of Vizagapatnam district were transferred to Godavari district. Thus by 1909, permanent agency tracts of Godavari consisted of the whole of old mansubs (Estates) of Rampa and Jaddangi, the more hilly parts old Peddapuram and Polavaram Zamindaries, Dutsharti and Guditeru Muttas of Golugonda Agency transferred from Vizagapatnam district, Badrachalam, Rekapalli taluks transferred from Central Provinces in 1882 and Malguzari villages of Nagur, Albaka and Cherla taluks of central provinces transferred to Godavari district in 1909 (under Government of India Act, 1909). The next important event in the agency administration was that the enactment of Agency Tracts Interest and Land Transfer Act, 1917.

Agency Tracts Interest and Land Transfer Act 1917

By the time this Act was promulgated, a change in the attitude of British government towards Agency tracts can be seen clearly. While the mood of British government at the time of promulgation of Ganjam and Vizagapatnam Act, 1839 was only to exclude the areas for purposes of law and order, the Scheduled district Act, 1874 has an element of protection to the scheduled areas. In the Act-I of 1917, the anxiety of the Government to protect the economic interests of tribals and also on land was more pronounced because of increasing exploitation⁶¹. Therefore, in the very beginning of the Act, mention was made about the expediency to limit rate of interest and to check transfer

⁶¹ Agency Tracts Interest and Land Transfer Act, Act No:1 of 1917 14th August, 1917.

of land in Agency tracts of Ganjam, Vijzagaptnam and Godavari districts from tribals to others. The main features of the Act are as follows:

1. The agency tracts for the purpose of implementation of this Act means Scheduled Districts as defined in Acts XIV and XV of 1874 (Act XIV refers to limitations Act while refers to the scheduled districts Act of 1874.)

2. The Agents means Agent to Governor in the districts of Ganjam and Vizagapatma and Government Agent in the district of Godavari.

3. The Hill tribes is defined under section 2 (C) as anybody or class of persons resident in agency tracts that may from time to time notified as such purpose of the Act by the government in council. The immovable property does not include standing timber, growing crops or grass. The 'transfer' was defined as mortgage with or without possession , lease, sale, gift, exchange or any other dealing with property not being a testamentary dispossession and includes a change or any contract relating to immovable property.

In case of interest on debt, it was prescribed that a maximum of 24% per annum was to be charged. No compound interest or any collateral advantage is allowed as member of hill tribe or with the previous consent in writing of the Agent or of any other prescribed officer. Every suit against a member of hill tribe instituted after the commencement of the Act shall be instituted only in Courts of the Agency tracts.

Settlement with Muttadars in Golugonda Area, 1918

The continued disturbances in Golugonda area have compelled the British government to settle the *muttas* directly. In Golugonda and Madugala areas, *Sanads* were issued in the year 1918 i.e., thirty nine years after settlement of *muttas* in Rampa areas.

Altogether nine *muttas* of Golugonda and seventeen *muttas* of Madugala estate were settled and *Sanads* wee distributed by the Agent to Governor, H.A.B. Vermon at Korukonda villages in Golugonda Agency, on Saturday, 23rd November, 1918. These *muttas* were called government *muttas*. While speaking on the occasion, the Agent first informed that the King Emperor and his allies have achieved a complete and

overwhelming victory in the First World War and therefore, the people of the country should be thankful as the war came to an end.

In this Durbar, two types of *Sanads* were issued. In case of Government *muttas* of Golugonda area, only one *Sanad* was issued and in case of *Muttas* of Madugole estate which was under Court of Wards two *sanads* were issued, one was granted by the Governmewnt and other by the Agent as agent the Court of Wards on behalf of Madugole estate.

As per the conditions laid down in the *Sanads* appointing muttadars, high priority was given for the preservation of forests. *Podu* cultivation and forest fires were identified as two important threats to the forest. This when compared to *Sanads* of Rampa area show that the British government became more conscious about forest wealth.

The Muttadars were requested to encourage permanent cultivation by the tribals. The Agent also emphasized that the Muttadar should encourage migration of ryots from plains to settle in their *muttas* to take up permanent cultivation. This perhaps started a regular stream of migrants from plains areas to tribal areas. A Ghat road was proposed to be built up to Lammasingi and later on up to Malkangiri and the *shandy* (weekly market) at Kondasantha was proposed to be moved to Lammasingi. The Agent felt that the influx of carts and plains men, by opening up of these areas, will help the tribals to get better price for their produce which was a wrong policy as traders always deceived tribals.

The Muttadars were told that the Muttadar will hold the office of *mutta* only during the pleasure of government. The *mutta* cannot be attained by mortgage, sale, gifts or otherwise. The Muttadar was empowered to punish any of the munsifs (also called as *pettandar* who collects rents from ryots and remits to Muttadar within the limits of the *Mutta*) if they do not carry orders of Muttadars or of Agent to Government or Assistant Agents.

The office of *mutta* was liable to be suspended or removed or the muttadar was punished or warned if the agent to Governor feels that the Muttadar was not conducting himself properly. Thus, during the Durbar, the muttadar of Ginnalakota was warned because he was deliberately allowing *podu* cultivation. The muttadar of gaditeru, Pendupadal, was suspended for one year and this was endorsed in the *Sanad* issued to

him. Similarly, the muttadar Sujanakota *mutta* , Mattam Potanna Padal, was suspended for one year for similar reasons. Whereas the muttadar of rudakota was warned, and the muttadar of Sukuru was fined for similar reasons. Similar warnings and punishments were given to muttaars of Gangaraju Madugole, Vanapilli and Padavalasa.

While the above settlement covered only the western part of present day Visakhapatnam district, the other part of Visakhapatnam tribal areas were under different non-tribal estates and their village officers were collecting the rents and maintaining the accounts. In Paderu area, there were 17 such *mutta* villages, while in Srungavarapu Kota area, there were 9 such *muttas*.

Government of India Act, 1919 (Wholly excluded areas and areas of modified exclusion)

By Government of India Act, 1919, the areas were removed from purview of Legislatures but limits of exclusion deferred in their extent and degree. Thus arose two categories namely “wholly excluded areas” and “Areas of modified exclusion”.⁶² The Godavari and Visakhapatnam Agency areas were declared as backward tracts and were included in the constituencies returning members to the provincial Legislature and also nominated members to represent the tribals.

In the year 1920, all the Agencies were kept under one Agency Commissioner. The object of placing all the Agencies under one officer was to speed up the pace of development of resources of the rich tract and also to improve the conditions of the hill men. But in 1923, this post was abolished as a measure of retrenchment.⁶³ All these once again show only the various alternatives tried by British government to administer these areas but with little success.

In the year 1921, Agency District Board covering agency areas in Visakhapatnam and East Godavari district with headquarters at Waltair (Visakhapatnam) was constituted. It had four Taluk boards namely i) Oriya Agency Taluka Board at Koraput, ii). Chats Agency Taluka Board at Narsipatnam,iii). Rampa Agency Taluka Board at

⁶² Dhebar Commission, 1962, op.cit, p.37.

⁶³ A.Aiyapan, ,1948, op.cit, p.8

Parvathipuram and iv). Savara Agency Taluka Board Rampachodavaram. This agency district Board was constituted to ensure local self-government. But no significant activity of this Board was reported in any of the records available. This Board was abolished in 1936. As such, it was to be concluded that the law and order approach was more prominent in British administration of scheduled areas.

Government of India Act, 1935

On the recommendations of Simon Commission, government decided to declare the “Backward Tracts” as Excluded and partially excluded areas. These recommendations of Government were embodied in the Sections 91 and 92 Government of India Act, 1935. These two sections provide for declarations, by an order in Council, of “Excluded areas” and “Partially excluded areas”.

Under section 91, His Majesty may by an order of council, declare certain areas to be Excluded areas and partially excluded areas. For this purpose His Majesty at any time, by an order of council;

1. Direct that whole or any specified part of an excluded area shall become or become part of partially excluded areas.
2. Direct that the whole or any specified part of a partially excluded area shall cease to be partially excluded area or a part of such an area.
3. Alter but only by way of rectification of boundaries any excluded or partially excluded are,
4. On any alteration of the boundaries of a province or the creation of a new province, declare any territory not previously included in any province to be, or to form of an excluded area or a partially excluded area.

Moreover, no act of the Federal Legislature and provincial legislature was applicable to the excluded and partially excluded areas unless the governor by public notification so directs. This has a very before extending to the Scheduled areas. The following are some of the Acts/ Regulations so amend.

1. The Madras (Andhra Scheduled Areas) Village Codes Regulation, 1940 – extended with certain notifications to scheduled areas.
2. The Madras Court of Wards Regulation, 1940
3. The Madras Coinage Regulations, 1940
4. The Madras Salt Regulation, 1942
5. The Madras Post Offices Regulation, 1942
6. The Madras Estates Land Regulation, 1943

While these were the positive points, there was another important aspect to be said about the government of India Act 1935. The Debar Commission has pointed out that the first occasion for evolving criteria for declaring any territory as a Scheduled area has come when government of India formed the excluded and partially excluded areas under government of India Act, 1935. But on that occasion, Secretary of State for India, should take into account political necessity for limiting the number of wholly excluded areas rather than with the criteria on which they should be constituted. This only shows that the priorities of British government mainly centre round law and order.

Government of India Order, 1935 (Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas) repealed Scheduled District Act, 1874.

The Section 92 provides for administration of excluded areas and partially excluded areas. The important features of these Sections are as follows:

1. The executive authority of a province extends to excluded and partially excluded areas therein but not with standing any thing in this Act, no act of the Federal or of the Provincial Legislature shall apply to an excluded area or a partially excluded area unless the Governor, by public notification, so directs and the Governor, in giving such a direction with respect to any Act may direct that the Act shall in its application to the area or to any specified part of have effect, subject to such exceptions or modifications as he thinks fit.

2. The Governor may make regulation for the peace and good government of any area in a province which was for the time being an excluded area or partially excluded area and Regulations may made, repeal or amend any act of the Federal Legislature or of the Provincial Legislature or any existing Indian Law, which was for the time being applicable to the area in question and;
3. The Governor will be in respect of any area in the province which was for the time being an excluded area, exercise his functions in his direction.

The Government of India Act, 1935 thus assumes a very important status as for as Scheduled areas are concerned as the Excluded and partially excluded areas declared under the provisions of this Act which became more or less the Fifth and Six Scheduled Areas after the Constitution of India Act came into existence.

Summary

In Andhra, the scheduled areas have been in existence ever since the Scheduled District Act, 1874 was passed by the British, even though the British policy of separation of certain areas, most of which were tribal areas, are in vogue from general administration which was started in 1839 with the promulgation of Ganjam and Vizagaptnam Act, 1839. These areas were separately administered mainly from the law and order point of view. Therefore, the very origin of the Scheduled Areas lies in law and order aspect of administration. When the law and order improved in some of these notified areas, they were deleted from the list leaving mostly the areas predominantly inhabited by tribals in the list of Scheduled areas.

As the Scheduled areas were being administered by the British, they also noted the simple nature of tribals and the way in which the tribals were being cheated by non-tribal migrants from plains. The Act of 1917 intends to protect the interests of tribals on land in matters related to money lending in tribal areas. The Scheduled areas were also called Agency areas and Agency Tracts as these areas were administered by the district collector concerned as Agent to state government. These Agency tracts became scheduled Areas after constitution of India came into existence. From then, the concept of administration has changed completely. The accent was on protecting and promoting the interests of schedule tribes living in Scheduled areas. The various Regulations were made

from 1959 onwards to protect the interests of the tribals living in those areas. By this time, the non-tribal migrants started acquiring interests in land and trade in these areas.

When the British interfered with the affairs of Polavaram and Gutala estates in 1785 and 1799, the Zamindars took the help of Koya tribals to attack the British groups. Similarly during Gumsur war in 1836 in Parlakhimidi, the Khond tribals protected the Rajas of Gumsur belonging to Bhanja family. Later on, the tribals of Visakhapatnam district in Golugonda area fought for three years (1845-48) to protect the Zamindari from British usurpation. They even withhold payments of rents, barricaded the hills from all corners and finally made the British accept Chinna Bhupati as the representative of ancient Zamindar in taking revenge over his rival. The British forces sent to maintain law and order, had to face lot of problems in forest as the tribes waged a guerilla type war. Therefore, whenever the British tried to interfere with the non-tribal Zamindars in tribal areas, the tribal came to the help of Zamindars. In order to tackle the law and order problem in these areas, they were separated from main administration and kept under direct administration of collector of the district as Agent of state government.

The non-tribal Zamindars were not so reciprocal. For example, the Raja of Jeypore caught and handed over to British, the Savaras of Puttasingi village in Parlakhimidi area killed police when the police improperly arrested their hill chief called Gomango. When they wanted to settle their scores with British or other Zamindars, they instigated the tribals to commit similar offences. But they themselves helped British to trace the culprits when it was a direct confrontation between British police and tribal chief. The Jeypore Raja was reported to have received gifts from British for helping them in the Savara tribe case.

When it came to the Rampa case, the British initially wooed the Mansabdar of Rampa by handing over the villages plundered by him as Mokhasas (rent-free tenures) for their administration. The British later on used these Zamindars to collect the revenues, thus giving scope for exploitation of tribals by the Zamindars. Handing over of scheduled areas to District collector for district administration remained only on paper. The Mansabdar of Rampa continued to usurp *mutta* after *mutta*. It was only when the tribals resisted this exploitation by violent methods, and it was only when the tribals found fault with British for acts of Mansabdar of Rampa, the British reacted positively. At this stage

three important observations of Sullivan who enquired into the disturbances have to be noted. The first one pertains to the plunderer. The second one pertains to the wisdom of forcing an agreement on tribal chiefs, against their will, with the Muttadar that the later will protect the tribal chiefs and the tribal areas on payment of rents. In fact, he annexed the *mutta* on some pretext or the other. The third aspect was the automatic application of Akbari Act to scheduled areas without examining its implications in scheduled areas especially after the promulgation of Scheduled District Act, 1874. the fact that the Mansabdar levied extra tax over the tree tax levied by British shows that he was *de facto* administrator of Scheduled areas, the *de-jury* being district collector.

Sullivan also mentioned that the government has not taken any action on the reports of Agents against the Mansabdar. No action was also initiated against Munsabdar by government for nearly 20 years even though tribals have been protesting all these years against misdeeds of Mansabdars. Sullivan's report also throws blame on British officers, police and excise officials who cooperated with the Manabdar in exploitation of the tribal chiefs. This only shows the ineffectiveness of Agents in administration of Scheduled Areas.

On the recommendations of Sullivan, the Mansabdari tenure and Mokhasas were "cancelled absolutely and for ever". The British entered into direct settlement with Muttadars and from then, the Muttadari system became part of administration of Scheduled areas.

The settlement with Muttadars was after the Rampa Rebellion was done in 1880. While the Muttadars had to pay fixed rent called '*Kattubadi*' which included tree tax the persons who cooperated with British by providing services to military sent to suppress the resistance movement were conferred with Mokhasas which are rent free favourable tenures. The settlement with Muttadars was also made by issuing '*Sanad*' (appointment order) which included several conditions of service. Therefore, the *Mutta* was held by them on service tenure. The Muttadaaari system became important component of administration of Scheduled Area. The Muttadar had to conduct himself "loyally and peacefully" and he should assist the government to maintain law and order. The *Mutta* was inalienable but can be enjoyed and inherited at the pleasure of government only. If the Muttadar failed to implement these conditions, the Muttad was liable to be resumed.

All this shows that the Muttadar has to render so many services with limited income from the Muttadar. Moreover, the Muttadar have to take care of visiting officers by providing them food etc., besides protection. Therefore, the Muttadars have resorted to collection of 'Katnams' (presentations), confiscation of fertile land and even extracted free labour called 'Bethi'. The undue demands of British government from poor tribals and backward tribal area have resulted in this sort of corrupt practices on the part of Muttadars who otherwise were very simple and as per as any other tribals. They were in no way comparable to non-tribal Zamindars in hills or plains.

The British records did not adequately appreciate the sincerity of tribals and loss incurred by them in the invasion by British government and migrants from plains. The British officers on the other hand took fancy in projecting including George Russel who was specially deputed to this aspect and rebellions had no first hand information. Their reports were based on 'make believe' stories under circulation in those areas and some circumstantial evidence found by military officers. The practice which might have existed long back was reported to exist till a few days of the visit of Russel Commission. Otherwise, how could Mariah Agency which was established to control this practice was abolished within few years? Was the goal achieved in few years? How can age-old practice could disappear in few days, that too when there was no evidence that this Agency has gone beyond Jeypore during their tenure? Their reports only reflected general European tradition continued from days of explorers, travelers and voyagers of writing fantasies about native groups living beyond Europe. This approach continued here also, and reflected in treatment of tribals as 'peculiar' people.

While Regulation-I of 1786 separating the Pahadias of Raj Mahal hills and Regulation-XII of 1833 declaring Chotanagapur as non-regulated area set the trend; it was Ganjam and Vizagaptnam Ac, 1839 which actually started the policy of separating the notified areas for administrative purposes. This has other underlying purposes also of delinking the hill chiefs from plains chiefs. This policy had two effects. One was that the tribal chiefs could not agree to a small 'Amin' (official) of British being their boss compared to the ancient Rajas and plains chiefs. The direct rule by British has also started a process of invasion of the state and state machinery on tribal areas. The continuous

administrative invasions that followed slowly denied the tribals of their rights over means of livelihood which were common property resources for the tribal communities.

In case of *Muttas* of Visakhapatnam district settled in 1918, the *muttas* were given as 'service tenures' without right over forests. They were not heritable and only enjoyable under the pleasure of British. The Muttadars have to provide so many services as per agreement, that it was impossible to perform them without exploiting their relatives and fellow tribes' men. To pay the rents and provide services with meager income from backward tribal tracts was a very difficult task. Some of them lost tenures due to default in payments of rents and some other lost *muttas* or got punishments for not adhering to the conditions in the '*sanad*' issued at the time of settlement.

Some of the Muttadars in Golugonda Agency were also put to lot of financial losses as they could not control traditional practice of shifting cultivation called '*Podu*'. In these circumstances it was not surprising if they had kept good cultivated lands with them and resorted to extraction of forced free labour or attached labour. Ultimately, the popular government of Andhra Pradesh has abolished Muttadari system in 1969 and the common complaints against them before abolition were that they kept good lands for them and resorted to free labour called '*vetti*'. What was surprising that the Indian anthropologists who were associated with two important committees (Aiyappan Committee, and Malayappan Committee) appointed by government of Madras and after independence also did not enquire into the circumstances under which Muttadars resorted to such a practice. However, Aiyappan committee was more sympathetic to Muttadars by declaring them that Muttadars were not sinners. If Muttadars were really usurpers, they would have been very rich like plains Zamindars, on the other, according to officials who worked in those days and now retired from service, the Muttadars were very poor people, being tribals, they were kind to tribal areas. After 1970, the government helped the non-tribal settlers more than the tribals as the tribals were anyhow enjoying the lands as per traditional recognition of their ownership. The difference was that the tribals now have a title recognized by government under a non-tribal concept of '*patta*' (certificate of right). The individual ownership on land made alienation of tribal land easier than when the land was owned by community.

When Muttadari system was abolished in 1969 by popular government, the Mukhasas were not covered by this regulation. Therefore, they continued till they were also abolished in 1989. A strange situation has arisen in 1969 when the traditional Muttadars who fought against British lost the *muttas* due to abolition and the persons who got Mokhasas for arranging supplies to British troops against tribals and loyal to British, continued the enjoyment of Mokhasa. The Mokhasadars being intelligent from the beginning, 'managed' to escape from Muttadari abolition Regulation Act of 1969 until 1989 which means they had two more decades of enjoyment of Mokhasa. Even though Mokhasa were abolished in 1989, it was informed that the officers to implement the Regulation were not appointed to complete formalities of abolition and conversion into Ryotwari system.

The next important issue to be examined is the changing status of Scheduled areas since their origin. When Ganjam and Vizagapatnam Act, 1839 was promulgated, it was only the law and order to be maintained in those areas, that was the most important aspect of administration for the British government. That is why many areas which were notified included some plains areas of hill Zamindaries also. Later on in 1864 when the law and order improved, some of the plains areas were excluded from the list of notified areas. In view of continued disturbances, the Scheduled District Act of 1874 came into existence with the main purpose of examining the applicability of general Acts and regulation to Scheduled areas notified.

As the very origin of Scheduled Areas lies in the law and order aspect which was top priority for British, no other criteria was laid down for its identification. The Debar Commission? pointed out that the first opportunity for government of India available to define the Scheduled Areas was when the Government of India Act of 1935 was promulgated. According to Dhebar Commission the then Secretary of State stressed more on the law and order aspect of administration than any thing else. However, it was not to say that tribals' interests have not received attention of the British rulers as the Agency Tracts Interests and Land Transfer Act was promulgated in 1917 Scheduled Areas. The very fact that plains areas were deleted in 1864 leaving only tribal areas on land in Agency tracts shows that Agency tracts predominantly inhabited by tribals received special attention of British.

Even after the attainment of Independence, the Parliamentary Committee that went into the problem, according to Dhebar Commission, has laid down criteria for Scheduled Area basing on 'General knowledge' than anything else. Therefore, the Dhebar Commission has evolved criteria for declaring Scheduled Area.

As per as Andhra Pradesh is concerned, no new Scheduled Area was added but some Scheduled areas were deleted by Madras Cessar order, 1951. The problem continues, for example, in Srikakulam district there were several areas of nearly 100% tribal concentration and they were not part of Scheduled area. The development requirements of Scheduled tribes living in most of those areas were taken care of but the protection from exploitation could not be provided under the umbrella of Scheduled areas. The proposals to bring them under Scheduled areas were pending before government.

As this was going on at the state level, some other peculiar arguments have cropped up. When such tribal concentrated villages were proposed to be included in scheduled area to make the scheduled and tribal sub-plan area (areas of tribal concentration carved out to implement special accelerated and integrated tribal development programmes) continues, some vested non-tribals started arguing that such of those scheduled villages with less than 50% tribal population should be deleted from scheduled area. This should not be agreed to because of the proportion of tribal population in these areas decreased over the decades due to two factors, they were,

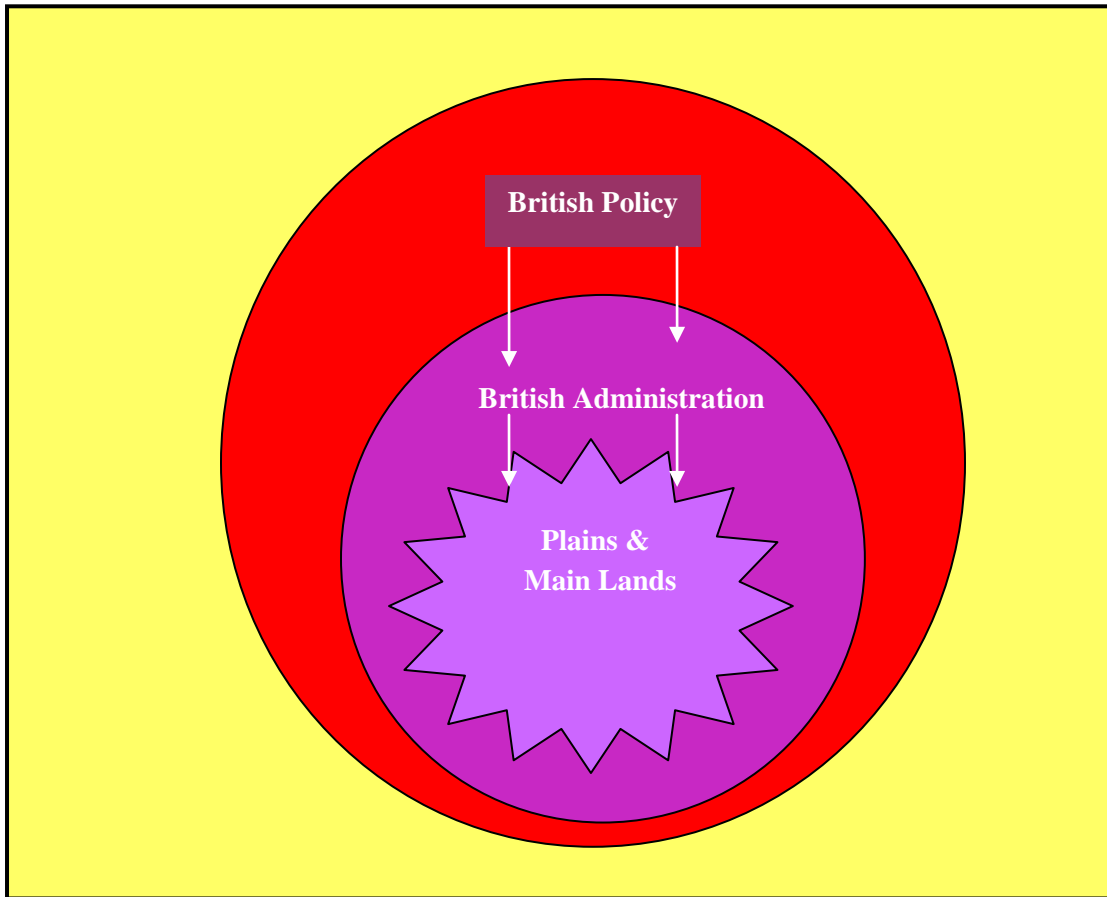
1. The immigration of non-tribals from plains to scheduled area with vested interests of cornering resources in tribal areas.
2. The out-migration of some tribals from scheduled villages into interior forests on account of loss of resources mainly due to exploitation of non-tribal traders, moneylenders and landlords.

If de-scheduling on the lines of suggestions made by non-tribals was agreed to, it would be setting a trend for more de-scheduling. In such a case, large-scale migration into scheduled areas to change the demographic composition or even to manipulate the records for this purpose will occur.

The third important factor was role of the Agents to government and provisions of Fifth Schedule. In the Ganjam and Vizagaptnam Act of 1839, the collector of district with the notified area was designated as Agent for the state government concerned. As per the rules issued under the Scheduled District Act of 1874 also the collectors were designated as the Agents to the State Government. Later on the Government of India Act, 1935 the government was given powers to administer these areas.

To conclude, the present chapter examines the colonial revenue settlements applied to the tribal areas of the Andhra in Madras Presidency. It seeks to demonstrate the operation of colonial land revenue settlements on tribal lands and attempts to analyze the impact of such policies on the tribal society during British colonial rule. It is argued, in particular, that colonial land revenue policies did not consider the interests of tribals and transformed them to landless labourers. The consequence of the colonial land revenue settlements were the emergence of various revenue officials in the tribal society such as Zamindars, Munsabdars, Muttadars etc., and their main duty was to collect revenue and favour the government. One important feature of the British rule in India is that when the colonial rulers occupied the plains and main lands of the county, they formulated policies first to grab the revenues and resources and later designed the administrative apparatus to execute the policies as seen in the below diagram.

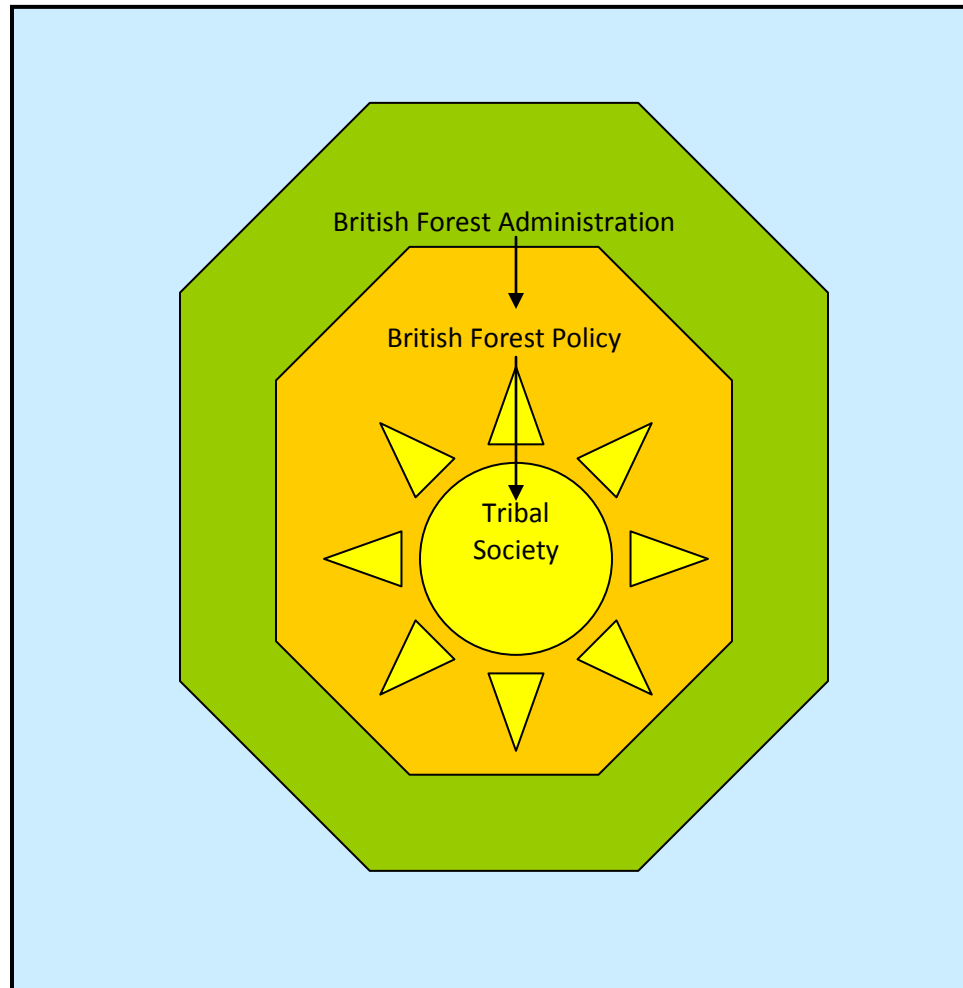
**The Colonial Scheme of governance
in the plains and main lands of the occupied territories**



(Diagram:V.4)

It is the policy driven administration that the British adopted in the plains and the main lands. Contrary to this, in the forest regions and hilly terrains the system of British governance was to formulate administrative apparatus first and later to support it by forest policies as illustrated in the following diagram.

**The Colonial Scheme of governance
in the forest lands and hilly terrains of the occupied territories**

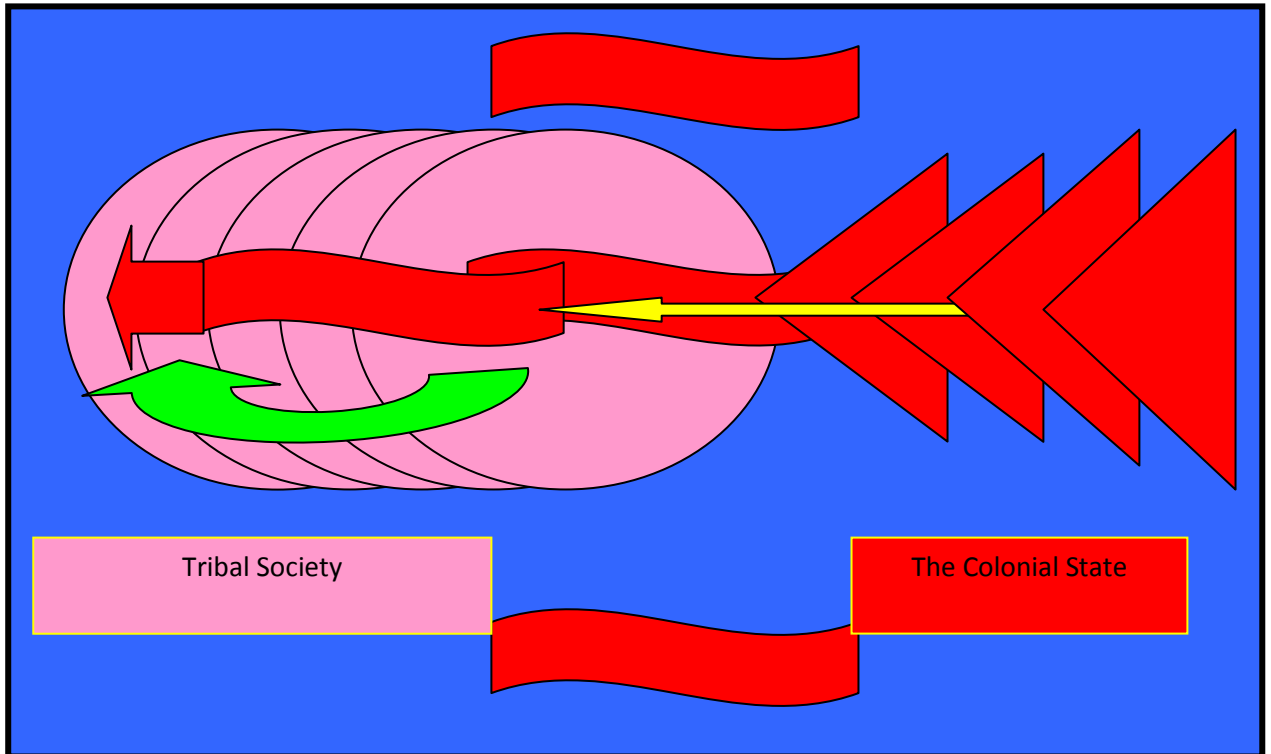


(Diagram:V.5)

As the Europeans in general and the British in particular use forest produce, especially timber for most of the infrastructural activities such as shipyards, ships, railways, bridges, palaces etc., the forest administration has paramount concern for them and hence, designed the administrative apparatus for the forest management. When the resistance is faced from the natives of the forests, the British resorted to policy making for monopolizing forest resources. This pushed the forest tribes into interiors of forest.

The British policies ultimately lead to the immigration of non-tribals from plains to forest areas with vested interests of cornering resources in tribal areas and also caused the out-migration of some tribals from forest villages into interior forests on account of loss of resources mainly due to exploitation of non-tribal traders, moneylenders and landlords as shown in the diagram below.

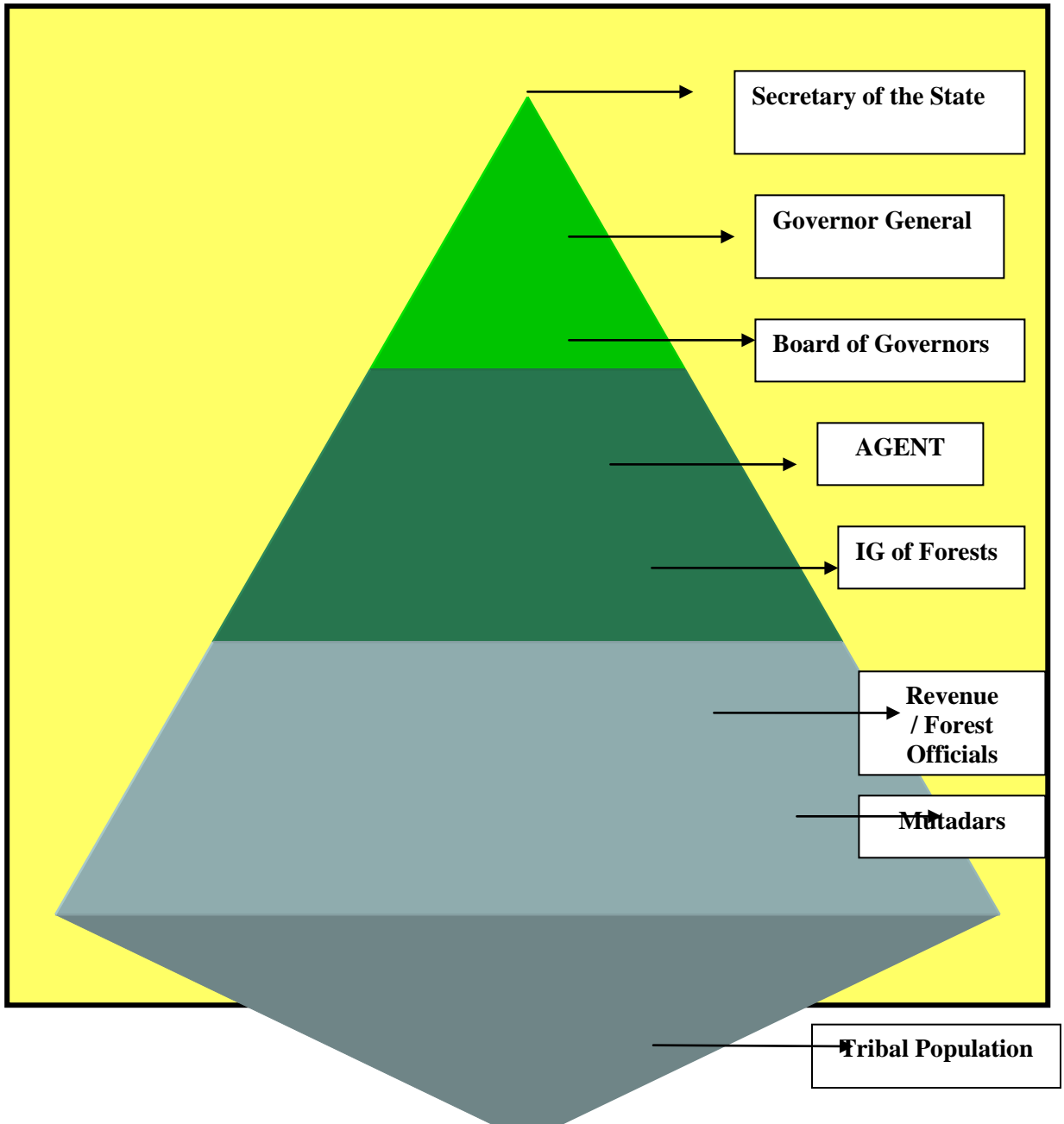
Out-migration of tribals from forest villages into interior forests



(Diagram:V.6)

Thus, the colonial administrative policies successfully subjugated the tribes of the Agency areas in Andhra region. The British administration adopted the Centralized Bureaucratic Pyramidal Power Structure to administer the Agency areas of the Subcontinent as shown bellow.

**Centralized Bureaucratic Pyramidal Power Structure
of the British Rule**



(Diagram: V.7)

During the year 1864 the then British India Government started the Imperial Forest Department and appointed Dr. Dietrich Brandis, a German Forest officer as Inspector General of Forests in 1866. Having recognized the need to have a premier

forest service to manage the varied natural resources of the vast country and to organize the affairs of the Imperial Forest Department, Imperial Forest Service was constituted in 1867. Having realized the importance of a multi-tier forest Administration in the federal and provincial Governments for effective management of forest resources the British India Government also constituted Provincial Forest Service and Executive & Subordinate Services, which were quite similar to the present day forest administrative hierarchy. The subject of "Forestry" which was managed by the Federal Government until then was transferred to the "Provincial List" by the Government of India Act, 1935 and subsequently recruitment to the Imperial Forest Service was discontinued. The Indian Forest Service, one of the three All India Services, was constituted in the year 1966 under the All India Services Act, 1951 by the Government of India. The main mandate of the service is the implementation of the National Forest Policy which envisages scientific management of forests and to exploit them on a sustained basis for primary timber products, among other things. The forest officials were to work closely with the revenue officials for effective control of the resources. Thus the 'Centralized Bureaucratic system of governance based on Pyramidal Power Structure was designed as administrative apparatus by the British.

Chapter-VI

Formulations of Colonial Policies in Madras Presidency

The very phrase, 'Tribal policy in India' involves a host of questions. Why specifically a Tribal Policy? Who are the tribes? What is the need for a policy for them? Who makes the policy? These questions are rooted in both conceptual and practical discourse. They become relevant in the context of an ideological evolution and the practical actions which the ideas inform. Without much debate we can contextualize the origin of the concept to the colonization by the west and theoretical discourse regarding the nature of civilized society and the state. The early western thinkers developed a dialectical mode of thinking in which they always tried to understand something by which it was not.

Forest Policy and Colonial Hegemony

How does one can study formulation of colonial forest policy and its impact on tribal society in India today? One could start with the insight offered by Edward Said,¹ who argues that all knowledge is a historical construction and it cannot be adequately understood without referring to contemporary politics and power. Further, practices of knowledge or the description of the practices of knowledge not only produce discourse but "are embedded in technical processes, in institutions, in forms of transmission and diffusion".² There are also minute alterations in fields of power that keep past and present firmly connected. The transformation-partly juridical,

¹ Edward Said *Orientalism*, Vintage, New York, 1979; Also see K.Sivaramakrishnan 'Colonialism and Forestry in India: Imagining the Past in Present Politics' in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Jan., 1995), pp. 3-40.

² M.Foucault, "History of Systems of Thought." in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, D. F. Bouchard, (ed) Oxford University Press 1977, pp.199-200.

partly real, partly ideological-of people from colonial subjects to sovereign citizens suggests a changed moral context, as Clifford Geertz³ has suggested.

Therefore, the study of colonial discourse is important, especially with regard to the nature of colonial intervention and its impact on the native institutions⁴. Key continuities in the hegemonic discourses about forest management in the aftermath of decolonization may be noticed, and these can help assemble the pieces that went into realizing colonial discourses and their manifestation in state authority structures. Many Orientalist ideas about primordial Indian ways of living informed the approach to forestry in the nineteenth century.⁵ There was the idea of the ancient monarchic state presiding nominally over self-governing, village communities that appears in the writing of Henry Maine, Marx, Weber and Louis Dumont. This could in turn feed the notion of forest communities engaging in pre-capitalist forms of forest use that were ecologically sustainable.

Colonial State and Forest Policies

Alternatively, the assertion of sweeping and overriding state power over forest resources (most dramatically instanced by the Forest Act of 1878) drew on divine kingship's dictatorial pride to link the concept of royal trees to the ultimate justification for forest preservation. In fashioning strategies of power, colonial administrators explore selectively into the pre-colonial pasts of subject peoples. The lengthy legislative debates about the Forest Act of 1878 were interrupted by references to the practice adopted by Tipu Sultan and some other Indian rulers in which certain

³ Clifford, Geertz, *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*. Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1988.

⁴ Nicholas B. Dirks, "The Invention of Caste: Civil Society in Colonial India" *Social Analysis*, Special Issue, 1989, pp. 42-52.

⁵ Edward Said has called the containment and representation of the other within dominating frameworks. "A priori Orientalist assumptions... produced definitions that could be redeployed to prove the original belief. This was typical of colonial knowledge" in K.Sivaramakrishnan 'Colonialism and Forestry in India: Imagining the Past in Present Politics' in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Jan., 1995), pp. 3-40.

trees like teak were declared to be royal, thereby reserving the right to harvest them for the state. In manipulating such weak evidence of pre-colonial state regulation of forest use to strong sweeping usurpation of local rights in forests, colonial foresters acted in the same spirit as their distinguished colleagues did a few years later when they compiled ethnographies of Indian castes and tribes.⁶ Here the *silvicultural* experts, naturalist foresters, and some civil servants joined in imagining a village community that was inherently hostile to the natural environment and its preservation.⁷

What was happening in the forestry sector was to some extent a manifestation of the larger Orientalist colonial project of constructing India as knowable by representation. The enormous growth, change, and increasing complexity of such knowledge were of crucial importance to technologies of rule. For example, when the ethnographic surveys and census operations started, society was fragmented into groups, households, and individuals and available for reassembly as statistical units.⁸ With its inclusive classificatory enterprise, the state was incorporating the classic episteme of modernity which, according to Foucault⁹ was an "articulated system of mathesis, a taxonomia and genetic analysis. The sciences project . . . was an exhaustive ordering of the world." While forest dwellers were being sorted into types by tribe and caste, the forests themselves were arranged in categories by dominant genre and species. Such description and the laying down of taxonomic structures to represent biotic communities presaged colonial development projects in which human and natural resources were controlled for imperial purposes.

⁶ See the discussion of similar processes in the colonial constitution of caste in Nicholas B. Dirks. It seems to reflect a more widespread approach to the appropriation of Indian pasts and their utilization in framing colonial policy.

⁷ See Stebbing (1922) and Ribbon Troup (1940), who represent both the scientists and the administrators directly involved.

⁸ G. Prakash, "Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World, Perspectives from Indian Historiography." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, (32:2), 1990, pp.383-408.

⁹ M. Foucault, *The Order of Things: Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, Vintage. New York, 1973, pp.74-75.

In India's forests, these massive developmental projects materialized in railway expansion and in more roads and tracks being constructed into hither-to inaccessible areas of hill regions, resulting in extensive deforestation¹⁰. The government's role in transforming the affected areas, often in tribal belts, included restricting shifting cultivation and forest reservation. The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries marked similar developments in different parts of the colonized world. In Tanganyika, German colonial administrators established a number of forest reserves in the decade preceding World War I. This was an attempt to control the use of forest resources in an area and culture where such use—certainly in terms of scientific forestry—had been traditionally unregulated.¹¹ In Java, Dutch colonialists had started by negotiating with Javanese kings and other nobles for access to particular species, notably teak, and for forest labor. However, a bureaucracy within the colonial state managed forests there, too, by the middle of the nineteenth century.¹²

In India the jungle that had been the refuge of struggling peasants became the object of keen commercial interest thus reproducing the pattern emerging in different colonies. Forest officers sent to assess the jungle's value wrote dramatic reports predicting the immediate destruction of forests, soil erosion, landslides, and the desiccation of springs if conservation was absent. Gibson, the first Conservator of Forests in the Bombay Presidency compiled, around 1850, a list of rivers and streams that had silted up along the Malabar Coast. He did this by ethnographic interviews, drawing on the memory of villagers. As Stebbing¹³ reveals, the question of real importance for scientific forestry was to determine how far the destruction of forests in the catchment areas and on the sides of hills in the drier parts of the country affected the level of water in big rivers, decreased local water supply and rainfall, and

¹⁰ Ranajit Guha, *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya*, Oxford University Press. New Delhi, 1989.

¹¹ K.Sivaramakrishnan, (Jan., 1995), op.cit, pp. 3-40; Schabel, H.G, "Tanganyika Forestry under German Colonial Administration, 1891-1919," in *Forest and Conservation History*, 34:3, 1990., pp.130-43;

¹² K.Sivaramakrishnan, (Jan., 1995), op.cit, pp. 3-40.

¹³ E.P.Stebbing, *The Forests of India*, vol:I. John Lane. London: 1922.

caused erosion and avalanches. Thus, the rhetoric of conservation, environmental protection, and sustainable development, commonplace in current debates on forestry internationally, was being generated in the colonial project and laying the foundation for state forest management.¹⁴ The observations made by surgeon naturalists like Alexander Gibson in Poona, Hugh Cleghorn in Mysore, and Edward Balfour in Madras had created a body of reports and influential opinions that linked deforestation to the disturbance of hydrological regimes, drought, and acidification.¹⁵ The direct effect of such work on Lord Dalhousie, who initiated colonial forest management in India, is noted by Richard Grove.¹⁶ The discursive device consisted of blaming the ecological misfortunes of local populations, including occasional events like drought, on the villagers' practices and ignorance of conservation strategies.¹⁷

As was true of other British colonies, deforestation in India was axiomatic of the principal economic and ecological changes during colonial times.¹⁸ The history of ecological imperialism would be manifest in the pattern of tree species exploited, planted, and regulated by law and silvicultural science. To enable systematic extraction of desired economic products from the forests, the first step was to classify and take inventory of stock. In addressing the demand for more intimate knowledge of Indian forest resources, British policy makers evolved an elaborate administrative

¹⁴ Schabel, H.G, "Tanganyika Forestry under German Colonial Administration, 1891-1919," in *Forest and Conservation History*, 34:3, 1990., pp.130-43;

¹⁵ K.Sivaramakrishnan, (Jan., 1995),op.cit, pp. 3-40.

¹⁶ Richard Grove, "Conservation and Colonialism: The Evolution of Environmental Attitudes and Conservation Policies on St. Helena, Mauritius and in Western India, 1660-1854", in *Changing Tropical Forests: Historical Perspectives on Today's' Challenges in Asia, Australasia and Oceania*, J.Dargavel, K.Dixon and N.Simple,(Eds), Center for Resources and Environmental Studies, Canberra,pp.38-39.

¹⁷ Richard Grove "Scottish Missionaries, Evangelical Discourses and the Origin of Conservatio ,Thinking in Southern Africa,-1820-1900" in *Journal of Southern African History*, 15, 1989, pp. 163-87.

¹⁸ Ranjit Guha and Madhav Gadgil, "State Forestry and Social Conflict in British India: A Study in the Ecological Bases of Agrarian Protest." *Past and Present*, 1989. pp.123:141; Ranjit Guha, "An Early Environmental Debate: The Making of the 1878 Forest Act," *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 27:1, pp.65-84.

structure, a stringent legal code, and a body of scientific practice. Forest policy also rested on ideological formulations arising from culturally delineated pasts of colonists and indigenous societies. This suggests several questions relating to perceptions of nature among the different interacting cultures, issues and idioms of protest and the structuring effect of such matters on policy.

The following examination of instruments of state forestry, peasant protest, and the interplay of cultural constructions that may be discerned is part of an approach to understand the dynamics of power relations in the forests of India. It is also an attempt to formulate ways of looking in the light of hegemonic discourse that was penetrated by the emerging undergrowth of practice and resistance in the management and use of these forests. This approach seeks to make cultural forms and historical events dependent on power relations.¹⁹

Colonial Power and Making of Laws

The determination, codification, control and representation of the past have been central to the establishment of the nation state and directly implicate colonialism. Not only did the empire provide the ground for European domination, it reproduced itself after its demise through the documentation projects initiated in previous centuries.²⁰ A consideration of the forestry sub-project, so to speak, is then vital from this angle. The circumstances under which the Indian forest department was created and the debates preceding the formal legislation of the Indian Forest Act are significant as the historical context and as one set of structuring forces on modern forest management practice.²¹ These conditions

¹⁹ K.Sivaramakrishnan, (Jan., 1995),op.cit, pp. 3-40.

²⁰ Cohn, B. S and N. Dirks, "Beyond the Fringe: The Nation State, Colonialism and the Technologies of Power." *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 1:2, 1988, pp.224-9.

²¹ The Indian Forest Department originated in 1864 with Dietrich Brandis, a German botanist turned forester, as the first Inspector General of Forests. A hurriedly drafted Forest Act was passed in 1865 to facilitate the acquisition of forest areas earmarked for railway supplies. However, the Indian Forest Act that is still largely in force came about only in 1878 after vigorous debate over the suggested provisions. In its final form it bore the distinctive

included the objective economic compulsions of railway development and the financial crisis faced by India's government after the revolt of 1857.²² These conditions were also shaped by the intellectual preferences of the administrators imposing the imperial will and securing national revenues.

A combination of revenue needs, expansion of commercial crops, and development of the mining industry accentuated the powerful impact that building railways had on Indian forestry in the nineteenth century.²³ Indian railways, the greatest in any colonial country, covered over 37,000 miles. They linked ports to agricultural hinterlands and urban centers to support the export of primary goods and import of finished products.²⁴ Wood from the forests, in the form of sleepers for railway tracks and fuel for steam engines, provided vital inputs into this system. Forests were integrated into the market economy by forest administration initially demarcating areas with promulgated regulations for their management and directives to generate budget surpluses in forest operation. The appointment of Brandis as the first Inspector General gave the central government an agency for formal intervention in provincial forest management. His appointment had much to do with his image as the "hero of Pegu" who had rescued the teak forests of Burma from timber traders and made them available to British shipbuilding.²⁵

Brandis toured the presidencies and centrally administered provinces, laying down more specific duties for the forest service. In his nineteen years as Inspector General of forests, Brandis produced several reports based on continuous travelling

stamp of B. H. Baden-Powell, the civil servant best known for his voluminous work on the land systems of British India.

²² T.R.Metcalf, *The Aftermath of Revolt: India 1857-1870*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1964.

²³ Ranjit Guha and Madhav Gadgil, "State Forestry and Social Conflict in British India: A Study in the Ecological Bases of Agrarian Protest." *Past and Present*, 1989. pp.123:141

²⁴ Hurd, J. "Railways and the Expansion of Markets in India, 1861-1921." *Explorations in Economic History*, 12, 1975. pp.260-85.

²⁵ R.S.Troup, *Colonial Forest Administration*. Oxford University Press, London, 1940.

through the jungles which became the basis for creating forest administration with specific responsibilities in the provinces.²⁶ These included forest settlement, demarcation, surveying and formally constituting state forests; preparation of working plans; construction of roads, bridges, buildings, drainage channels, etc. Protection work was directed against fire, cattle, and natural calamities. A few years later, German foresters in Tanganyika regulated burning, cutting and grazing, reproducing discourses and technologies of state forestry rehearsed in India.²⁷ Exploitation and artificial regeneration were mainly for major produce (timber), and minor produce (lac, bamboo, leaves, nuts and fruits) of commercial value.²⁸

Even as the administrative machine was being created, legal sanction for taking over occasionally explored territory was being combined together, first in the Act of 1865 and, later, after much debate within the government, in the Indian Forest Act of 1878. To some scholars this represents a feature of British administration that blended executive and judicial functions even as British jurisprudence was transplanted into exotic settings with slight modification²⁹. A comparison of the forestry case with parallel developments in the legislation for control of nomadic groups all over India is illuminating in this respect.

In a discussion of the genealogy of the Indian Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 and its application in northern India, Nigam³⁰ mentions considerable conflict between the judiciary and the district administration over interpreting the causes of the

²⁶ Though his recommendations pertained specifically to the Central Provinces (1876), North-western Provinces and Oudh (1881), and Madras (1883), their impact was more widespread and generalizing.

²⁷ H.G. Schabel, "Tanganyika Forestry under German Colonial Administration-1891-1919," *Forest and Conservation History*, 34:3, 1990, pp. 130-43.

²⁸ B.Ribbentrop, *Forestry in British India*, Government of India Press, Calcutta, 1900.

²⁹ H.Tinker, "Structure of the British Imperial Heritage," in *Asian Bureaucratic Systems Emergent from British Imperial Tradition*, R. Braibanti, (ed), Duke University Press, Durham, 1966.

³⁰ S.Nigam, "The Making of a Colonial Stereotype-the Criminal Tribes and Castes of North India," *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 27:2, 1990, pp. 131-64.

criminality of Sansis, Bawarias, and other nomadic tribes in Uttar Pradesh. The executive used the argument of intrinsic criminality to further the case for special powers acts and for enhanced magisterial powers that tilted the scale in favor of the subjective satisfaction of the magistrate, as opposed to the due process of law, which ultimately was the jural domain of courts. This was a struggle among different branches of the government for control over the criminal justice system. Thus the regulatory systems in colonial India developed out of the tension between abstract libertarian legal principles and the more pragmatic jurisprudence of suspicion, which favored surveillance, deterrence, and draconian measures for social control.

Intellectual Background of the Forest Policy

The intellectual history of British colonial lawmaking in nineteenth-century India can be written as an extended conversation with Utilitarian philosophy and Classical economics. The influence of John Stuart Mill, Lord Macaulay, and the Evangelical movement was deep and lasting on the colonial administrators³¹. "The belief that certain collective or corporate forms of social organization and property relations stifled initiative or encouraged careless use of resources was generally held by colonial officers, missionaries and traders. It was embedded in an ideology that regarded private ownership as the superior opposite of communal forms and whose premises were based on a long tradition of western thought".³² Land settlements made throughout this period, such as those for subsistence agriculture and areas producing cash crops, reflect an abiding faith in the ability of well-delineated private property rights to produce a productive climate that would enhance revenue generation. The emphasis was on economic productivity and the underlying belief that "a productive society without any form of ownership is impossibility".³³ Thus, Bengal had a landlord settlement, while in the Central and North-Western Provinces village

³¹ Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India*. Cambridge University Press, Delhi, 1959.

³² P.Peters, "Embedded Systems and Rooted Models," in *The Question of the Commons: The Culture and Ecology of Communal Resources*, B.McCay and J. Acheson, (eds), University of Arizona Press, Tucson, 1987.

³³J. Grunebaum, *Private Ownership*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1987, p.128.

communities were made responsible for land revenue through their chieftains and headmen and in Madras and Bombay Presidencies the revenue demand was fixed with the peasant cultivator (*ryot*), in most cases.³⁴

Land administration policy was definitely formulated to accomplish specific imperial objectives, and the cultural background of those who performed this task influenced their choice of ways and means. However, the consciousness of agents of colonial domination cannot be treated as a simple reflex of political and economic processes or the expression of a solid hegemonic intellectual tradition.³⁵ Several cultural constructs came into play. These cultural constructs also colored the perception of colonial administrators when they sought to comprehend local systems of rights, privileges, and land management. Often the local community defined the networks of rights, responsibilities, and privileges through cultural symbolism and the social organization of economic activity. They were not explicated or overtly recorded on parchment. There was often no apparent evidence of secular sanctification for such arrangements, which nevertheless performed functions very similar to property rights.³⁶ The validity of unwritten arrangements of common property management was not recognized by the dominant elements in the British administrative hierarchy. This had as much to do with administrative feasibility as an intellectual persuasion that state institutions identified as rational and progressive would better serve public interest. The British entered a medieval landscape in which absolute possession appeared not to exist. By contrast, their cultural legacy exalted the basic value of unqualified possession. This combined with the Roman notion of *res dominium* to inform British settlement policies in India.³⁷ This paternalistic approach, a powerful mix of conviction and coercion, undermined traditional structures of authority. At the same time, the legal and political environment that the Raj was creating for the

³⁴ B.H. Baden-Powell, , *The Land Systems of British India*. Oxford Claremont Press, 1892.

³⁵ K.Sivaramakrishnan, (Jan., 1995),op.cit, pp. 3-40; J.Comaroff, and J. L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, vol. 1. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991

³⁶ K.Sivaramakrishnan, (Jan., 1995),op.cit, pp. 3-40.

³⁷ Ibid.

operation of market forces and the penetration of capital remained contradictory and left social groups to maneuver³⁸

For such reasons, it may be simplistic to conclude that a single dominant ideology informed the process through which the legal framework for forest control and management evolved. In the land settlements that had preceded these efforts, there had been a sharp difference between regions. Although the Bengal *zamindar* (landlord) settlement tried to recreate the British yeoman farmer, Thomas Munro in Madras made a *raiyatwar* (peasant cultivator) settlement, arguing its efficacy on the basis of a legitimacy conferred by the regional history of agrarian relations, as he read it. Munro's position was both moral and pragmatic in seeking a place for Indian institutions in land and judicial administration.³⁹ His view of an enduring British empire built on a reconstruction of Indian national character also emanated from the same reformist zeal that in other contexts was proselytizing non-literate communities and characterized a spirit of responsibility to oneself. This gave the British administrator greater freedom than the system appeared to allow.⁴⁰

Such a distinctive interpretation of a shared past (cultural tradition and training) and present assignment among the British policy makers was also evident in the debate about forest law. Several approaches to forest management were put forth. One extreme recommended the complete extinction of customary usage, while the other, especially the Madras government, speaking in the Munro tradition, advocated the preservation of rights and local institutions. The rest can be placed on a continuum between these extremes. European experiences in dealing with communal forest rights were cited by all parties in the debate to support their respective

³⁸D.A. Washbrook, "Law, State and Society in Colonial India," in *Power, Profit and Politics*, C. Baker, G. Johnson, and J. Gallagher, (eds), Cambridge University Press, London, 1981.

³⁹ B.Stein, "Idiom and Ideology in Early Nineteenth Century South India," in *Rural India: Land Power and Society under British Rule*, P. Robb (ed), Curzon Press, London, 1983; B. Stein, *Thomas Munro: The Origins of the Colonial State and his Visions of Empire*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1990.

⁴⁰B.S. Cohn, "Recruitment and Training of British Civil Servants in India, 1600-1860," in *Asian Bureaucratic Systems Emergent From the British Imperial Tradition*, R. Braibanti, (ed), Duke University Press, Durham, 1966.

proposals, but each had a different interpretation to encourage disparate cases.⁴¹ For Brandis, "the proposal was to give expression to that limitation of forest rights which follows as a necessary consequence from their origin and development."⁴² The most annexationist view prevailed and relying heavily on the draft by Baden Powell, resulted in the passage of the Act of 1878.

The state established total ownership of forested lands by using the principle of renowned domain, in which the state, drawing on European jurisprudence, claimed to be acting in the public interest.⁴³ But even this classical notion of state supremacy provided for due compensation, a notion built into the 1894 law for the acquisition of agricultural land.⁴⁴ But in the case of forests, procedural artifice was used to evade juridical obligation to provide compensation for rights abrogated in the process of declaring them exclusive state property. As has already been noted, Baden-Powell was influential in crafting the Act of 1878. A crucial contribution was his distinction between rights that could not be abrogated without compensation but must be imprinted in the settlement record and privileges that were always regulated, could be terminated, and, where allowed, were not alien-able. He averred that villagers, who from time immemorial were accustomed to cut and graze in the nearest jungle lands, did not acquire a right by prescription because they used the forest without any distinct grant or license. All customary usages were therefore merely a privilege.

Thus, the edifice of state forestry was erected on the foundations of law, bureaucratic structures, and scientific knowledge that excluded contiguous village communities from forests in two ways. First, physical access was restricted. Second, the use value of the forest for subsistence was minimized by altering species composition and reducing biological diversity. This two-sided strategy moved forests

⁴¹Ranajit Guha, 1990, op.cit, pp.65-84.

⁴² D.Brandis, *Memorandum on the Forest Legislation Proposed for British India*, Government of India Press, Calcutta, 1875, p.13.

⁴³ C.Singh, *Common Property and Common Poverty: India's Forests, Forest Dwellers and the Law*. Oxford University Press. New Delhi, 1986.

⁴⁴A. Ghosh, *The Land Acquisition Act, 1894*. Eastern Law House, Calcutta, 1973.

from the margins of subsistence agriculture to the center of commercial biomass production. At the larger level, discourses of protest mirrored these fundamental transformations of forest use and management. A consideration of the idioms and rhetoric of social protest is therefore necessary. However, when we proceed to the particulars of practice, policy and protest do not fit neatly into an impact-response model. Resistance, power, and cultural constructions of nature all interact to modulate state practice and re-organize peasant lives around forests in diverse ways that need to be situated in their specific histories of development and change.

The environmental managers of British India created a bureaucratic and segmented mental landscape and they set about restructuring the physical landscape to match it. This progressed slowly but inexorably, as a new generation of specialists replaced an older generation of generalists, as a narrow reductionist scientific approach pushed aside local, qualitative, experienced knowledge, and as an extraction and engineering mentality replaced conservationism as a mode for managing the colonial South Asian environment. The philosophical perspectives that informed the conservationist arguments of the mid-nineteenth century included the Utilitarian idea that the commons must be maintained to benefit the greatest number of people over the longest period of time while minimizing the harms of forest exploitation to people downstream, the precautionary principle, and an emotional and aesthetic appreciation and respect for "nature." However, the arguments based on these philosophical perspectives declined in effectiveness and respectability as an engineering paradigm ascended within the culture of the Forest Service. This trend coincided with a shift in departmental purpose away from conservation-oriented activity to extractive and commercial activity.

An important debate in Indian environmental historiography has to do with the nature and purpose of state forest conservation in India. One group of scholars suggests that forest conservation was meant to hide the real considerations of the British Empire's need for raw materials and to justify the expropriation of forests from "traditional" forest users in order to more fully exploit the forests. The most prominent representative of this position has been Ramachandra Guha, who focuses his analysis on

the battle over the Indian Forest Act of 1878, in which the "annexationists" defeated the "populists" and thus gave the state greater control over forest management. Combining selections from the "annexationist" arguments, evidence of the Empire's material needs, and an assumption of greater sustainability of pre-colonial resource use, Guha presents a picture of the Forest Service as primarily devoted to exploitation and expropriation. Another group of scholars, chief among them, Richard Grove-argues that the conservationist motives that informed the creation of the Forest Service were genuine, and that the roots of modern environmentalism lie in the colonial experience⁴⁵. Grove argues that the ideas behind state forest conservation developed through the interaction of the European and Indian ideas and local experience. Environmental concerns about deforestation-induced climate change originated in the seventeenth century colonial experiences: examples of rapid destruction in fragile island environments motivated conservationists who exploited governmental fears of environmental devastation to promote the establishment of the Forest Department.⁴⁶

The Cultural Perception of Nature

In the study of colonial and post-colonial complex state agrarian societies, the vision of an equilibrated relationship between man and nature is a pervasive metaphor, in which predation and symbiosis were held in a fine balance until the advent of European expansion. The present constitution of New World biota and society is, according to Crosby⁴⁷, a distinctive product of the European portmanteau and the ecological change it wrought. Intersecting ecology, politics, and culture, the capitalist transformation of world biota then provides elements of a shared past.

⁴⁵ Richard Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens, and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600-1860*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1995; Richard Grove, Vinita Damodaran, and Satpal Sangwan, (eds.), *Nature and the Orient: The Environmental History of South and Southeast Asia, Studies in Social Ecology and Environmental History* Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1998.

⁴⁶ Richard Grove, *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ A.W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1986.

This notion of something shared but not entirely is conveyed by Scott in his statement that "myths, hegemonic ideas, are the product of joint struggle in which the basic terms are shared, but in which interpretations follow widely different paths in accordance with fundamental interests"⁴⁸. The use of religion and other large mythic structures was often innovative when a resistive discourse was fashioned from the kind of ambivalence mentioned above. The Chipko agitation reached out to overarching Hindu belief when the *Gita* was read in the forest to protest the trees being cut down. This was crucial when successfully appealing to non-local labor used by timber contractors. Equally, the act of hugging trees by women, the traditional controllers of the hearth, was aimed to strike a chord in an ethic of shared subsistence that transcended differences of territory, gender, and caste. Religion was important precisely because it developed reconciliation forms using *adivasi* rites and Hinduism. Fifty years earlier, the incorporation of *adivasi* religious sites into Koya and Bagata pantheon became important to the rebellious hill men.⁴⁹ This incorporation demonstrated autochthonous origins for the hill men's faith among the hills and streams where they lived.

As Levi Strauss⁵⁰ (1972) shows, tribesmen do not use religion and myth as devices to reject reality. Rather, religion and myth provide structures for comprehending the immediate reality and responding to them. In the Gudem-Rampa case, religion was used to express dissatisfaction with conquest and frame the terms of deliverance in a known model that provided symbolic capital to counter the superior control of economic capital exercised by oppressors. Travelling ecclesiasts (*sivasaris*) moved through the region, with the prophecy of one Bodadu (in 1886) that god had ordained a successful *fituri* (rebellion). This was rendered authentic by the encounter of Bodadu with the five *pandavas* (the redemptive brotherhood of the Mahabharata epic in the Hindu tradition) in the jungle, a symbolic mediation of local and national

⁴⁸ J.C. Scott, *Domination and the Art of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1990, p.100.

⁴⁹ David Arnold, 1982, op.cit.

⁵⁰ C. Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1972.

culture that was politically expedient for integrating hill men with supporters in the plain⁵¹. At a later stage, Rama Raju, a Telugu *kshatriya* leader of the agitation against forest reservation, gained local control through his knowledge of astrology and medicine, giving him magical powers in the eyes of the hill men. However, by advocating temperance and *khadi* (homespun cloth), he also strategically allied with Gandhian politics.⁵²

Thus, the cultural construction of nature is grounded in practice. A holistic view of such a practice must be taken to relate systematically distinct moments to combined ones by going from resistance to power and from the religious idiom of confrontational protest to the religious idiom of complicit modulation of social processes. To communities dwelling in the forest, the forest was a source of livelihood, so their religion led them to make special sacrifices to forest gods. It is striking to see in how many myths and legends a deep sense of identity with the forest is sharply imprinted. Law and policing could not take away from the forest villages their heartfelt ownership of the forest.⁵³ The clash between state forestry and village management was not just an economic one. The contending management styles rested on radically different systems of meanings. The social idiom of protest reflected the threat to traditional cultural and communal values that commercial forestry has represented. Therefore, that idiom invoked both an alternate system of use and an alternate structure of meanings.

To comprehend the finely interwoven language and substance of debate, it is necessary to examine these constructions of nature implicit in the philosophical ways that different societies used to deal with forests. In their review of sacred groves, Gadgil and Vartak⁵⁴ have pointed out that these systems of indigenous conservancy

⁵¹ David Arnold, 1982, op.cit.

⁵² David Arnold, 1982, op.cit.

⁵³ R.S.Anderson, and W. Huber, *The Hour of the Fox: Tropical Forests. The World Bank and the Indigenous People of Central India*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1988.

⁵⁴ Madhav Gadgil and V. D. Vartak, " The Sacred Groves of Western Ghats in India." *Economic Botany*, 30, 1976, pp.152-60.

arose in hunting and gathering communities. In a later work, Gadgil and Malhotra⁵⁵ argued that cautious and sustainable use of natural resources was instrumental in the stability of the caste Hindu society and its resistance to transformation. All of these points to the existence of traditional forms of forest conservation and contradicts colonial forest histories which describe local communities as "careless and ignorant" in dealing with forests. These need some elaboration.

In pre-colonial India, a variety of social groups exercised claims on forest resources in different regions-hunters and gatherers, shifting cultivators, plough agriculturists, pastoralists, and artisans. This led to a diversity of arrangements for communal management of the forest, consisting of religious proscription, communal sanction, and active tree planting. Sacred groves were one such mechanism and are still in existence in the Himalayas and coastal South India. Their connection with religious practice, as revealed by their proximity to temples, is often explicit. The biological diversity of tropical forests, preserved in little patches where these groves exist, is recognized even by colonial foresters⁵⁶. Stretching from the Khasi Hills of northeast India to the *Devara Kadu* of the Coorg in the southwest, Brandis notes the occurrence of sacred groves in different parts. "These sacred forests as a rule are never touched by the axe, except when wood is wanted for the repair of religious buildings." One problem with this view is that it makes pre-colonial practices frictionless and devoid of conflict. Indigenous conservation ethics seem to be rooted in the structural-functional perceptions of the societies espousing them. The environmental movement has sought to naturalize sacred groves as an icon of indigenous conservation, placing them outside politics precisely to make them a more potent political symbol in the struggle between peasants and the state, on issues of forest use and management.⁶⁵ As Sahlins⁵⁷ has suggested, the ritual power of taboo

⁵⁵ Madhav Gadgil and K. C. Malhotra. "Adaptive Significance of the Indian Caste System: An Ecological Perspective." *Annals of Human Biology*, 10:5, 1983, pp.465-78.

⁵⁶ Brandis, *Suggestions Regarding Forest Administration in the Madras Presidency*, Government of India Press, Madras, 1883.

⁵⁷ M.Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities: Structure in the Early History of the Sandwich Island Kingdom*, University of Michigan Press, 1981.

encompasses the protection of property, and this could become transformed in pragmatic structures of trade. The manner in which such ritual conservation is remembered and reconstituted in contemporary power relations would be influenced by the history of taboo and its implication in historical power structures. Alongside the designated sacred groves, village communities practiced a system of managing woodland by rotation and also regulated the supply of fuel, fodder, and small timber from the forest to individual households. Sanctions in the form of fines and social boycott were imposed by the community on those who violated these regulations⁵⁸. Sometimes resources were conserved by dividing land among different social groups on a seasonal basis. Examples are the seasonal sharing of the forest and grazing lands between nomads and sedentary agriculturalists, in which the nomads repaid access to land by providing manure and other services, and the allocation of different wildlife species among different

In contrast, the dominant European view of nature, as it emerged with the spread of capitalism, was qualitatively different. Landscapes were seen as commodities, and members of an ecosystem were treated as isolated, extract-able units⁵⁹. This perception was dominated by ideas of exploitation and appropriation which viewed nature as a machine given by god to man to be managed for maximal productivity⁶⁰. At the same time Gibson, the first Conservator of Forests in Bombay, was preparing his reports on the consequences of forest destruction for water supplies, soil erosion, and siltation of rivers, ardent naturalists were making similar associations of human influence and resource degradation in the New World⁶¹. The vital difference was that, in the colonies, the critique was of "unreclaimed backwardness," while in the free world it was more reflective. In both situations,

⁵⁸ Ranajit Guha, *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1992.

⁵⁹ .Merchant, *Ecological Revolutions: Nature, Gender and Science in New England*. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1990.

⁶⁰ L.White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis." *Science*, no. 155, 1967, pp.1203-207.

⁶¹ K.Sivaramakrishnan (Jan., 1995), op.cit, pp. 3-40.

however, the idea that the state should control forests was evolved as a modified Utilitarian vision of conservation and of the spirit of free enterprise to promote maximum sustained yield and multiple-use of forestry.⁶²

Recent environmentalist and polemical literature has seized selectively upon the complex history of forest conservation and degradation in India to sharpen the edge of this idealized antinomy. Many historians have worked with the assumption that the environmentally destructive aspect of the colonial experience had to do with imperialist attitudes to the environment. The problem with this has been the connected tendency to characterize attitudes to nature "by a simple dualism of Arcadian attitudes on the one hand, and imperialist attitudes, on the other".⁶³ Even Guha and Gadgil⁶⁴ conclude their fine study of forest conflicts in the colonial period by referring to "two opposed notions of property and resource use: communal control over forests being paired with subsistence state control with commercial exploitation." The social construction of forests that underlies this formulation is clearly intended to provide the contemporary environmental movement with history and antiquity, a strategy deriving from the era of freedom struggles in the colonized world.⁶⁵

Colonial Forest Policies in Madras Presidency

The forest policy and management of forests has been a subject of considerable debate and conflict since the establishment of British rule in India. The imperial needs dictated the British interest in the Indian forest resources, which resulted in the establishment of control over forest resources. The colonial system of

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ R. Grove, "Conservation and Colonialism: The Evolution of Environmental Attitudes and Conservation Policies on St. Helena, Mauritius and in Western India, 1660-1854, in *Changing Tropical Forests: Historical Perspectives on Today's Challenges in Asia, Australasia and Oceania*, J. Dargavel, K. Dixon and N. Simple (eds). Center for Resources and Environmental Studies, Canberra, 1988, p.20.

⁶⁴ Ranajit Guha and Madhv Gadgil. 1989, op.cit, p.177;

⁶⁵ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. 1991, London.

forest management was continued even after 1947 with little modifications, emphasizing revenue generation and commercial exploitation while its policing orientation excluded tribals who had the most longstanding claim on forest resources. The tribals especially were confronted with colonial forest management that continuously eroded their life-styles and simultaneously the assertion of state monopoly over natural resources deprived them of an important means of subsistence.⁶⁶ In this context, an attempt is made to review colonial forest policies by examining the debate on the ownership of forests between British officials and local revenue officials.

This part explains the evolution of colonial forest policies and state control over forest resources in Madras Presidency.

Forests during East India Company Rule

During the initial stages of the East India company rule, the evolution of forest policies was closely associated with both Bombay and Madras Presidencies, as the teak stocked districts were situated in these presidencies. In order to meet the teak wood demands of the Bombay Dockyard, the company government initiated interest for the forest policies.⁶⁷ The earliest attempt of European merchants' involvement in teak trade was made in the form of formation of timber syndicate in Malabar district in 1796 under the leadership of Machonochine, who was an employee of the company's medical service. Though this syndicate had survived only for short time, it had its influence on the subsequent attempts in connection with the supply of teak timber to the Navy requirements.⁶⁸ But these collapsed due to stiff resistance from the native merchants.

In 1815 the government of Bombay formulated the draft consisting of the rules for management of teak forests in Malabar and Canara Districts. It was

⁶⁶ Ranjith Guha, 1983, op.cit.

⁶⁷ E.P Stebbing, Vol:I, op.cit.,pp.61-62

⁶⁸ Berthold Ribbentrop, *Forestry in British India*, Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1989, p.67.

dispatched to the Government of Madras for its consideration. These Drafts rules imposed regulations on the teak felling by the private persons. The Conservator of forests was empowered to impose customs on timber and control to fell teak and sandal trees. Thus, the monopoly on the teak wood trade was established by the East India Company initially in Malabar and Canara districts, because most of the teak wood procured in the Western Coast was sent to Bombay market, where it was used in shipbuilding and to some extent exported to European countries.

During the period from 1800 to 1850, the East India Company followed the policy of limited intervention in the forests of the Madras Presidency. The forest exploitative activities were mainly confined to the teak forests. There were no serious exploitative and conservation operations undertaken by the government as they were very expensive and time consuming. In 1840, the Court of Directors, while reviewing the forest administration argued that there would be no advantage in purchasing more land than was actually required to make for teak wood.⁶⁹ In this way, at initial stage, the forest policies in the Madras Presidency confined to simple extraction of the teak wood that was required for shipbuilding and other necessities of the government. Thus, the early conservation measures in the Madras Presidency were mainly confined to conservation of the teak plantations in the West Coast. The reason perhaps was that there was a pressing demand from various departments like the Bombay Dockyard, the Public Works and the Telegraph departments.

The ever-increasing demand for timber and other products therefore, convinced the Madras Government to initiate a separate administrative branch for the management of forests. Commenting on the establishment of the Forest department in Madras, E.P. Stebbing mentioned that “.... Probably the chief reason which finally induced the Madras government to appoint their Conservator of Forests was the alarming decrease which it had become apparent in the supplies of first class teak in the old Malabar forests for which had practically all been cut out during the proceeding half century.”⁷⁰ The demand for teak and other valuable woods from the

⁶⁹ E.P Stebbing, Vol:I, op.cit., pp.80-87.

⁷⁰ Ibid, pp.41.

East India Company government had resulted in the inception of some constructive attempts to manage forest resources. In August 1856, Dr. Cleghorn, a Surgeon General, submitted a report to the Madras government, which containing the proposals for the establishment of the forest department.⁷¹ As a result, on the 19th December, 1856, Dr. Cleghorn was appointed as the Conservator for the Forest Department in the Madras Presidency. It was a major landmark in the history of forest administration in the Madras Presidency.

After that an important initiative of the Chief conservator of forest was that in prohibiting not only for the felling and extraction of timber but also for the protection and reproduction of the forest growth.⁷² Another important conservation measure undertaken during this period was the creation of the Jungle Conservancy Fund in 1889, under the supervision of the Revenue department. Its main objective was to conserve and extend the village jungles in Madras.⁷³ From 1860 to 1882, the history of the forest policies in the Madras Presidency was mainly the struggle between the Forest department and Revenue departments to control the village jungle lands.

An introduction of railways in India in the mid 1850s created a massive demand for timber and compelled the colonial state to formulate strategies to exploit the forest resources in India in a sustained form. The commencement of the railway net work in various parts of British India resulted in two simultaneous processes: one, it lead to wanton destruction of forests and second, in order to have continuous supply of wood for railway net work. Ramachandra Guha argued that the Indian forest department was established in order to provide the wood requirements to the railway net work systems that were introduced in the 1850s.⁷⁴ The wood necessities of the railways had exercised significant influence on the Madras government forest polices.

⁷¹ Ibid, p.297.

⁷² C.D. MacLean, *Manual of the Administration of the Madras Presidency*, Vol: II, The Government Press, Madras, 1885.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Raaamachandra Guha, 1985, op.cit., pp.1882-1896; Velayuthan Saravanan, “Commercialization of Forest, Environmental Negligence and Alienation of Tribal Rights in the Madras Presidency, 1792-1882”, *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vo.35, No.2,1998, pp.125-146.

Debate on Property Right over Forests

It was during the colonial period that for the first time proprietary claims were made over forest resources by extraneous forces. Atchi Reddy⁷⁵ identified three main parties who claimed some rights of ownership of the forests and its produce in the Madras presidency before 1882. First were the village communities who claimed their right to cut wood, graze the cattle, and extend their cultivation into the forestlands. The second category was that of Zamindars and other feudal landlords. And, third category was the Government. Community ownership of the forests in Presidency of Madras was quite old, well established and recognized by the successive local governments.

The Board of Revenue proceedings of Madras presidency stated that, “there is scarcely any forest in whole Presidency of Madras which is not one in which, so far as the Board can ascertain, the state asserted any rights of property until very recently. All of them, without exception, are subject to tribal or communal rights, which have existed from time immemorial and which are as difficult to define and value as they are necessary to the rural population..”⁷⁶ Thus, the forests are and always have been common property. Not only in the Madras Presidency but also in the entire Indian subcontinent, tribals had a free access to forests and practice the shifting cultivation.

From 1865 to 1882, there was an intense debate on the forest tenure pattern that should be adopted in Madras Presidency. There were main themes around which the debates were held; one, the nature of people’s rights in the forest, and another, the nature of state intervention in the forest management. The main theme of the legal and administrative debate on the forest policies in the colonial India was the nature of people’s rights in forests.

⁷⁵ M. Atchi Reddy, “ Forests in the Madras Presidency: Transition from Private Community Property to Colonial State Property”, Revised version of the paper presented at the 10th Annual Conference of the Andhra Pradesh Economic Association held at Vijayawada, 15-17, February 1991.

⁷⁶ The Board of Revenue proceedings, Dated: 5th August, 1871, Madras.

The hostile relations between the Forest and Revenue department on the issue of control over the forest and waste lands had a significant bearing on the debates on the forest legislation in the Madras Presidency. The Board of Revenue and the revenue officials consistently opposed the proposals sent by the government of India on forest legislation with an innovative counter argument. They argued that forest tracts in South India were the communal property, enjoyed by the people since times immemorial. Some of the studies on the colonial forest policies argued that the forest acts enacted by the British were formulated after intense debates within the colonial bureaucracy.

As Satpal Sangwan⁷⁷ argues that the forest Act of 1878 was formulated by the British Government after rigorous debate that took place within the colonial bureaucracy. For him, the debate by the colonial officials on the forest legislation was not a monolith one, rather different views were expressed by the colonial bureaucracy on the nature of forest legislation that should be adopted for the management of the forests in India. He argues that it was this discourse that went on making the Indian Forest Act of 1878.⁷⁸ Ramachandra Guha, while writing on the making of the Indian Forest Act of 1878, argues that the revenue officials in the Madras Presidency articulated for the protection of communal rights of the people in forests.⁷⁹ Akhileshwar Pathak, on the other hand, demonstrates how the hostile relationship between the governments of the Madras and Calcutta were responsible for prolonged debate on the communal rights in the Madras Presidency.⁸⁰ These studies highlight the heterogeneous nature of the debate on the forest legislation within the colonial bureaucracy. In this argument, one finds a contrary articulation of perspectives: one

⁷⁷ Satpal Sangwan, "Making of Popular Debate: The Indian Forester and Emerging Agenda of the State Forestry in India, 1875-1904", *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. 36, No 2, April-June, 1999, pp. 1265-1273.

⁷⁸ Mahesh Rangarajan, "Imperial Agenda and India's Forests: The Early History of Indian Forestry, 1800-1878", *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol.31, No. 2, April-June, 1994, pp. 147- 167.

⁷⁹ Ramachandra Guha, 1993,op.cit, pp.65-84.

⁸⁰ Akhileshwar Pathak, *Law, Strategies, Ideologies: Legislating Forests in Colonia India*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2002

way they argued for the protection of people's rights in forests, at the other, there was a strong advocacy for the monopolistic control of the state over the forests in India.

There are four important factors responsible for the emergence of legal debates and discourses related to the forest policies in the Madras Presidency:

1. One, massive wood consumption by the shipbuilding, railways and the other government departments;
2. Two, the phenomenal agricultural expansion that had converted most of the forests and village common lands into cultivated fields;
3. Third, population increase and its pressure on the forest resources;
4. Fourth, wood and other requirements from the forest resources for the colonial state.

These four factors created pressure on the forest resource base and compelled the colonial state to formulate administrative and legal interventions for the management of the forests in the Madras Presidency. It was in this context that the legal ideas and debates on the forest legislation were pronounced in the Madras Presidency.

While making comments on the intervention by the colonial state in the management of forest resource, some of the forest officials pointed out that the evolution of state forestry was a natural process happens in any country. They argued that the British government imitated the forest conservation measurers to save the Indian Forests from the destructive practice of the natives.⁸¹ Thus, the state monopolistic control on the forest resources in India was justified with the rhetoric of the conservation as a global phenomenon.

After 1858, at an all India level, the colonial state reoriented its policies under the rhetoric public welfare. The administrative structures of the various government departments were brought under the systematized rule of law. Under the crown regime, the Indian Policy affairs were decided at three levels, *i.e.*, the Secretary of State in Britain, the Viceroy heading the Government of India and the Provincial

⁸¹ Captain Wood, "Roads and Fire Conservancy", in D. Brandis (Ed), *Report of the Proceedings of the Forest Law* in Forest Conference held in Simla, 1875.

Governments headed by Governors. Thirthankar Roy⁸² points out that due to different parties and interests, these three levels of governance had frequently expressed conflict over policy matters. Some of the Provinces frequently quarreled with the Government of India on the resource allocation and administrative responsibilities. The prolonged disagreement between the Government of India and the Madras on the forest legislation in the Madras Presidency represent an example of this conflict.

Forest Policies: At A Glance

S.NO	Forest Policy	Important Features
1	The Forest policy of 1865	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowered the state to declare any land covered with trees or brushwood as state forest and to make rules regarding the management of the same by notification, provided that such notification should not abridge or affect any existing rights of individuals or community.
2	The Forest Act of 1874	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classified forest into reserved, protected and village forests. • The government was empowered to acquire land over which rights claimed by persons. • Local government were given right to notify forest or land as protected forest and also to make rules to regulate and prohibit certain acts in protected forests. • Local governments were also given power to assign to any village community right to or over any land which was constituted as reserved forest and all forests so assign were apply to village forests. • Activities like trespassing or posturing of cattle were prohibited. • The authority to arrest was limited to offences violating the prohibition or the quarrying the stone or the burning of lime or charcoal or the removal of any forest produced, any protected forests and the breaking or clearing for cultivation, for building, for herding cattle or any other purpose.

⁸² Thirthankar Roy, *The Economic History of India, 1875-1947*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2000, p.247.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forests were divided into four classes: a) forests – the preservation of which was essential on climatic or physical ground, b).forests-which afforded to supply of timber for commercial purposes, c) minor forests d) pasture land. • Policy envisaged the release of forestland for cultivation, subjected to certain safeguards. • The policy had left a margin of outlying areas of reserved forests for the supply of the villager’s needs.
4.	The Madras Forest Act of 1882	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Madras Forest Act of 1882 did not propose the communal forest that was advocated by the Board of Revenue and revenue officials in the Madras Presidency. • The Madras Forest Act of 1882 had opposed two methods of forest reservation: first, direct reservation, under this method most of the natural and virgin forests were reserved as the government property. The second method of reservation was settlement of peoples’ rights over forests as prescribed in the Madras Forest Act of 1882. • There were two patterns of the forest reservation in the Madras Forest Act of 1882; one, reservation of the natural and virgin forests and the forest controlled by the government before enacting of the forest act and second, constitution of fresh reservation under procedure laid down in the chapter two of the Madras Forest Act.
4	The Forests Act of 1927	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidated the law relating to forests, the transit of forest produce and duty livable on timber and other products. And also given emphasis on the revenue yielding aspects of forests. • Forests were classified as reserved, protected and village forests. • Certain special provisions were made about the shifting cultivation. The forests settlement officer was supposed to record the claims relating to the practice of shifting cultivation and to inform the state government together with his opinion as to the permissibility or otherwise of the practice. The state government was finally to decide on the issue of permission or prohibition. • The practice o shifting cultivation was in all cases

		deemed to be a privilege subject to control, restriction and abolition by the state government.
5	The Forest policy of 1952	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy withdrew the concession of release of forestland for cultivation. • Decided that there should be village forests for the needs of the villagers as against the provision of allowing into the outlying areas of reserve forests given also on private lands. • Imposed fee on grazing.
6	The Forest Draft Bill 1980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bill was mainly on the recommendation of NCA and classified forests as reserved, protected and social forests. • Terms like forest and cattle were defined widely. • Forest officers were given power of arrest and seizure of property to deal with the offences suspects to be committed in respect of forests. • Strengthened the control of central government on forests by prohibiting state governments from declaring any reserve forests or any portion thereof, as non reserve without the poor approval of the central government from allotting any forestland or any portion thereof or any non-forest purpose.
7	The Forest Act of 1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derivation of economics benefit is subordinated to the aim that o ensure environmental stability and maintenance of ecological balance. • The government has been encouraged joint forest management by giving usufruct right to those who protect forests. • About the shifting cultivation- state government can permit the practice of shifting cultivation for a period of not exceeding three years by which time the practice is to extinguish and alternatives to be improved for rehabilitating the families are to be laid down. • Special provisions were made to prevent encroachment on lands in reserved forests. The forest officers are empowered to confiscate the crops on the encroached lands. • State governments are empowered to constitute village forests over any land (except land under reserve forests) over which it has proprietary right or any land at the disposal of the village community has access by way of any right, concession or privilege. • Village forests are to be managed through the village community and guidelines for such management have been laid down. • State governments are empowered to assign government lands to individual for the purposes of

		<p>afforestation. However, the government can not assign any land from reserved or protected forests.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made provisions to regulate trespassing of cattle in reserved, protected and village forests, penalties for such offences have been made very severe. • Forest officers, police officer, or revenue officers can arrest the offenders and detain in custody.
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(Table:VI.1)

The Forest Act of 1865

After 1860s, the colonial state attempted to acquire control over the forest resources in India, not only to meet the wood supplies for the railways and various other government departments, but also to generate revenue from forest resources. This was the first step in this direction for the promulgation of Forest Act of 1865.⁸³ This Act imitated a new legal and administrative regime in the forest management system in India. It was the first attempt in the legalization and bureaucratization of the forest landscape to meet the timber requirements of the colonial state in India. The preamble of the Act Forest Act of 1865 pronounced that “Wherever it is expedient that rules having the force of law should be made from time to time for the better management and preservation of forests wherein rights are vested in her Majesty for the purpose of the Government of India”.⁸⁴ Thus, the Forest Act of 1865 provided the legal sanction to the forest administration in the various provinces under the British rule and empowered the colonial state to acquire monopolistic control over the Indian Forests. The rules proposed by the Forest Act of 1865 facilitated the colonial state monopolistic control over forests with legal and administrative powers. It has not only imposed the control of state over forests, but also proposed a strict punishments and penalties mechanism for regulation of peoples’ access to forests.

⁸³ B.Ribbentrop, *Forestry in British India*, Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1986. pp. 97-98.

⁸⁴ E.P Stebbing, *The Forest of India*, 1922, Vol.II, op.cit, p.8.

One of the important features of the Forest Act of 1865 was that it categorized the Indian Forest landscape into ‘reserved forests and ‘unreserved forests’. Under this scheme, reserved forests were declared as state property, wherein peoples’ access was prohibited. In unreserved forests, peoples were allowed to access forest produce with certain restrictions.⁸⁵ The object of this categorization was to impose state monopoly on the forest resources in India. The system of reservation of forest tracts as permanent state estates was justified on the ground that the forests in India were the property of the state in pre- colonial period and the colonial state has been following the Indian historical tradition. It was argued that the British inherited the ownership right on forests from the preceding rules in India. While addressing this issue, R. Ribbentrop, who served as the Inspector General of Forests in India, argues that “ The despot preceding the British government allowed every one to take what he required, but reserved to himself full power to do, at any moment with his property whatever he liked, let or hindrance. Nobody thought of opposing in this respect. But though the Oriental governments, from which the British government inherited its forest property, never recognized a prescriptive right, it had to be admitted that, under the system originally in vogue, and which had remained entirely unchecked for some time after the British occupation, rights of user had in some instances been acquired by the legal process of prescription, in consequence of the substitution or at least intermixture, of western laws and ideas, in cases where it had been exercised neither by force nor secretly, but fully , openly, and unchecked, for 62 years. In some cases rights of user had been acquired by grant and *sanad*, and in others the officers in charge of the more clearly settlements gave up the right of the soil to villages, and reserved to the State only the trees growing on the land”.⁸⁶

The dominant perception of the forest officials on the nature of forest property in India was linked to the notion of **Oriental despotism**, under which all the lands belonged to the king. Ribbentrop argued that the British Government inherited the property right in forests and wastelands from the pre-colonial rulers. Even Baden

⁸⁵Ibid, 12.

⁸⁶ Ibid, p .97.

Powel put forward a similar argument as “in olden days, native rulers used often to set aside considerable areas of forest land as ‘Shikarighar’ or hunting grounds, and these would be usually covered with thick and perhaps valuable forests. Such lands have now become the property of the British government following the principle of the succession.”⁸⁷ Commenting on the state intervention in the management of the forests the pre- colonial India, Baden Powel argued that “there never was time when the government could not issue an edict “reserving” certain valuable trees – teak, sandal, black wood and others- as royal trees, nor any time when the chieftain of the province would have hesitated to enclose off a large area of the waste as a hunting preserve.”⁸⁸ Thus, the colonial bureaucracy selectively deployed the instance from Indian history where the rulers in the pre-colonial period intervened in the management of forest resources. However the Forest Act of 1865 had initiated a new chapter in the history of the forest management in India.

Though most of the provinces under the British rule had accepted the forest Act of 1865, the Madras government opposed its extension to the Madras Presidency as the Board of Revenue and revenue officials opposed the implementation of the Act in this presidency on the ground that it negatively affects the communal rights and privileges of people. Another concern of revenue department was that the new forest rules were brought with a view to empower the forest department to occupy the wastelands. This they feared would restrict their supremacy in land management system for till then it was the Revenue department and the District Collectors who had a free hand in land management. They opposed the forest legislation pointing out that it may negatively interfere in day-to day lives of the people, leading to confrontation between the government and people.

⁸⁷ B.H Baden Powel, *A Manuel of Jurisprudence for Forest Officers: Being a Treatise on the Forest Law*, Government Press, Calcutta, 1882, p.47.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p.89.

Forest Draft Bill, 1869

As the Forest Act of 1865 was unable to provide a systematic legal framework for reservation of forests as state property, the Government of India instructed Brandis to formulate a more effective legal mechanism. He prepared a Forest Draft Bill that was circulated among all provinces. This bill was dispatched to the Madras government for its consideration in 1869.⁸⁹ It circulated the Draft Bill to the district Collectors and sought their opinion on the possibility of its implementation. The response of the District collectors was expressed by the revenue officials as demonstrate the nature of conflict between the Forest and Revenue department on acquiring control over the management of forest. This debate was centered on the issue of how to tackle the communal rights and privileges of people in forest in the Madras Presidency. Majority of the revenue officials opposed the Draft Bill prepared by Brandis and argued that it would deprive the livelihoods of the people in the forests by restricting their customary access to the resources. While criticizing the Draft Bill, the Collector of Vizagapatnam District argued that the section of the Draft Bill aimed at curtailing the rights of agency communities over the forest in the Madras Presidency.⁹⁰ The main reason for the revenue officials' opposition on the Draft Bill was that it did not recognize the powers of the revenue department in forest management. While criticizing the Draft Bill, the collector Godavari District argued that "the Bill totally ignores the agency of the District revenue authorities in matters connected with the settlement of forest rights, and on which those authorities, from their position, must be the best available judges".⁹¹ This argument shows the attitude of the revenue officials who demanded big share in the forest management.

⁸⁹ B. Ribbentrop, *Forestry in British India*, Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1986. p.98.

⁹⁰ Letter from the Collector of Vizagapatnam District to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, 28th April 1871, No. 337, in Board of Revenue Proceedings, 5th August 1871, No 3284, p.5739.

⁹¹ Letter from the Collector of Godavari District, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, 12th April, 1872, No.121, Dated; 14 July, 1872, p.2981.

After 1870s, the process of reservation of forests as state property was undertaken by some of the provinces under British India. This process remained slow in the Madras Presidency due to the fact that the majority of the revenue officials and the Board of Revenue opposed the forest reservation with the argument that unless the issue of communal rights be settled, the government cannot undertake the forest reservation.

Despite the vehement opposition within the colonial bureaucratic structure on the forest legislation, from 1870s onwards there was an explicit concern shown by the colonial state to formulate forest legislation. The possible reason for the continuous interest was due to the realization of the potential of forests as revenue yielding agencies. The immediate fallout of the resistance from the Madras government to the Forest Act of 1865 and the Draft Bill proposed by Brandis was that it generated several questions on the forest legislation in India. In order to organize a detailed discussion on forest legislation, two forest conferences were organized by the British government. These conferences provided a platform for the colonial officials to discuss and negotiate various aspects of the forest legislation to be formulated in the British India. In the Conference held at Allahabad, Baden – Powel acted as a main spokesperson for the state control over forests and advocated for strict state forestry in India. He proposes the following categorization for Indian forest landscape to be brought under forest laws:⁹²

- a). Reserved forest, property of the state and people rights were not recognized;
- b). Protected forests, privileges for people were allowed;
- c). Private or communal forests created to meet the requirements of people.

The object of this division was to establish the state control over forest tracts and simultaneously grant some concessions to the people in the protected and communal forests. Baden - Powel argued that peoples' traditional access to forests was based on not property rights, rather they were user rights.

⁹² B.H. Baden Powel, and G.S. Gamble (Ed), *Report of the Proceedings of the Forest Conference held in Allahabad, 1873-74*, Government Press, Calcutta, 1874, p.5

However, there were some officials, who aware of the importance of the forest landscape for tribal lives in India. Major Kenneth Mackenzie⁹³ suggested that the forest conservation should confine to the conservation of timber trees and should not deprive the people, who depended on forest for survival. He advocated that forest conservation should not intervene in the agricultural holdings and people should be allowed to get forest produce for domestic consumption without any restrictions. Thus, some of the officials did advocate for sympathetic treatment of rights of tribals in forest.

There were officials and policy makers who advocated extreme measures. For instance, Schlich, famous forester, in contrast to Kenneth Mackenzie, represented an annexationist views and argued for the extensive reservation of forests as state property. He argued that “I object radically to the theory of “reserved” and “unreserved” forests, viz., that one lot may be preserved and the other hacked about anyhow. The reserve forests usually from a small area, quite out of proportion to the wants of the country, and if the unreserved forests are not also worked on a plain, they will be destroyed and the little reserve areas that are left will be insufficient to stave off great and general inconvenience.”⁹⁴ The idea of Schlich in a way represented the Forest Department’s argument which wanted to demarcate extensive forest zones for the sylvicultural operations. While formulating the forest legislation there was an extensive discussion on two patterns of forest management, *i.e.*, rigid state control versus limited interference in forests. But most of the colonial bureaucracy was in favour of the state authority over forests and argued that the state as rational trustee and best suited to manage the forests in India.

The second Conference was held at Simla under the chairmanship of Brandis. In this Conference, some of the forest officials advocated the idea that forest was public property and they have been managed by the state for public welfare. C.F.

⁹³ Kenneth Mackenzie, “Settlement of Forest Rights and Privileges” Comments published in *Report of the Proceedings of the Forest Conference held in Allahabad, 1873-74*, Government Press, Calcutta, 1874,p.108.

⁹⁴ Ibid, p.111.

Amery pointed out that the “State forest is not a private property of the people at large, to be administered by their representatives for the benefit of all”⁹⁵ The point to be mentioned here is that C. F Amery attempted to rationalize the colonial state’s role as ‘benevolent landlord’ which would manage forest resources for the public welfare. Thus, the state monopoly was sought to be grounded in managing the forest resources in India under the rhetoric of public welfare.

Brandis hypotheses was that the evolution of the forest rights in India have resembles the origin of the rights of commons in Europe for wood and pasture. For him, the forest rights were inherently limited in nature and could only be exercised as long as the wastelands or forests provide the resources. He argued that as in Europe, in India also the forest usage was regulated from time to time by the local rulers. He pointed out that forest usage in India existed in the form of user rights but not as property rights. Thus, he sought to provide justification to the role of state in intervening in forest management.

After 1875, the colonial state initiated to prepare the forest legislation at all India level and insisted that the provincial government must also formulate similar forest legislations. Under the pressure of the government of India, the Madras Government appointed a Committee in 1875 for preparation of a draft forest bill. The Committee was instructed by the Governor of Madras Presidency to enquire on the following categorization of forests:⁹⁶

1. State Forests
2. Communal Forests
3. Property Forests

The above-mentioned model on forest categorization for the Madras Presidency was intended to evolve consensus between the government of India and Madras governments. The Madras Government incorporated the interest of the

⁹⁵ Dietrich Brandis and G.S. Gamble (Ed), *Proceedings of the Forest Conference*, Simla, 1875, p.28.

⁹⁶ Dietrich,Brandis, *Memorandum on the of Public Forests in Madras Presidency*, Government Press, Simla, 1878, p.40

government of India by creating the state reserve forests. At the same time the communal forest category was proposed to cater to the needs of the people.⁹⁷ But, the committee appointed for preparation of the forest bill could not conduct an enquiry due to the non- cooperation from the Board of Revenue and Revenue officials. The Government of India on its part went on insisting that the Madras Government should adopt a systematic policy in order to bring about better revenue results. In 1878, the Government of India dispatched Forest Draft Bill for the consideration of the Madras Government.⁹⁸ In response to this, like in 1860's, the Madras Government took position that the State forests could not be created due to the fact that the forests in the presidency were the common property of villages.

Robinson⁹⁹, the Secretary to the Madras government, criticized the nature of Forest Draft Bill, because it would curtail the peoples' communal rights in forest. Mr. Huddelstun, member of the Board of Revenue, also felt that the Draft Bill sent by the Government of India proposes immense powers to the forest officers and would not suitable to the Madras Presidency. While describing the nature of forest tenure in the madras Presidency, he wrote that “ in this presidency, there is not an acre of land which does not lie within the limits of some village, and in the unclaimed portion of which the villagers have consequently, from time immemorial, for building their house or constructing agricultural implements, collecting fuel, or grass or leaves for domestic and agricultural use; of hunting, fishing and grazing their cattle; and from time to time have, in accordance with local customs, extended cultivation, subject to the Government and village dues”.¹⁰⁰ Thus, the revenue officials argued that the people exercised communal rights in the forests in the Madras Presidency for generations and should not be disturbed by the state. However, the government of

⁹⁷ The Board of Revenue Proceedings, Dated: 7th December, 1876, No.105, p.9796.

⁹⁸ Letter from the Government of India, Department of Revenue and Agriculture, 12 F, 5th January, 1878, in D. Brandis, *Memorandum on the Demarcation of Public Forests*, p.40.

⁹⁹ Minutes by Robinson, 3rd February, 1878, in D. Brandis, *Memorandum on the Demarcation of Public Forests*, p.43.

¹⁰⁰ Minutes by W. Hudelstum, 14th February, 1878, in D. Brandis, *Memorandum on the Demarcation of Public Forests*, p.45.

India continued to make efforts to convince the Madras government on its draft forest legislation.

The Forest Act of 1878

Under the pressure from the government of India, the Madras government undertook an enquiry on the communal rights in the forests in the Madras Presidency. It appointed a Forest Commission to enquire into the nature of the communal rights exercised by the people in Forest.¹⁰¹ The Forest Commission of 1878 was appointed to suggest recommendations on the formation of the forest reserves in various districts. The Forest Commission completely changed the nature of the discourse on communal rights in the Madras Presidency. It argued that the communal rights were disappeared on account of common lands for cultivation. This commission felt that it is justifiable to create forest reservation on the ground that agriculture expansion had reached a saturation point and remaining wastelands should be conserved by the state for public welfare. Thus, prolonged battle by the revenue officials in opposition to the forest legislation and their advocacy on the communal rights was completely naturalized by the government of India logic of maximization of revenue from colonies. This consensus has resulted in the promulgation of the India Forest Act of 1878. This act declared the state ownership over forests and treated the forest utilization pattern of people's as privilege or concession granted by state at its will. But this Act was also opposed by Board of Revenue and Revenue officials, because of the issue of property rights. This debate led to delay on formulation of forest legislation in the Madras Presidency for a decade. The main reason why the Government of India constantly insisted on the Madras government to formulate forest legislation on the lines suggested by her was the realization of potential of revenue form forest resources.

In 1881, the government of India deputed Brandis to prepare the forest legislation for the Madras Presidency. He visited some of the districts to observe the

¹⁰¹ G.O. No: 1105, 20th July, 1878, in Board of Revenue Proceedings, 27th February, 1879, No 521, p. 1368.

existing pattern of forest organization. His report had become an important source for the Madras Forest Act of 1882. He proposed that the forest conservation should not only focus on the silvicultural operations, but also concentrate on providing food and fodder to the population. He attempted to expand the institutional scope of the forest conservation and even succeeded in convincing the Revenue department to drop opposition to forest conservation policies. He wrote that “It must be distinctly recognized that not only does the provision of timber and firewood come within the legitimate scope of forest administration in India, but one of its most important duties will in future be to increase the supply of cattle fodder, particularly during seasons of drought in the drier districts. The importance of this feature of Indian Forest administration has by no means yet been sufficiently recognized.”¹⁰² Brandis, therefore totally in favor of creating the reserve forests as a state property.

Though the Madras Presidency remained opposed to the forest legislation for a long period of time, due to the pressure from the Government of India it had to formulate the Madras Forest Act of 1882. By 1880s, it was accepted in the Madras official circle that there existed no communal forests and consequently, time immemorial rights exercised by the people over forests were not given proper treatment while enacting the forest Act. Thus, the promulgation of the Madras Forest Act of 1882 had initiated new legal and administrative regimes for forest management in the Madras Presidency.

The Madras Forest Act of 1882

The promulgation of the Madras Forest Act of 1882 asserted that the forest landscape in the Madras Presidency belonged to the state. It empowered the Madras Government to undertake demarcation, reservation and settlement of forests as state property. This articulation of the revenue officials on the protection of the communal rights of people in the Madras presidency was not reflected in the Act as it was promulgated. Brandis, the main architect of the Madras Forest Act, felt that the general framework of the Indian Forest Act of 1878, the Burma Forest Act of 1881

¹⁰² Dietrich Brandis, 1883, op.cit, p.7.

and The Madras Forest Act of 1882 were similar. But, he pointed out that the Madras Act of 1882 possessed two peculiar features: one, it did not have a chapter on village forests and two, it created the forest courts for allowing people to appeal against the decision of the Forest Settlement Officer.¹⁰³ The forest courts were incorporated into the Madras Forest Act of 1882 in order to address the public discontent during the implementation of the forest settlement process in the Madras Presidency.

The Madras Forest Act of 1882 was a lengthy legislation consisting of ten chapters' and sixty-eight rules. These rules proposed the procedure for creating and managing reserved forests and reserve lands.¹⁰⁴ It divided the forest landscape into following categories:¹⁰⁵

1. Reserved Forests.
2. Reserved Lands (lands at the disposal of the government, which was not included in the reserved forests).
3. Forests or Waste lands, which was not the property of government, but for special reasons may be placed under the control of government.
4. Forests belong to private owners, the management of which may be undertaken by the government at the request of those owners.
5. Forest in which the government or any other persons or jointly interested, which may be managed by government.

The Madras Forest Act of 1882 did not propose the communal forest that was advocated by the Board of Revenue and revenue officials in the Madras Presidency. It describes fact that the articulation on the communal rights was a rhetoric used by the revenue officials to oppose the expansion of the forest department. In other words, the nature of the colonial state policies at one level were identified with sensitive

¹⁰³ Ibid,p.2.

¹⁰⁴ *The Madras Code from 1803-1950, Government of Madras, Vol.II, The Government Press, Madras, 1885, p.122.*

¹⁰⁵ C.D McLean, 1885, op.cit, p.314-315.

discourse on the protection of people rights, and at other level, pushed the colonial state to a higher pedestrian.

While mentioning the object of the Madras Forest Act of 1882, the Board of Revenue pointed out that the Act was enacted for two reasons: one, to reserve the forest tract, which are important for protection of climate and surface irrigation systems, as state forests and second, to provide pasture, fuel and other requirements of the village population in the Presidency.¹⁰⁶ The state monopoly on the forests was thus, justified by the Madras government under the pretext of public welfare. The actual reason behind the forest reservation however, was to impose the state control over forest landscape to generate revenue and meet the timber supplies for the government departments.

The Madras Forest Act of 1882 had opposed two methods of forest reservation¹⁰⁷: first, direct reservation, under this method most of the natural and virgin forests were reserved as the government property. The second method of reservation was settlement of peoples' rights over forests as prescribed in the Madras Forest Act of 1882. Under this method, most of the mixed forests and thorny scrub in plain and hill areas were brought under reservation. Subsequently, reservation of these forests became a hard task for the government of Madras. This main reason for this was people's lively hoods were critically dependent on these forests.

Baden-Powel's remarks on the Forest Act of 1882 were that the main focus on rivalry between the forest and revenue departments. He strongly felt that in opposition to the forest conservation, the revenue officials on several occasions exaggerated the communal rights in the Madras Presidency.¹⁰⁸ Thus, the debate on the communal rights of the people over the forests in the Madras Presidency was supposed to have been conditioned by the prejudice of the revenue officials on the forest conservation. In the Forest Act of 1882, there were no safeguards included on

¹⁰⁶ Resolution, Dated 11th June, 1883, No. 1767, in *Board of Revenue Proceedings*.pp.1-2.

¹⁰⁷ C.D Mclean, op.cit, p.320-323.

¹⁰⁸ B.H. Baden – Powel, “The Madras Forest Act”, *The Indian Forester*, Vol.IX, , April 1883, No.4, pp.204-208.

the communal rights of people and the discretionary powers were given to the Forest Settlement Officer to settle the claims by people for forest rights.

There were two patterns of the forest reservation in the Madras Forest Act of 1882; one, reservation of the natural and virgin forests and the forest controlled by the government before enacting of the forest act and second, constitution of fresh reservation under procedure laid down in the chapter two of the Madras Forest Act.¹⁰⁹ Under the first pattern, the Madras government reserved the forestlands without conducting the settlement procedure laid down by the Madras Forest Act of 1882. The second pattern of forest reservation in the Act was under the scheme of an elaborate legal process. This process practically excluded the people from accessing forests, by redefining and restricting the customary access to the forest in the Madras Presidency.

By 1900, most of the forests in the Madras Presidency were brought under reservation. Consequently, tribals and peasants that were critically depended on forests for survival for day -to -day needs were excluded for the customary access in forest tracts. In the following section, discuss how the forest settlement pattern undertaken by the Madras government alienated the tribals form the customary access in forests in the Madras Presidency.

Forest Act of 1927

The Indian Forest Act of 1878 was modified on the past by different acts of local Governments. It was later on replaced by a very comprehensive act called the Indian Forest Act,1927. This was an attempt to codify all the practices of the forest officials and to regulate further people's rights over forestlands and produce. The forests were classified into reserved, protected and village forests and elaborate provisions were made to extent state control over forests.

¹⁰⁹ C.D Mclean, 1885,op.cit, p.314.

The act deleted the reference to communities' rights over forests, which were made in the 1878 Act. Persons were expected to put in their claims over forestlands and forest produce before the Forest Settlement Officer who was to enquire into their claims. Rights in respect of which no claims were preferred were to be extinguished, unless the person claiming them satisfied the forest settlement officer that had sufficient cause for not preferring the claim in the specified times.¹¹⁰

This Act has put some control on the shifting cultivation with certain special provisions. The forest settlement officer was supposed to record the claims relating to the practice of shifting cultivation and to form the state government together with his opinion as to the permissibility or otherwise of the practice. The state government was finally to decide on the issue of permission or prohibition. If the state government permitted the practice wholly or in part, the forest settlement officer was specifically mentioned that the practice of shifting cultivation was in all cases deemed to be a privilege subject to control, restriction and abolition by the state government.¹¹¹

This was an Act to consolidate the law relating to forests, the transit of forest produce and the duty livable on timber and other forest product. Thus, there was a clear emphasis on the revenue yielding aspects of forests. The subject of forest was included in the provincial legislative list under Government of India Act of 1935. Thereafter several provinces made their own laws to regulate forests. Most of these laws did not affect the framework laid down in the 1927 Act.

However, the most serious consequence of forestry working on commercial and imperial interest was one corollary, i.e., the diminution of customary rights as well as the decline in traditional conservation and management systems. The curtailment of communal ownership of forests by the state severely undermined the subsistence economy of the forest people.

¹¹⁰ Forest Act of 1927, Section-9.

¹¹¹ Ibid, Section-10.

Shifting cultivation was one major, traditional subsistence activity that got banned from the reserved forests.¹¹² The restriction of shifting cultivation to small and demarked areas forced the tribals to shorten fallow cycle or to prong cultivation on designated patch until deterioration set in.¹¹³ In the Koya tribe of Bhadrachalam, who were accustomed to shifting cultivation were forced to follow a type of fallow cultivation as a result of the felling of trees in the forests of the area starting in the quarter of the 19th century. Finally they lost their lands to either to the moneylenders and became tenants or else sold out their land outright in the market and some of them became the annual farm servants to the same parties while many of them restored to the casual labour market.¹¹⁴ Thus, shifting cultivation was discouraged without any appropriate alternative scheme. As Sengupta¹¹⁵ observed that to compensate for the loss of source of livelihood, tribals have been forced to explore alternative avenues of engagements. In Jarkhand tribals migrate to different parts of India supplying cheap labour for rich farmers in Punjab, road contractors in Himachal Pradesh and contract labour in mines and factories all over.

Colonial Forest Policies and Tribals in Madras Presidency

Regarding the relationship of tribals with the forest, the Committee on Forests and Tribal in India (1982) state that “they are not only forest dwellers but also for centuries they have evolved a way of life which, on the one hand, is woven around forest ecology and forest resources, on the other hand ensures that the forest is protected against the degradation by man and nature by evolving their own conservative systems”. These traditional systems of conservation of resources were

¹¹² K.Sivaramakrishnan, 1995, op.cit, pp.3-40.

¹¹³ C.V.Haimendorf, *The Chenchus: Jungle Folk of Deccan*, Macmillan, London, 1943.

¹¹⁴ Atchi Reddy, “ Forests in the Madras Presidency: Transition from Private Community Property to Colonial State Property”, Revised version of the paper presented at the 10th Annual Conference of the *Andhra Pradesh Economic Association* held at Vijayawada, 15-17, February,1991.

¹¹⁵ Sengupta, ‘Reappraising Tribal Movements-III, The Economic Basis’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol:31, No:21.1988.

ensured through rotations on using the economically useful species. These are not only included a long fallow period in the rotation of shifting cultivation but also selective retention of valuable trees while felling for cultivation. There is substantial evidence that all of this enable the tribals to use their resource base in a sustained manner¹¹⁶

Thus, tribal cohesion and equitable social organization meant possibilities of better enforcement of norms to ensure the ecological balance. Outside flows of material were largely restricted. For instance, honey and ivory were exchanged for metal. However, such exchanges were quantitatively insignificant, so that the material cycles were largely closed over the spatial scale of tribal territories. This meant that the tribal population had a real stake in the security of the resource base of their territory and evolved a number of cultural traditions to ensure its substance.¹¹⁷ The tribals put various kinds of restrictions such as seasonal restrictions, total protection to certain areas, protection to certain valuable species, which have some religious importance etc.

The tribals have a certain specific relationship with forests. They always interact for their sustenance and try to recreate the forests with their traditional conservation systems. But the progressive assertion of state monopoly rights over large areas of forests turning them into 'reserves', has resulted in large-scale eviction and uprooting of traditional tribal villages. The relationship that existed between tribal social organization and the forest was completely upset as a result of forest policies. This large-scale commercial exploitation of forests not only destroyed the source of livelihood for tribals but also adversely affected the ecology of the area¹¹⁸. The tribals were not only denied their means of livelihood, but also became victims of exploitation and harassment by forest officials and contractors. The alienation of

¹¹⁶ Madhiv Gadgil, "Social Restraints on Resource Utilization: The Indian Experience", in J.A. Mc Neely and D.Pitt (Ed), *Culture and Conservation: The Human Dimension in Environmental Planning*, Croom Helm, Dublin, 1985.

¹¹⁷ Madhiv Gadgil, "Forest Management, Deforestation and People's Impoverishment" in *Social Action*, 39(4), October-December, 1989, pp.357-383.

¹¹⁸ A. Mathew, "Forests and Tribals: Victims of Exploitation", *The Administrator*, Vol.XXXVIII, April-June, pp.11-17.

tribals from the forest and the deterioration and degradation of forest due to over exploitation for profit continued and increased during colonial period. As a result the tribals were systematically disposed of every means of existence. In this context an attempt is made to review forest policies during colonial period.

The tribals in Madras Presidency were traditionally depended upon forests for grazing, firewood, collection of minor forest products, food and shifting cultivation.¹¹⁹ The intervention by the colonial forest policies in the hill areas for exploitation of timber and other valuable sources initiated a transformation in tribal society.¹²⁰ This transformation exposed the tribal areas for exploitation both by the forest department and plain business people.¹²¹ In Madras, the British Government treated the tribal access to forests as a concession that was allowed to be exercised as long as the government permits.¹²² Thus, the immemorial traditional access of tribals to forests was defined as the concessions privilege permitted by state, not as right evolved over centuries of dependency as the eco-system. For instance, in the pre-colonial south India, the state appears to have recognized tribals rights over their eco-system.¹²³

There were two factors that compelled the Madras government to adopt cautious policy towards tribes: one, the need to use their local knowledge of forest routes and timber trees in Silviculture operations and secure labour in forest conservation operations and two, to prevent tribal revolts in opposition to the interference of the forest reservation in day-to-day life. The tribals were employed by

¹¹⁹ A.Ayappan, 1948, op.cit, pp.15-20 and Furuer Himendorf, *Tribes of India: The struggle for Survival*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1994, p.79.

¹²⁰ Buddadeb Chaudary (ed), *Tribal Development in India: Problems and Prospects*, Inter-Indian Publication, New Delhi, p.79.

¹²¹ Kavita Philip, *Civilizing Natures: Race, Resources and Modernity in Colonial South India*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 2003.

¹²² Stephen Fuchs, *The Aboriginal Tribes of India*, McMillan India, Delhi, p.244.

¹²³ Furuer Himendorf, 1994, op.cit,p.80.

the forest department as watchers and labours in boundary clearing operations and fire patrolling activities in the Madras Presidency.

Management of Minor Forest Products

The minor forest products constitute an important part of the forest resources for tribal people. The tribals in hill areas traditionally collected and sold the minor forest products as a major livelihood activity in the Madras Presidency. After 1870, the Forest Department attempted to control trade in the minor forest products, which till then was under the hands of revenue authorities. This competition to control the trade in minor forest products resulted in a conflict between the revenue department and forest department.

Prior to the establishment of the forest department in the Madras Presidency, the collection of minor products were given in auction to the contractors and revenue derived from this source was credited to the Land Revenue department. In order to increase its revenue, the forest department attempted to acquire control over the minor forests products. Initially, the timber trade constituted the main component of income of the forest department, but in 1867, Cleghorn, the Conservator of Forests expressed desire to involve the forest department in the collection of minor forest products.¹²⁴ The increase in the value for minor forest products also made the forest department to attempt to acquire over the minor forest products trade and that was mostly under the hands of the plain-based traders. The forest officials argued that the innocent tribals, exploited by plain traders acting as intermediary between the state and the tribals and between the tribals and market. They also argued that the middlemen paid lower amounts for the forest products collected by the tribals and thus, exploit their hard labour. The forest officials suggested that the tribals be employed in the collection of the minor forest products under the supervision of the forest department. But the Board of Revenue rejected this proposal and instructed the

¹²⁴ Annual Administrative Report Prepared by the Conservator of Forests, H.Cleghorn for 1866-67, in Board of Revenue Proceedings (Land Revenue) , 17th February, 1891, No; 120, p.10.

forest department not to interfere in the collection of minor forest products in 1868.¹²⁵ However, the forest officials continued to make their efforts to control the trade in minor forest products.

The Madras government sent the proposals of Chief Conservator of Forest to all the District Collectors. But, the most of the District collectors opposed the proposals. The Ganajm District Collector, in response to the proposal was bold to argue that “I am very averse to any interference with what have become almost the prescriptive rights of these semi-savage people to gather for their own benefit the hill products in this district.”¹²⁶ The District Collector of Vizagaptnam argued that the government should not involve in the collection of minor forest products that may result in an unnecessary conflict between the tribal people and the government machinery¹²⁷. The main reason for revenue official’s opposition on the interference by the forest department in the tribal areas was their apprehension of the tribal revolts.

The important point is that the forest officials perceived the control on minor forest products as a facilitating factor for their intervention in the non-dense forest regions. While mentioning the necessity of bringing the management of the minor forest products under the supervision of the forest department, Brandis made a strong plea that the forest products, which were carelessly collected by the tribals, should be brought under the management of the forest department.¹²⁸

Forest Reservation Process in Madras Presidency

The forest settlement procedure was not conducted in the Madras Forest Act of 1882. The reason attributed for this was that the tribals could not come with proper

¹²⁵ Board of Revenue Proceedings, 30th September, 1874, No. 2813.

¹²⁶ Letter from the Collector of the Ganjam District to the Secretary of Board of Revenue, in Board of Revenue Proceedings, 21st August 1871, No: 3585, p.6243.

¹²⁷ Letter from the Collector of Vizagapatnam District to the Secretary of Board of Revenue, in Board of Revenue Proceedings, 24th August, 1870, No.653, p.6243.

¹²⁸ D.Brandis, 1883, op.cit,p.270.

claims at the time of forest settlement due to lack of understanding of the procedure. To address this problem, the Madras government directed the Forest Settlement Officer to leave sufficient forest areas at the time of the forest settlement in the tribal areas. In pursuance to this policy, the Forest Settlement Officer in the Palakonda and Golgoada taluks of Vizagaptnam informed that he had left sufficient forest land for the use of tribals at the time of forest settlement.¹²⁹ The reservation forests as estates resulted in far reaching demographic changes and displaced from their ancestral places. For instance, at the time of forest settlement, some of the tribal villages were included in the reserve forests in the Atikonda reserve in Vizagaptnam district. Consequently, the tribals were forced to move out from their ancestral lands.¹³⁰ The Forest Settlement Officer in the Karaka reserve in Vizagaptnam district mentioned that several villages included in the reserve forests.¹³¹ However, the forest department was happy to keep the tribals inside the reserved forests, because it required their labour in forest conservation operations and for the patrolling and fire – tracing operations.

The forest settlement process was slow in the agency areas of Andhra. Because the survey and settlement of the forests became a hard task for the Madras Government for want of information. In 1890, the collector of Vizagapatnam district informed the government that he could not undertake the forest reservation due to lack of clear information on land tenure pattern in the district.¹³² He reported that the *Muttadars* and *Mokshadars* claimed the property rights on the forests proposed for conservation and created problems to forest settlement process. As a result of this, the forest conservation process moved on slow pace in Vizagaptnam.

While reserving the forest land in the tribal areas of Andhra region, the settlement procedure that was prescribed in the Madras Forest Act of 1882 was not

¹²⁹ The *Board of Revenue Proceedings*, F. No. 352, Miscellaneous, 14th March, 1894.

¹³⁰ The *Board of Revenue Proceedings*, F. No. 451, Dated: 9th July, 1894.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, F. No. 297, Dated: 9th May, 1895.

¹³² *Ibid*, F. No. 130, Dated: 28th April, 1886.

followed, The main reason for this was, these areas consisted of valuable timber trees on the one hand, and ecologically sensitive zones, on the other. Due to these reasons, the Madras government attempted to reserve hill forest tracts. It justified the reservation on the ground that sufficient forest areas were left for the access to the tribals for continuation of their customary rights. But, in most cases the tribals failed to understand the demographic changes initiated by the forest reservation. This had created serious problems in the later days.

Prior to the intervention of the colonial state, the hill areas in the Andhra region were managed by the Muttadaras, who were the hereditary hill chiefs. Due to harsh environmental conditions and lack of communication, the British could not acquire control over these areas.¹³³ The Muttadars, though imposed a small tax on cultivated lands, but did not disturb the traditional relationship between tribals and forests. Penetration of the colonial rule through forest policies exposed the tribal areas to wider exploitation both by the state and plain traders. After realizing the potential of resources in the hill areas, the colonial state initiated its efforts to acquire control over these areas. However, the state attempts were resisted by the Muttadars. There were series of revolts against the British intervention occurred in Vizagapatnam and Gunjam districts between the years 1830 and 1840.¹³⁴ In spite of revolts, the British gradually acquired control over tribal areas by promulgating the Act of XXIV of 1839. Under this Act, the hereditary rights of Muttadars were disallowed. This process resulted in sever discontent on the British intervention in tribal areas.

After realizing the potential of forest resources, the colonial state imposed restrictions on tribals access to forests particularly *podu* cultivation, which was a main livelihood source for tribes was restricted in the Agency Areas in 1879.¹³⁵ Thus,

¹³³ M.S.R. Anjaneyulu, *Vizagapatnam: A Study of the Relations Between the Zamindars and East India Company*, Visakhapatnam, 2007, p.65.

¹³⁴ P.Kamala Mohan Rao and D.L Prasada Rao, “ Tribal Movenents in Andhr Pradesh” , in K.S. Singh (Ed), *Tribal Movements in India*, Vol.2, Monohar, New Delhi, 1982, pp.353-372.

¹³⁵ A. Satyanarayana, “Socio- Economic Origins of Rampa Rebellion -1878-1880”, *Andhra Pradesh History Congress Proceedings*, 38th session, Vijayawada, 1978.

restrictions on Muttadars hereditary rights on the one hand and tribal's discontentment due to the restrictions on *podu* on the other, manifested in a massive tribal uprisings in Rampa areas of Godavari district in 1879 – 1880.¹³⁶ This shows that the British intervention and imposition of restriction on tribals' access to forest created grievances in tribal society. In this context, introduction of organized forestry and imposition of the state monopolistic control over forests in tribal areas led to deprivation of tribals.

Due to lack of literacy, the tribal people could not represent their grievances related to accessing forests in the form of petitions. However, there were few petitions by the tribals on their grievances submitted to government authorities that were preserved in the Board of Revenue Proceedings. For instance, some of the Chenchus, tribals from Kistna District, submitted a petition on 10th October 1888, to the District Collector on severity of forest rules. They informed that for generations, they depended on the collection of minor forest produce like tamarind, honey, sop-nuts, etc., as the main source of for livelihood. They also complained about the harassment by the forest subordinate of officials, who frequently confiscated the forest products, gathered by tribals and demanded bribe for allowing them into forests. In response to their petition, the Board of Revenue instructed the District Collector to probe into this issue. The Collector, reporting to the government, suggested for employment of the Chenchus in collection of minor forest products, hunting material and cattle grazing without any tax. He also proposed that the Chenchus should be employed as watchers in reserved forests.¹³⁷ Whether such sweeping concessions were given to the Chenchus is not clear, but the policy of taming tribals to utilize their labor in forest conservation operations could be seen in Madras.

Regarding the employment of tribals in forest conservation operations, the conservator of the Forests in Northern Circle informed the government that in

¹³⁶ David Arnold, 1982, op.cit., pp.82-142.

¹³⁷ The Board of Revenue Proceedings, Land Revenue, Dated:7th February, 1889, Forest, No. 86.

Kurnool and Kistna Districts, special arrangements were made by the Forest department to employ the Chenchu tribals in the conservation operations that were undertaken in reserved forests. In Nellore and Cuddapah Districts, the Yanadi tribals were employed in the protection of reserved forests as watchers.¹³⁸ Attempts were also made to employ tribals in the forest conservation operations.

With the initiation of forest reservation, the tribals living in the forest zones were uprooted from their traditional economic system and relocated as labour force in the Forest department. In 1890, the Madras Government undertook the reservation of 1000 square miles of forest area in Godavari district. While writing about the forest settlement in the Godavari region, the Working Plan for Godavari forests pointed out that “..... although these hill tribes possessed few sustainable rights over forests, they had, from time immemorial, enjoyed and abused an unrestricted freedom to feel, clear and burn whatever they chose; and for political reasons, it was considered necessary to deal with them cautiously”.¹³⁹

By reserving hill forests and imposing restrictions on tribals' access to forests, the forest department interfered in day-to-day life of the people in the Godavari Agency area. The Agent of Godavari District endorsed a petition put forwarded by some of the hillmen their grievances related to forests to the Board of Revenue. He reported to the government interference of the forest department's staff in tribal areas created troubles for tribals. In connection with the Agents report, the Board of Revenue strictly warned the forest officers not to affect in day-to-day life of tribals.¹⁴⁰ The Madras Governments careful policy towards tribals should however be seen in

¹³⁸ Annual Administrative Report of the Forest Department in Madras Presidency, Government Press, Madras, 1889, p.6.

¹³⁹ R.B. Corwell, *Working Plan for the Godavari Lower Division, 1934-44*, Government Press, Madras, 1937, p.28.

¹⁴⁰ Letter from the Conservator of Forest, Northern Circle, 30th August 1893, No.632, in Board of Revenue Proceedings, L/R, Miscellaneous, 30th August, 1893, F. No. 633.

the context of frequent revolts against the colonial states prevention in their areas right from the mid 19th century.¹⁴¹

One of the important means of livelihoods for the tribals in the Andhra region was the *Podu* cultivation practiced for subsistence needs. The Shifting cultivation in the Northern Circars districts was called the *Podu*. It was practiced by the tribals in some parts of the Eastern Ghats. There were two important areas where this system was practiced: one, in Godavari region and another was in Vizagaptnam and Ganjam Districts. It was reported by the officials from Vizagaptnam that important forest tracts were cleared away by shifting cultivation. The *Podu* therefore, was depicted as the main factor responsible for destruction of forests on mountain slopes. In 1873, Colonel Beddome, the Conservator of Forests, reported that “This plateau (3000 feet plateau) is wonderfully well weaved by numerous streams, when all have their rise in the woods which more or less clothe all the small raising hills. These latter were all, at a very recent date, covered with fine forests, but this is fast disappearing owing to the ruinous system of hill cultivation. Numerous hills have already been turned into bare rocky waste, or only clothed with a few date bushes or the protest description of stunted growth, and if the present way of cultivation is allowed to go on unrestricted the entire trees disappear of all woodlands, is only a question time.”¹⁴² However, the ideas on forest conservation for protecting surface drainage and rainfall were questioned by revenue officials in the Madras Presidency.

Prior to reservation of forests, the tribals enjoyed considerable freedom to undertake *podu* cultivation in hill areas. It was restricted by government after reservation of hills of exploitation of timber. In order to acquire forests silviculture operations, the Forest department imposed ban on the *podu* in reserve forests. For instance, in Andhra region, strict regulations were imposed on the practice of *podu* cultivation within the 100 yards of reserved forests in 1905. It was argued by the

¹⁴¹ V.N.V.K Sastry and K.V Subba Reddy, *Evolution of Scheduled Areas and Changes in Muttadari System in Andhra Area*, Tribal Cultural Research and Training Institute, Hyderabad, 1991.

¹⁴² *Andhra Pradesh District Gazetteer, Vizagaptnam, Vol.I*, First published in 1907, and republished in Hyderabad, 1994, pp.117-118.

forest officials that “not only were large areas of forest destroyed for *Podu*, escape fire from the burnt clearings swept over many square miles of forest every year. Therefore, for conservancy to be through, it was necessary to exclude all *podu* cultivation from the limits of the reserved forests, and to curtail the privilege of the hill tribes within rich areas.”¹⁴³ Thus, regulation on *podu* cultivation was justified with the arguments that unless it should be prohibited forest conservancy was not possible. However, in some cases, the forest department allowed tribals to live in reserved forest and practice *podu* cultivation on the condition that they should work for the forest department.¹⁴⁴ In other words, wherever, the colonial state required labour in the interior forests they followed a policy of attracting tribal labour. Thus, the Madras Government followed a cautious policy and tried to use their labour in the forest conservation operations.

The nationalist intelligentsia also responded to *podu* issue. As M.V. Ramamurthi, the president of the Parvathipuram Taluk Congress Committee pointed out that: “Most of the hillmen live on what is known as *podu* or shifting cultivation. Dry crops are raised and yield is very much less than the plain dry lands. Herein they come into conflict with forest authorities of the Zamindars. These slopes or tracts on hill sides thrown back on other sources of living as coolies, etc; this is a problem which requires careful consideration.”¹⁴⁵ Thus, the *podu* cultivation, which was an important livelihood means of tribals, was restricted by the forest department.

Unlike the plain peasants, the tribals could not articulate their grievances in the form of written petitions. They demonstrated the discontent on forest rules in the form of burning reserved forests and attacking subordinate forest staff. For instance, reserve forests in Dhankonda and Ssnivaram in Vizagaptnam districts were burnt by tribals in opposition to regulations imposed by government on *podu* cultivation.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ R.B. Corwell, 1937, op.cit, p.28.

¹⁴⁴ The Board of Revenue Proceedings, L/R, Dated: 30th November, 1906, F. No. 1265.

¹⁴⁵ A. Ayappan, 1948, op.cit, pp.15.

¹⁴⁶ Annual Administrative Report of the Forest Department in Madras Presidency, Government Press, Madras, 1908- 1909 p.11.

These sporadic protests some times brought concessions to hill man. The tribals living nearby the reserved forests of Dharakonda and Sanivaram in Vizagapatnam district were given concessions for grazing and *podu*.¹⁴⁷ These concessions were often cancelled under the pretext of disloyalty of tribals to the forest department. The concessions granted to tribes in Ganjam district were cancelled under the pretext of disloyalty of tribes to the forest department.¹⁴⁸

In spite of government concessions, tribals continued to violate the forest rules, which had restricted their means of livelihood. For instance, in Vizagapatnam district, 3000 areas of reserve forests were damaged by tribals in Kondasantha village by putting fire.¹⁴⁹ The *Khond* tribals live in Ganjam and Vizagapatnam district frequently engaged in burning reserved forests for practicing *podu* and thus created problems to the Forest Department. Thus, the legitimacy of the forest rules was questioned by the tribals by violation of rules and damaging reserved forests. It was this necessary that compelled the colonial state to incorporate the contestations of people for accession forests, if not as a general policy, at least as case-by-case basis. For instance, in Godavari district, the *Koya* and *Konda Reddy* tribals were given concessions for accessing forests on the condition that they should help forest officials' in fire tracing and other conservation operations in reserved forests.¹⁵⁰ The major problem that created hostile relations between the Forest department and tribals was the harassment by forest guards and watchers, for such interference undermined the tribals in day-to-day life. The Madras government took cognizance of this problem and cautioned the District collectors to minimize the harassment by lower forest officials.¹⁵¹ Thus, the exploitation of forest resources for market needs and

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, p.14.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 1912-1913, p.8.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 1914-1915, p.8.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 1908- 1909, p.33.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 1912-1913, p.21.

imposition of restrictions on tribals' access to forests generated discontent on government machinery among tribals in the Andhra agency areas. This discontent expressed during the Non-Co-operation movement under the leadership of Alluri Sitarama Raju.

The rebellion that took place under the leadership of Alluri Sitaram Raju in tribal agency areas gave massive shake to the British government. In the course of the rebellion, tribals have attacked the police stations that considered as the symbols of the state authority and damaged the prestige of British government to a considerable extent. This situation compelled the colonial state to follow a careful policy in taming tribals. .

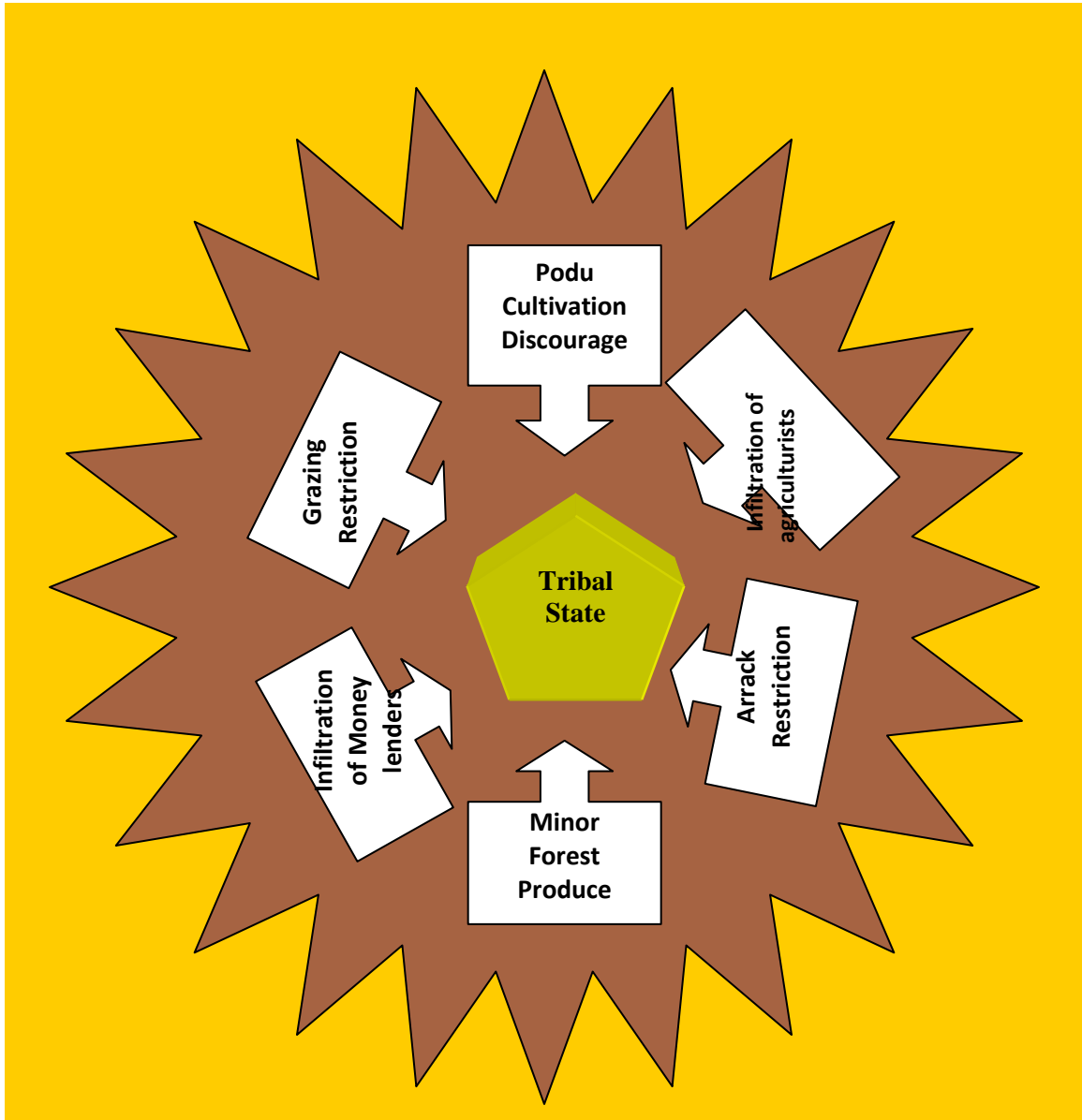
The colonial forest policies implemented in the tribal areas had initiated far-reaching changes. The colonial state tried to convert tribals into cheap labour force to be employed in the reserve forests. As the new pattern of work which was unfamiliar to tribals they resisted the initiatives by the forest department. At the same time, the forest department imposed strict restraints on *podu* cultivation, which was an important source for livelihood. Therefore, tribals on the one hand, lost their traditional livelihood source and on the other, became cheap labour employed by the Forest department and plain based merchants. Thus, the colonial forest policies deprived the livelihoods of tribals and exposed the tribal areas to wider exploitation both by the government machinery and plain based merchants.

The prolonged debate on the forest legislation in the Madras Presidency represents an example on how the formulation process of the forest policies was carried out in colonial India and how the colonial state acquired the monopolistic control over the forest resources in spite of differences within the bureaucratic structure on the one hand and imperial and provincial government on the other. An important fact here is that the colonial forest policies have evolved out of a diversified contestation within the colonial bureaucratic structure. The prolonged disagreement between the government of India and Madras on one hand, and differences between the Forest and Revenue department on the other, influenced the nature of the debates and discourse on the forest policies in the Madras Presidency. Finally however, it was

the interests of the colonial state characterized by a system of state monopoly over forests that have prevailed upon.

To surmise from the above discussion, the British colonial rule and its implication in India is one of the vast historical phenomena in Indian history. The colonial rule marked a significant point especially in the tribes of Madras Presidency where they were lived under economical as well as cultural deprivation. In order to fully exploit the economic and cultural resources of the country, the British rulers introduced various institutional structures and policies in Indian provinces as shown below.

**Restrictions on Forest use by the tribes and
Inroads of Non-Tribals into Forest Lands**



(Diagram:VI.2)

As shown above, in addressing the demand for more intimate knowledge and exploitation of Indian forest resources, British policy makers evolved an elaborate administrative structure, a stringent legal code, and a body of scientific practice incorporated in the form of Forest Laws. These formulations culturally alienated the indigenous societies. The edifice of state forestry was erected on the foundations of

law, bureaucratic structures, and scientific knowledge that excluded contiguous village communities from forests in two ways. First, physical access was restricted. Second, the use value of the forest for subsistence was minimized by altering species composition and reducing biological diversity. Forest conservation was meant to conceal the real considerations of the British Empire's need for raw materials and to justify the expropriation of forests from "traditional" forest users in order to more fully exploit the forests. The forest resource base compelled the colonial state to formulate administrative and legal interventions for the management of the forests in the Madras Presidency through policy device. It was in this context that the legal ideas and debates on the forest legislation were pronounced in the Madras Presidency.

Chapter-VII

Impact of the British Policies and Tribal Social Formation in Andhra

Land as a unit of thought can have several meanings. It is an area to be owned and used for agricultural purposes or as an area over which one wields political power. To the extent that it serves the biological imperative within a subsistence economy, it may be viewed as merely an area to be owned and used for agricultural purposes. But to the extent it crosses the boundaries of subsistence economy and enters the area of surplus generation, it begins to be viewed as a tool for acquiring political power and control.¹ From the political and economic point of view it involves access to resources, control over people and social relationships. The powerful non-tribals by virtue of their social, economic, and political advantage exercise power and control over the poor tribals as seen in the acquisition of their lands thereby depriving them of their every source of livelihood. In a sense, the entire phenomenon of the alienation of tribal land by non-tribals may be viewed as a conflict between two opposing forces. For the former it is a struggle for power and maintenance of the status quo and for the latter it is a struggle for their very survival.²

The indigenous people are blamed or accused for not being concerned about the environment, because the colonial rulers thought that the open forests showed greater degradation than reserved forests. Before the advent of state control and commercialization of forests, there is no evidence that an environmental problem existed; it was only the appropriation of large areas by the state and the commercialization of forestry that created environmental problems. It created problems by forcing the local communities to meet their needs from smaller and smaller areas.

¹ Philip Viegas, 'Land control and Tribal for Survival', *Social Action*, Vol.37, 1987, p.326.

² Ibid.

In the tribal areas, in the absence of private ownership and accumulated wealth, the distinctions of rich and poor did not arise. It also limited the degree of socio-economic differentiation between the Muttadar and the subjects who formed part and parcel of the tribal belt. Further we all know, that their ideology, philosophy and worldview nurtured in the forest interiors, created in them a strong psychological and real fear of intrusion. Geography of the region helped in strengthening such views and in maintaining the tribal in relative isolation from the plains.³

This isolation was shattered progressively throughout the 19th century with the establishment of British control over that region. The dictates of colonial control and interest gradually necessitated more and more direct intervention and control of the tribal world, the forests. This intervention, total, unlike previous intrusions from the plains, brought in its wake new forms of exploitation, forms against which the tribals struggled all through the 19th century.

The non-tribals exploit the tribals, but this is not done on a racial base, but as man-to-man for personal advantages. The tribals of Andhra in general and particularly in the coastal agency areas live both in plains as well as in the hills and the jungles. While many tribes of the plains are nomadic, landless, primitive those in the agency areas have their lands alienated, meager properties heavily mortgaged. And they are the worst among the exploited sections of the society. The outside forces may comprise of different sections of the ruling classes. In those areas where food gathering or food cultivation from forests is the primary mode of living for tribals and state intervening either through its direct control or by through others, has denied the traditional mode of living for the tribals.

It was out of necessity that the British had undertaken the extensive land survey and settlement activity in the country during the early half of the 19th century.⁴ After

³ To the British, such traditional practices appeared totally inconsistent as it affected their forest resources, Neeladri Bhattacharya, 'Colonial State and Agrarian Society', cited in S. Bhattacharya and Romila Thapar (Ed.), *Situating Indian History* for S Gopal OUP, Delhi, 1986, p.121.

⁴ Amalendu Guha, 'The Ideology of Survey and Settlement', *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol. XVII, No.40, October 9, 1982, p.1651.

1850's the British colonial interest had necessitated the transformation of the Indian society into a reproductive one, resulting in setting up of the required infrastructure such as the establishment of massive railway lines which would link the north and south India and facilitate easy transportation of raw material. The British forest policy was formulated in the interests, not only of conservation but more importantly to ensure full sized timber to meet the needs of Government, cantonments and for shipyards, steamers and railways.⁵

The British policy of conservation of forest and restriction of *podu* to certain areas was intended to prevent destruction of forest wealth. The irony is that tribals had their own conservation methods. In fact, the land used by the tribals for agriculture was not thick or wooded jungle. Moreover, such forestland in the course of 10 years or so would reproduce itself. Ramachandra Guha has rightly observed that the important of forests in hill life had given rise to a natural system of conservancy that took different forms, either by drawing a protective ring around the forest or by dedicating hill slopes to deities and preserving trees and slopes around such places.⁶

By the end of the 19th century large quantities of gallnuts were sent to London and Hamburg, Waz to London, Colombo, Calcutta and Bombay, Horns to London and France, Skins to Madras, etc.,⁷ By 1904-05 the total revenue from the forests amounted to nearly Rs.2 Lakhs from the sale of bamboo, timber, minor forest produce, firewood, charcoal, from grazing trees and the sale of grass for fodder.⁸ These statistics have been cited here only to emphasize that the British Forest Policy and intervention in the tribal areas or lands was to facilitate the tapping of the rich natural resources of this region. Further, teakwood, black wood, rosewood, sandalwood, redwood, Railway fuel and

⁵ Bhattacharya, S and Thaper, R, (ed.), Op.cit. p.118.

⁶ Ramachandra Guha, 'Forest and Social Protest in British Kumaun 1893-1921' in Ranajit Guha (ed) *Subaltern Studies, Writings on South Asian History and Society*, No.4, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985, p.16.

⁷ F.R.Hemingway, *Godavari District Gazetteer*, Madras, 1907, p.101.

⁸ Ibid.

firewood, and other forest produce, anything that was available was fully exploited by the English.⁹

However, it is not to deny the existence of tribal grievances over their day-to-day interactions with natives from the plains. For instance, there exist economic enslavement of the hill peasants by the *Sowcars*, exploitation by private businessmen and forest contractors, alienation of lands by bigger ryots from plains and so on. But the problems associated with the plains people had not threatened the very existence of the hill peasants' subsistence economy, as the colonial forest policy did.

The establishment of British rule brought about a revolution in the nature and extent of the contact of the plains people with the tribals. The spread of the non-indigenous moneylender is indeed a peculiar feature of Indian economic history in the 19th century whose connection with the British occupation and the British Judicial system cannot be disputed. With the transition to money economy and the establishment of novel concepts regarding land rights and judicial procedure, the more enterprising moneylenders who did not belong to the same society came in large numbers. And along with him in the Agency areas, there was naturally found migrating classes who were keen to sense these opportunities and intended to exploit them.¹⁰

During the colonial rule, reservation of forests for commercial exploitation actually meant introduction of state capitalism. The forests constituted the most important source of livelihood for the bulk of the people residing in the forest tracts. While the control of the forests was taken over by the state, nothing was done to improve the level of their productive technology or to provide other sources of livelihood to them. It was, therefore, natural that the people developed apathy if not a hostile attitude towards the forest administration.¹¹

⁹ Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency during the year 1876-77, Government Press, Madras, 1877, p.116.

¹⁰ G.S. Ghurye, op.cit.,1943, p.49.

¹¹ Imperial Gazetteer of India, the Indian Empire, Vol. III, 1877, p.67.

The stoppage of the one and easy source of some of their needs naturally irritated and depressed the people. But forest policy followed by British administration in India created hardships not only to the so-called tribes but also to the settled villages. Villages along with foot of the hills which are forested depended upon forest produce for their complete economy. The forests adjoining the village were the natural grazing grounds for the cattle of the agriculturists and for firewood. The manure of the village's fields was provided by the cow-dung, dry-leaves and dry-wood provided from the forests. Introduction of forest conservancy meant, severe curtailment, if not entire stoppage of such customary rights, on the exercise of which depended agricultural prosperity.

There was also much resentment against the lower level forest officials, who acted as a new kind of police force. They demanded gifts and services during their tours and threatened to lodge cases of violation of forest laws unless the people paid them money.¹² During the late 19th century this resentment fed in to several major uprisings against the British by forest dwellers, such as the Rampa and Gudem revolts.

Thus, the rules and regulations regarding forest further strengthened the hands of the exploiters. Police only added miseries to the already humiliated tribals. However, the ultimate result of formal Governmental interaction facilitated further exploitation of the tribal world in the name of development, a process that set the stage for repeated and protracted tribal struggles to preserve their moral economy of the forest eco-system. During the British rule, large-scale plunder of the natural forests for the administrative services had been actively carried. Ramchandra Guha¹³ has investigated in detail into this dimension and concludes that the British forest policy always had indiscriminately subjugated the forests to its objectives of revenue and profit. Therefore, the destruction of public resources like forest began during the colonial regime itself.

¹² Richard Tucker, 'Forest Management and Imperial Politics: Thana District, Bombay, 1823-1887', *Indian Economic and Social Historical Review*, 1980, p.290.

¹³ Ramchandra Guha, 'Forestry in British and Post-British India, A Historical Analysis', *Economic and Political Weekly*, October 27, 1983, p.1883.

Further the new land tenure system deprived the tribal population of their communal rights over forests and lands forcing those to give up many vital activities which were customary rights and essential for day-to-day living. They were brought under a new bourgeois legal, property and administrative setup which uprooted them from their own patterns of justice based on a different set of norms and values. Further British policies encouraged an influx of zamindars, their representatives, forest contractors, traders, moneylenders, administrators, and educationists (predominantly missionaries) into the tribal areas. These sections of people exploited the tribals with the political and judicial backing of the colonial government. Vast sections of Tribal people were transformed into landless labourers and bonded serfs who were economically and socially dependent on the various categories of people described above. This had a devastating effect on every aspect of tribal life. This was an all India process operating unevenly.

The Agency Areas of Andhra

The then Government of India devoted its attention to the pressing problems of the Agency areas and passed the Acts of 1839 and 1874. Under these Acts, the District collectors of the 3 Districts were appointed Agents to the Governor for the purpose of administration of the Agency areas. It continued up to 1920.¹⁴

The entire Agency area is populated mostly by the hill men of different castes and creeds with few plains men who have settled down mainly for agricultural and trade purposes. On the basis of their socio-economic organization the tribals of Andhra may be classified into food gatherers, pastorals, shifting cultivators and settled cultivators.¹⁵ Besides, these main occupations they were also engaged in secondary occupations. Among the tribals in Andhra, savaras, konds, koyas and hill reddiees are shifting cultivators. The numerically largest groups inhabiting both plains and agency areas are

¹⁴ C.D.Maclean, op.cit, 1887, p.69.

¹⁵ U.S.Rama Mani, *Tribal Economy, Problems and Prospects*, Allahabad, 1988, p.34.

Gonds, koya, Hill Reddies, Savaras, Bagatas, Valmikis, Yerukalas and Yanadid, as well as smaller groups like Ronas, Kathunaikas etc.¹⁶

These people are very much attached to their hilly dwellings and are average to quit their old ancestral home unless through fear of epidemic or from superstitious belief in evil spirits. Certain castes and Tribes are confined to certain taluks.

The hill men living in these mountainous and thickly wooded tracts have been in the enjoyment of certain privileges from time immemorial. The Government of the country had to recognize these privileges and rules had to be framed for the management of the forest in these agency tracts so as not to infringe these rights enjoyed by the hill men. He is, therefore, content with what mother earth yields. In olden days he was eating roots, fruits, honey, tamarind and barks of some trees chiefly the Sago palm and leaves and drank the arrack from the palmyra and the Tapioca growing in his wild abode. Gradually, with the increasing population this source of food was found inadequate and he turned round to the mother earth and here thick forests which he cut down and burnt to the extent required to raise his field crops. On the newly cleared lands he reaped good crops and every year fresh land was cleared to raise new crops. Forests involved in this process are called *podu* or shifting cultivation.

***Podu* Cultivation**

The type of agriculture adopted by the agency tribes in shifting cultivation is known as *podu*. There are two forms of *podu*, the ordinary or *chilaka podu* and hill or *konda podu*. The former is on flat ground and is cultivated for several years, while the later is on hill slopes and is generally abandoned after one or two years. The land is ploughed once or twice in *chilaka podu* before and after sowing, but not at all in *konda podus*.

Like many primitive economic activities *podu* cultivation had been going on for ages in the agencies. A small tract of land on the slope of a hill would be cleared at the

¹⁶V. Raghavaiah. , *Tribal Struggles in India*, Nellore, 1971, p.23.

end of the year. The dead wood was burnt in March and April and a shed served as manure for the crops and with the advent of rains a variety of cholam known as *khonda-jonna*, Maize, *Ragi* and Samai was generally sown. Occasionally a small crop would be obtained for the same place during the second year, but more often the spot would be abandoned till the jungle grew high enough to tempt the *podu* cutter once again. In fact, burning down a part of the forest and then hoeing and sowing the seeds in the soil fertilized by the ashes required very little investment and fairly good crops were ensured for their subsistence.¹⁷

Then agency tribals, particularly the Koyas, hill Reddies, Savaras and Khonds and others, would not do *podu* beyond the minimum required for their personal needs.¹⁸ Before the colonial Government took over the management of major as well as minor forest produce of private lands, the hill peasants enjoyed considerable freedom to undertake *podu* in any part of the jungle. This freedom, however, was effectively restricted once the hill was opened for Government exploitation.¹⁹ Many forests were declared reserves and *podu* cultivation was banned. This threatened the very existence of the tribal society and brought the hill peasants into many open clashes with the colonial rulers. Moreover, the sudden declaration of *podu* and other related economic activities are illegal by the colonial Government brought the bulk of the tribals face to face with the immediate prospect of starvation, since the area available under cultivation as well as unreserved forest for *podu* was very small.²⁰

Collection of Minor Forest Produce

Another form of livelihood for tribesmen was the collection of minor forest produce. Before the intrusion of the colonial authority, throughout the hill regions, the

¹⁷ A.Aiyappan, 1948, p.15.

¹⁸ Ibid, p 16.

¹⁹ A.V.Ramana Rao, *Economic Development of Andhra Pradesh- 1766-1957*, Bombay, 1958., pp.323-324.

²⁰ F.R.Hemingway, op.cit,1907, p.95.

tribes enjoyed absolute freedom to carry on this specific economic activity. In a bid to integrate the hill economy into the framework of colonial economy (after late 19th century) the forest department completely usurped the right of collecting even the minor forest produce. The grip of the forest department was further tightened from the beginning of the 20th century, for the collection of minor forest produce was not done entirely either by the forest department directly or the by contractors under the supervision of the colonial government. In some places, no doubt the forest department retained the seigniorage system but the rates were fixed by the forest department.

Further attributing the backwardness of agency areas to toddy drinking, the government imposed tax on it and simultaneously issued licenses to Abkari contractors to open toddy shops in hills, where the tribals had now to purchase toddy. Until 1872 the hill men, in common with other inhabitants of the Madras presidency, were permitted to draw toddy for domestic consumption without a license under the provision of section 28, Act III of 1804. This provision was annulled in 1872 as the government felt that this exemption was being abused to the detriment of its Abkari revenue. Certain areas were however, exempted, including the agency tracts of Ganjam and Vizagapatam and Bhadrachalam and Rekapalli when they were transferred from the central provinces to the Godavari agency in 1874.²¹

System of Labour

The experience of peasants in the agency areas produced an awareness of the illegitimacy of British authority. The annihilation of the traditional *podu* cultivation, the usurpation of their customary rights and forest produce like collection of minor forest produce, the imposition of increasing burdensome systems of unpaid or underpaid service and forced labour under *vetti* by the British government were the major factors which generated and ultimately strengthened the consciousness of the illegitimacy of the colonial rule in the hills. Neither was there alternative arrangements for *podu* cultivation, nor was any concessions given to exploit the forest resource as a substitute for the loss of *podu*. On the other hand, the oppressive British forest policy and the rigid law enforcing

²¹ Ranajit Guha, 1982, op.cit, p.108.

mechanism were encountered by the tribals whenever they tried to go back to their old forms of living. Thus frustration, in fact, acted as a strong radiating stimulus for an action from below against the unjust and illegitimate British rule in course of time.²²

In some areas tribal resistance to the state's attempt to stop *Podu* often took a violent and confrontational form. This was especially so where commercialization of the forest was accompanied by the penetration of non-tribal landlords and money lenders who came to exercise a dominant influence on the indigenous population. Elwin himself, talking of the period disturbances among Saora tribal people of the Ganjam Agency identified them as emanating from sources. They are the exaction of plainsmen and the states attempt to check the cultivation.²³

These repeated protests had a significant impact on government policy. In some parts of Madras presidency, certain patches of land were set aside for tribal people to continue *podu*. Although the forest department would welcome the complete stoppage of *podu*, it was not done for the fear of futurist.²⁴ Elsewhere in the state was found a novel way of pursuing commercial forestry without further alienating tribal cultivators. This was the Taungya method of agro-silviculture developed in Burma in the 19th century, in which *podu* cultivators were allowed to grow food crops in the forest provided they grew timber trees alongside. This system made possible the establishment of the labour force necessary for forest work at a comparatively low cost and it is still widely in operation.

Over the most parts of India, the plough agriculturists were scarcely less affected by forest reservation than *podu* cultivators. For, they too depended on their natural habitat in a variety of ways. Since animal husbandry was valuable to cultivation, the forests were also prime sources of fodder in the form of grass and leaves. The forests also provided such concession as fuel, leaf manure and timber for construction and

²² A. Aiyappan, 1948, op.cit,p.19.

²³ Verrier Elwin, 'Saora Fitoris', *Man in India*, XXX, cited in Hardiman's book, p.271.

²⁴A. Aiyappan, 1948, op.cit 16-17.

agricultural implements.²⁵ Here too, state intervention or reservation enforced changes in the traditional pattern of resource utilization, even if these changes were not quite as radical as in the case of shifting cultivators. In areas dominated by cultivating proprietors, those affected by state forestry consisted primarily of middle of rich peasants, many of whom were grazers rather than agriculturists. On the other hand in tracts where tribal and low-caste communities, who supplemented their meager earnings with the extraction and sale of fuel, grass and other minor forest produce, were sharecroppers and tenants.

An example of the first form of deprivation comes from the Madras presidency. Several decades after forest reservation, villages had vivid memories of their traditional rights over the forest. A committee was formed to investigate the forest grievances were puzzled to find that villagers interpreted the term 'free-grazing' quite differently from the committee itself. While they prepared to pay a small fee, peasants understood 'free-grazing' to mean 'the right to graze all over the forest', that, the continuance of the territorial control that they formally enjoyed.²⁶ Thus the demand for grazing was accompanied by the demand for free fuel, timber and in effect for the abolition of all control and for the right to use or destroy the forest property of the state without any restriction whatever.

When the tribal protested, the Koyas and Reddis were permitted to hunt without restrictions. Further they were allowed to fish in rivers and ponds lying within the agency limits, because absolute restrictions on their freedom resulted in confrontation.

The hill men had been permitted to graze their cattle free in their entire agency as per G.O. No.1061, dated 18th September, 1885.²⁷ But in certain areas certain fees were

²⁵ D.Hardiman, "Farming in the Forest: The Danges, 1820-1940" in Hardiman D, and David Arnold (ed), *Subaltren Studies: Essays in Honour of Ranjit Guha*, Vol:I, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1994,p..275.

²⁶ Ramachandra Guha, 1990,op.cit, p.1884.

²⁷ Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency during the year 1885-1886, Government Press, Madras, 1886, p.114.

levied. For instance, in Rampa-chodavaram and Yellavaram cattle were charged grazing fees at *annas* 3 for cow unit and were permitted to enter the Rampa country at the cost of Rs.25/- to Rs.30/- for each pair of cattle for the period of 5 months. No goats were allowed to graze.

It will thus be seen that although some concessions were given in these agency tracts, several complaints were heard of the harassment caused by forest subordinates working in these agencies. It is probable because these forest subordinates come in closer contact with these hill men than subordinates of other departments, they were more disliked. This may be true to some extent but in many cases the treatment meted out to the hill men by forest subordinates was harsh and not tempered with mercy. Much depended on the way in which the forest act was administered in these agencies. The hill men welfare and indeed their survival depended on the sympathetic treatment meted out to them by the forest officials.

Grigson in his book on the Aborigines in the Central provinces strikes a note of warning in the following words, "So long therefore as it continued to be recognized firstly that the forests constitute a very valuable asset and are essential to the people of the plains and secondly that the asset can only be exploited and made available by the preservation, one might almost say, by the careful nursing of the forest tribes so long will it be possible for them to survive. Legislation means little to them. Mal-administration at the centre may not touch them. But unsympathetic and indifferent local officers and corrupt subordinates will be their ruin".

Besides the forest department, another major source of trouble was the police department, whose presence in the forests increased consequent to the framing of new forest policy and laws. The police force, constituted by Act XXIV of 1856 was in charge of a district under a Superintendent of Police. He was aided by an Assistant Superintendent of Police who had immediate control over the police over the agency. Police personnel mainly being non-aboriginals are recruited from the plains were in no way spokespersons or representatives of the tribals. In the early 1860s with the establishment of a provincial constabulary the government began to set up police stations

in hills, but left them without proper supervision. With this, the police had the opportunity to become even more openly corrupt and rapacious than in the plains. They extracted cash and kind arbitrarily from the tribals. The police also expected to be sheltered when they visited a village on duty, and expected presents at festivals. Though the hill men tolerated these demands of the police, they condemned the police alliance with the traders and with zamindars and their frequent interference in village affairs and arbitrary decisions.

Constables too contributed to the general harassment. Weekly markets were often closed for this reason. They insisted on being supplied with grain, fowls and sundries at quarter the rates as a privilege of the police.²⁸ The sale of opium was another area where the state and the trader-contractor collaborated to the detriment of the hill men. It drew them deeper into the plains based economy. Until 1870, there was no reference to opium taking into the hills. It began to be imported in larger quantities from Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh via Rajahmandry. Until 1884 opium in the Vizagapatam agency was a government monopoly, sold through licensed vendors.²⁹

The growth of rail and road communications in the long run hastened and made easy the plunder and subordination of the forests. The extension of the major railroad and irrigation systems was completed by the end of the 19th century. There was a steady expansion of both internal and external trade in agricultural products, since the late 19th century. Railways which started during this period hastened the process. By the late 1880's the Andhra Districts were linked to Madras, Bengal and Bombay and the neighbouring princely state of Hyderabad, by means of the Madras and Southern Maratha railway, Madras railways etc.³⁰ The Madras-Culcutta main line entered the Krishna district at Bezawada, one of the main junctions and continued across the East coast i.e.,

²⁸ 'Vivekavardhini' stated in March 1880, that the bad treatment of the people by the police subordinates was the cause of the Rampa Rebellion, cited in M. Venkatarangaiah (ed), *The freedom Struggle in A.P. volume-1, 1880-1905*, Hyderabad, 1965, p.81.

²⁹ Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency during the year 1884-1885, Government Press, Madras, 1885, p.96.

³⁰ Ibid, 1885, p.96.

coastal Andhra. Nizam's state railway also facilitated the export of delta produce to Hyderabad.³¹

Another important branch line was opened in 1893 which connected the two important ports of Andhra, namely Kakinada and Waltair. Further in 1893, a branch line was constructed to Bobbili and Salur. The Bengal-Nagpur line traversed from south to north of Vizagapatam and Ganzam districts linked them to Orissa and Bengal. The Bellary-Krishna line linked the districts of Bellary, Kurnool and Anantapur to coastal Andhra. This line was important, especially in times of scarcity, as it facilitated the import of food grains from the delta to the Deccan region.

Side by side, with the extension of railways in Andhra, went on the construction of roads (metalled and unmetalled). The Andhra districts were served by three different kinds of roads-provincial, districts and local. The grant trunk road, the metalled high way ran across all the coastal districts. It provided an outlay for the cotton of these districts. The provincial roads, connected by numerous feeder roads, played an important role in the export of commodities to other parts of India by land. The regional trade and commerce was mostly mediated by the local roads. However, by the turn of the century most of the Andhra districts were well connected internally. Further, the construction of roads received a great impetus during the famine works.

It may be said that the extension of roads was as rapid as that of railways and the road construction affected the village life of India rather more directly than railway constructions. The roads increased the importance of the weekly markets in the village economy and also the importance of local fairs. At the same time the expansion of railways made possible the distribution of foreign goods throughout the country with the help of these markets and fairs. The extension of roads helped to break down the self-sufficient nature of the village cultivation. Localization to a certain extent was now

³¹ Ibid, p.97.

possible at least among the adjacent groups of villages. Thus, this spread of communications, had a very large share in the breakup of the compact – character of the village community.³²

Predictably state intervention of forests sharply affected the subsistence activities of the forests communities, each of them numbering a few hundred and with population densities calculated at sq.miles for person rather than persons for sq.mile. The forest and game laws affected the tribals. For instance by making their hunting activities illegal and by questioning or even denying their existing monopoly over forest produce other than timber. The cumulative impact of commercial forestry and the more frequent contacts with outsiders that the opening out such areas brought about virtually crippled the tribals. As a result, in the south, the chenchus of Kurnool, almost in desperation, turned to banditry, frequently holding up pilgrims to the temple of Srisailam.³³ While the new laws restricted small-scale hunting by the tribal people, they facilitated more organized shikar expeditions by the British. From the mid 19th century there began a large scale slaughter of animals in which white shikaris at all levels from the viceroy down to the lower clerks of the British Indian army participated.³⁴

Preservation of resources on which the tribals relied for so many of their needs was in their own interest, and, as long as there was no interference by advanced population, the ecological balance was mutually well maintained.³⁵ But with the commercialization of the forest, the tribal freedom of exploitation of forest was restricted leading to loss of revenue on the part of tribals.

The incorporation of colonials by the western dominated global economy led to a radical transformation of the societies. Tribal society too could not escape from the clutches of colonial domination. While it paved the way for the tribal economy and

³² D.R.Gadgil, *The Industrial Revolution of India*, Delhi, 1971 p.135.

³³ Furer Haimendorf, 1943,op.cit, p.57.

³⁴ D.Hardiman, 1994,op.cit,p.267.

³⁵ Furer Haimendorf, 1943, op.cit, p.79.

brought the tribals under the colonial administration, it caused unforeseen hardships for the tribals.³⁶ The communal mode of production started breaking down with the recognition of private rights in land. The introduction of the legal system facilitated the alienation of the tribal land. Forest acts and other such acts and regulations denied the tribals their traditional right to forest produce. Police stations became the symbols of corruption and state terrorism, construction of railways hastened their miseries as more people came from outside to stake a claim on the forests. The more the tribals were exposed the more they felt insecure. Thus the British policy was a mixed blessing for breaking down the isolation of tribal people and bringing them into the main stream of life. For the tribals it meant a loss of autonomy and becoming a victim of more and more rapacious outsiders.

Further, the colonial economic policies during the 19th century destroyed the occupations of a number of castes. The salt policy of the government dictated by considerations of revenue was instrumental in destroying the trade of koravas, yerukulas, banjaras and lambadies. The governments forest policy prevented free grazing of the cattle owned by these groups (cattle was crucial in transporting the merchandise) and prevented them from collecting forest produce which they bartered for salt.³⁷

Around the last quarter of the 19th century, the increasing rate of crime against property induced the administration to adopt the concept of hereditary criminal, responsible for the large number of crimes in the countryside. The trading communities who were for a brief period classified as 'wandering tribes' were now put into this new category, which was a precursor to them being classified later as criminal tribes.³⁸ In 1871 Criminal Tribes Act was restricted in its application and extended only to certain provinces in north India. The trading communities of Madras presidency, the yerukulas,

³⁶ Eric Stocks, *Peasant and the Raj*, New Delhi, 1980, p.245.

³⁷ Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency during the year 1889-1890, Government Press, Madras, 1890, p.27.

³⁸ The Criminal Tribes Act in Madras Presidency: Implications for Itinerant Trading Communities, Meena Radha Krishna, I.E.S.H.R. volume-26, No.3 July-September, 1989, p.275.

koravas, banjaras and lambadies were declared criminal tribes in 1913 under the criminal tribes act of 1911.³⁹

There were a number of reasons why the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 was unacceptable to the Madras administration. The Inspector General of Police was firmly opposed to the declaration of itinerant communities as criminal tribes.⁴⁰ Several other objections were raised to deny the need for exceptional legislative restriction upon the itinerant trading communities in the presidency. These included

a] The impossibility of carrying out the proposed law honestly and efficiently with low paid police force. It was also pointed out that oppression and misuse of powers by the policy would follow.

b] The imposition of the proposed law in British territory, it was felt would lead to drive these communities into the native states and thus defeat that purpose of the legislation.⁴¹

The underlying reason was the fact that the Madras administration recognized the usefulness of these trading communities. They were practically the only means of trade in the interior regions. The interest to the government was the fact that they formed a channel for the distribution of salt, an important basis for revenue.

As mentioned earlier, from 1860's onwards in Madras presidency, these communities came to be described wandering tribes. The desirability of applying the provisions of the criminal tribes act in Madras presidency was considered again by the

³⁹ The Criminal Tribes Act In Madras Presidency: Implications for Itinerant Trading Communities, Meena Radha Krishna, I.E.S.H.R. volume-26, No.3 July-September, 1989, .p.269.

⁴⁰ Meena Radha Krishna,'The Criminal Tribes Act in Madras Presidency: Implications for Itinerant Trading Communities', Indian *Economic and Social Historical Review*, volume-26, No.3 July-September, 1989, p.271.

⁴¹ The Chief Secretary wrote a letter to Government, Dated: 19.5.1870, Judicial Department Dated 10th August, 1870, G.O.No.1071, Government of Madras, Madras, p.51.

Government. Towards the end of the 19th century the conclusion was drawn that it was better to wait for the recommendation of the police commission on the subject.⁴²

The important point to be reemphasized is that the wandering tribes of Madras presidency were grain and salt sellers. These people carried salt from coastal district to inland districts and bartered it for grain or forest produce. There is no doubt, that the official perception of these communities was changed as result of the fact that they had lost their traditional means of livelihood. A significant change in official thinking came in the first decade of the 20th century where there was a search for a more scientific explanation of crime in India. It was now asserted that it was the loss of livelihood during the 19th century which had led large number of people to lead the lives of criminals. Historical accounts to this affect showed the famine of 1877 to be a turning point for many communities. The new forest policy, competitive trade, spread of railways were also correctly identified by the administration, as having led to the loss of livelihood of many communities. However, these historical facts were used as evidence of the adoption of crime as a means of livelihood by entire communities, and made out a convincing case for the criminal tendencies of the members.

Further, there were many tribal groups who often refused to recognize the validity of the government claims and continued to cultivate at will, cutting trees and burning the forest floor. In this manner was created a whole new legal category of forest crimes. In some cases there was wanton destruction of the forest due to the feeling that if large tracts were allowed to grow the forest department would be the chief beneficiary.⁴³ In this manner the erstwhile protectors of the forest became its destroyers, alienated from the environment, in which they lived and loosing their sense of responsibility to the forest.⁴⁴

⁴² Judicial Department, .G.O.No.725, Dated: 20th May, 1903, Government of Madras, Madras, p.46.

⁴³ Ramachandra Guha, 1983, op.cit, p.1885.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 1989, op.cit,pp.5657.

The period under study that is from 1850 to 1900 saw the gradual improvement of communication in the agency areas. For instance, the construction of railway line and of motorable roads took place during this period. The British pursuing the policy of *laissez-faire*⁴⁵ started opening up the areas to raise its revenue and encouraged the influx of new settlers from neighboring districts and granted the *pattas*⁴⁶ to as much land as they could make arable⁴⁷ but the illiterate tribesmen, unfamiliar with the loss relating to land tenure, did not realize the necessity of possessing the *patta*. Later than the pressure on land grew because of the increasing infiltration of non-tribals, the hill people began to realize the value of such title deeds, But they were not well versed in dealing with revenue officers and their subordinates to compete successfully with new comers from more progressive areas. Consequently, they often failed to obtain recognition of their claims over the lands which they and their forefathers have been cultivating.

Ownership of tribal communities was now replaced by the *de jure* ownership of the state, which ultimately led to the exploitation of the forest resources with total disregard for the needs of the tribal economy. The commercialization of forest had another aspect, that is, the natural missed forest which provided the tribes with the raw materials for their household implements and bamboo for baskets, and such items of food as mangoes, tamarind, jack fruits, and edible berries, were now being replaced by plantations of teak, eucalyptus and various coniferous etc., all lucrative commercial crops.

Under colonialism the integration of the forests and its dwellers into the so-called “main stream” set in motion a process of deprivation, subordination and denudation which continues to this day.

⁴⁵ P. Ramaiah, *Tribal Economy of India, A Case Study of Koyas of A.P.*, New Delhi, 1981, p.11.

⁴⁶ Patta means the legal title deed entitling the right of ownership to land.

⁴⁷ Furer-Haimendorf, *The Gonds of Andhra Pradesh*, New Delhi, 1979, p.243.

Impact of Colonial Policy on Godavari Agency

The colonial government established its control on forests over a period and forest resources assumed growing importance for its revenue. The rights of Government over forest resources have been established in different ways in different tracts. The process of establishing its control, however, was a halted affair in the Rampa Country⁴⁸ due to the rebellious resistance by the tribals against this process. It is through the Muttadari system the State could make an entry into the region and establish its control over forests. But the reservation of the forests was carried out and the State established its control in a phased manner. This chapter is an attempt to explain the process of establishment of State control over forests of Rampa Country and the forest management systems that have been applied in this area during post-independence period.

Historically, three factors linked these hill-communities together in the single, albeit loosely articulated society. First, a largely self-sufficient economy based on shifting cultivation, second is the shared religious beliefs and third is an overarching Muttadari system.⁴⁹ Given for the present day one can observe that in the tribal society of the area that strong feelings of community are prevalent, particularly at the clan and village level, and are manifest in several tribal practices. It is a common practice to share the produce of certain trees in the village and to have mutual cooperation in the clearing of new land.

As long as the terrain was difficult to manage and the perception was that the country was wild and unproductive, the countrywide and the tribal inhabitations were largely left to their fate. Once the forests became a source of revenue, adding to the riches of the empire, the regulation and control for exploitation began. The tracts of Rampa were wild and unproductive and were difficult to manage on the part of the officers of the Government; they were left in the administration of their native chiefs.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ The area under Rampa Mansabdar was described as 'Rampa Country', which later formed as Rampa Chodavaram taluk of East Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh.

⁴⁹ David Arnold, 1982, op.cit, pp.82-142.

⁵⁰ Board of Revenue Proceedings, Dated: 24th Aug, 1848.

Thus the difficulties of external control over the hills obliged the Madras Government to follow the ancient expedient of indirect control through the Muttadari system. So the colonial administration considered Rampa Mansabdar as independent. The Circuit Committee wrote “the Mansabdar of Rampa belonged to the Circars of Rajahmundry, yet neither the company nor the Nizam’s government received any tribute from it, the reason being its poor resources”.⁵¹

After the acquisition of the Circars, the colonial administration introduced permanent settlement in 1802-03, which was applied to the plains of Madras Presidency. The hill tracts were left untouched. The thinly populated hill estates of Rampa, Totapalli and Jaddangi comprising 338, 103 and 88 villages respectively, were not brought under the permanent settlement.⁵² However, Totapalli and Jaddangi were soon brought under its fold, leaving Rampa, known as the Rampa country, as the only estate left untouched by the British. Apart from inaccessible geographical location, it was felt that Rampa’s influence was small, the revenue realized trifling and the value of its possession insignificant.⁵³ R.E. Master in his report on the Central and Eastern Deltas noted that the Rampa estate is particularly wild in jungles, though containing so many villages, yet, if half a dozen in the plains are expected, the revenue derived from them did not average more than two or three rupees a year from each. Moreover, no credible survey was possible in these parts due to the rugged and unhealthy terrain.⁵⁴ Consequently this poor estate did not receive much attention for long from the company government. The richness of the jungle tracts, however, did not eventually miss its eye. The Madras Government was alert in the establishment of rights over forest. As Finance Department of Indian Government stated “the Madras Government seem to be settling to work on very conscious but practical lines, the matter of prime importance being to take care that

⁵¹ The Circuit Committee Reports of the Accounts of the Zamindars , Dependent on Masulipatnam, Dated 15th Deember,1787, Madras, 1914

⁵²A. Henry Morris, *Descriptive and Historical Account of the Godavari District of the Madras Presidency*, Madras, 1878.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ J.Mangamma,1983,op.cit.

the wasteful privileges which the jungle tribes have long enjoyed shall not be too suddenly and ruthlessly curtailed.⁵⁵ The colonial government considered the Mansabdar as the key to penetration into the forests of Rampa and arrived at a settlement with the Mansabdar in 1813. As per the agreement, the six villages of adjacent plains were restored to the Mansabdar as *mokhasas* (land granted in return for services and loyalty to the Company) along with his ancestral possession in the hills. The Mansabdar also agreed to acknowledge “forever the sovereignty of the Company”. The agreement also stated that the Mansabdar should resign all rights of levy duties, seize and send out all suspicious persons from the agency, thieves and enemies of the State. The Muttadars should pay Rs.8750 per annum as *shist* (rent) to the Mansabdar. The ancestral land of the Mansabdar was restored free of all assessment, a privilege sanctioned by custom was strengthened and confirmed as a legal right by the Company government.⁵⁶ Though Mansabdar collected more *shist* from Muttadars, these arrangements continued peacefully till the Mansabdar died by leaving a daughter and an illegitimate son in 1835. The daughter was recognized by the Muttadars as their overlord. Soon after, her chastity was suspected by the Muttadars and she and her brother were driven out of the hills in 1839.⁵⁷

The colonial government used this discontentment of Muttadars and the intervention in local administration increased gradually but cautiously. The Board of Revenues ordered the Collector to take over the management of the Rampa under the Court of Wards during the minority of the young Mansabdar and said that on the expiry of his minority, an arrangement might be brought under consideration for its resumption and also made an agreement with Muttadars in 1841 by reducing the *shist* from Rs.8750 to Rs.1887. But the Muttadars refused to accept the young Munsabdar as their overlord. But after protracted negotiations of colonial administration, Muttadars accepted and

⁵⁵ Forest Revenue Proceedings- Note by the Finance Department, Government of Madras, Madras, 1908.

⁵⁶ Judicial Department, Dated: 1st November, 1881, Minutes by D.F Lar Maichael, Government of Madras, Madras.

⁵⁷ Proceedings of Revenue Department, No.61, Dated: 16th March 1845, Government of Madras, Madras.

agreed to perform their old police duties on the condition that their united *shist* should not exceed Rs.1000. (Table 3.2 for *mutta* wise details of *shist*).

Muttas wise Shist Collected at Different Time Periods by Mansabdar

(Godavari Agency)

Sl.No.	Name of the Mutta	Amount of Annual <i>shist</i> (in Rs.)		
		Before 1841	As per the agreement 1841	Fixed in 1841 agreement
1.	Bundapalli	250	121	40
2.	Beerampalli	250	141	40
3.	Musurumilli	150	94	40
4.	Velagapalli	150	94	40
5.	Choppakonda	30	17	20
6.	Geddada	--	-	20
7.	Bolugonda	-	-	40
8.	Tadipalli	-	-	40
9.	Emulakonda	200	113	25
10.	Nadumur	150	84	40
11.	Chiduguru	100	56	40
12.	Kundada	80	45	20
13.	Maredimilly	100	56	20

14.	Vadukuru	100	56	40
15.	Valamur	200	113	40
16.	Pamuleru	100	56	25
17.	Bodulur	180	101	40
18.	Kakuru	200	113	25
19.	Chavala	-	-	30
20.	Kota	600	339	260
21.	Pandraprolu	200	113	50
22.	Dorachintapalem	300	169	40
23.	Mohanapuram			25
24.	TOTAL	3340	1887	1000

Source: Sullivan Report, G.O.No.213, JDL dated 28th January 1881.

(Table:VII.1)

Other conditions of 1848 agreement⁵⁸ were:

- i). The Mansabdar should not levy any more levies than the *shist* under the pretence of *nazaranas*, *russums*, presents for marriages, etc., durbar and fines for the irregular acts in the community,
- ii). Agreed to adopt measures to prevent the people within the hills of the Rampa country or those from other places either secretly or openly from committing offences and to instruct Muttadars in question to prevent offenders,
- iii). He should suppress any resistance or disturbance by Muttadars and report the results to the government time to time,

⁵⁸ Agreement copy addressed to the District Collector, Dated: 22nd July 1848.

iv). He agreed that if he committed any irregularity the government could resume control over the estate.

But the Mansabdar had neither the vigor to control the Muttadars nor the sense to win their respect. Soon after he came to power, he broke his promises and began exaction. His persistent and oppressive exactions resulted in uprisings against his authority by Muttadars in 1858 and 1860. When these insurrections were so serious, the colonial government sent police to put them down and the Mansabdar was made to pay for their upkeep.⁵⁹ The police force too contributed to the discontentment among the tribals. They not only helped the Mansabdar in annexing *muttas* and assisted in introducing new toddy rules but also oppressed the tribals on their own account. The government neither warned the Mansabdar nor protected the tribals, forgetting in a sense that it was responsible for the 1848 agreement.⁶⁰ By 1879, he annexed nine *muttas* and doubled the *shist*. He imposed taxes even on fruit trees. He not only annexed *muttas* but also removed the hereditary *muttas*, and leased to *Vysas*, non-tribals of the plains⁶¹. The important consequence was that, to meet the taxes imposed by the Mansabdar, the Muttadars leased the forests of their concerned area to non-tribals.

⁵⁹ Seshagiri Rao, *Note on Rampa Agency, East Godavari District*, Printed by the Superintendent, Government Press, Madras, 1931.

⁶⁰ Reddy Prasad Reddy, *Tribals in Revolt: A Study of Rampa Uprising of 1879-80*, Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation, Department of History, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, 1987.

⁶¹ The Muttadar of Birampally was disposed in 1869. The Mansabdar kept three villages of ten villages in the *mutta* for his own profit and in 1873 leased the other seven for Rs.40 a year to Pragulapati Virayya a Komati of the plains. He realized about Rs.300 a year from the villages as rent as against Rs.40 fixed in 1848 agreement. In addition he collected produce of two tamarind trees in each village.

Year wise Muttas Annexed and Shist Collected By Mansabdar

(Godavari Agency)

Sl. No.	Name of the Mutta	Year of Annexed	Shist as per the agreement 1848 (in Rs)	Shist collected (in Rs)	Difference (in Rs)
1.	Bandapalli	1849	40	363	323
2.	Choppakonda	1849	20	116	96
3.	Bolugonda	1867	40	302	262
4.	Tadipalli	1870	40	105	65
5.	Nedunur	1870	40	130	90
6.	Dorachintalapalem	1870	40	190	150
7.	Chindugur	1872	40	38	-2
8.	Vedukur	1873	40	121	81
9.	Pamuler	1874	25	35	10

Source: Sullivan Report, G.O. No.213, JDL dated 28th January 1881.

(Table:VII.2)

Besides these, colonial government applied Abkari Act of 1864⁶² to the agency area of Rampa in 1872 and also brought the Rampa country under the First Scheduled of

⁶² The Abkari revenue consisted of taxes derived from arrack, toddy, foreign liquor and hemp-drugs. The government imposed taxes on toddy drawn from the sago palm and palmyra trees, which was the favoured drink of the tribals. The rules require that the village headman or Muttadar should take out a license and supply to tribals. But in practice, licenses were issued to Abkari contractors to open toddy shops in the hills. In 1875 a separate toddy form was granted for three years at the rate of Rs.11000 per annum. To this large outlay the renter demanded from Rampa Muttadars a tax, *chigurupannu*, fixed according to the number of trees tapped in each village. But in 1878 it was again auctioned for Rs.9, 210 a year more than in 1875. See for more details in V.N.V.K Sastry and, K.V Subba Reddy, *Evolution of Scheduled Areas and Changes in Muttadari System in Andhra Area*, Tribal Cultural Research and Training Institute, Hyderabad, 1991.

Act XIV of 1874 without establishing separate administration. As a result, people from the plains entered into the agency tracts as traders and forest contractors. The intervention of colonial government through the Acts, heavy taxes, police force, which resulted in entry of traders and contractors of plains, affected the tribals as well as the authority of Muttadars.

Additional Tax Imposed on Fruit Trees by the Mansabdar on the Muttadars

Sl. No.	Name of the Mutta	Fruit Tax
1.	Beerampali	90
2.	Musurumilly	100
3.	Valagapalii	100
4.	Geddada	72
5.	Tudipalli	100
6.	Vemulakonda	50
7.	Nadumur	90
8.	Chidugur	20
9.	Kundada	68
10.	Maredimilly	60
11.	Vadukur	80
12.	Valmur	60
13.	Pamuler	30
14.	Bodulur	70
15.	Kakur	60

16.	Chevvala	60
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Source: Sullivan Report, G.O. No.213, JDL dated 28th January 1881

(Table:VII.3)

With the introduction of the police, the traditional authority of the hereditary headman and of the village council was completely ignored. Prior to the introduction of the British law courts, the trials were not expensive to the tribals, but now it is not only expensive but also far from just.⁶³

When the Mansabdar started annexing the *muttas*, even the Muttadars' survival was threatened. The entry of plainsmen, who ignored their command, weakened Muttadars' authority. The tribals, who considered the Muttadar as their overlord, could not tolerate the erosion of his authority. The imposition of the toddy tax and other new and heavy taxes, interference by the government, indebtedness to traders, and corrupt police affected the tribals.

Tribal Social Formation

As observed, though the British recognized the richness of the forest of Rampa, and acted consciously in establishing the rights over forests as the privileges which the tribals have, should not be suddenly and ruthlessly curtailed. They attempted to establish control over the general administration of the area in the name of containing raids by tribals on plain villages, started tightening such control. In both 1813 and 1848 agreements, the Mansabdar was asked to control the intrusion and discourage raids. But the nature of tribal society and their implements do not support the official picture of the tribals as marauders.⁶⁴ Even if one assumes that they were raiders, it was not difficult to the plain people to repel such attacks with their superior arms. Hence there was no need for the British to extend their authority over the hills through Mansabdar to check the

⁶³ Reddy Prasad Reddy, 1987,op.cit.

⁶⁴V. Raghavaiah, *Nomads*, Swarajya Printing Works, Secunderabad, 1968.

incursion. In fact, the British, by giving rights over the occupied villages in the plains to the Mansabdar, made him their puppet and scapegoat at the time of crises in 1813.

The intervention of the British in the name of checking incursions can be seen as deliberate and determined attempts to establish control over forests.⁶⁵ At the same time the government never warned the Mansabdar against activities such as annexation of *muttas* and leasing the villages to non-tribals and imposition of additional taxes. This enabled traders from the plains to exploit the tribals under the cover of judicial and official machinery. This intrusion posed a grave danger to the self-sustaining subsistence lives of the tribals. The tribals, caught between different exploiters, finally resorted to Rampa rebellion in 1879. The Government appointed Sullivan to enquire into the causes for the Rampa rebellion and sought suggestive remedies.

Report of Sullivan on Tribal Resistance

Sullivan in his report identified four factors responsible for the rebellion. First, imposing new taxes and annexing some *muttas* by Mansabdar violating 1848 agreement. Second, the government did not rescue the Muttadars as per the contract of 1848 against the oppression of the Mansabdar. Third, introduction of the new Abkari regulation which prohibited the tribals from drawing toddy for domestic use, and unpopularity of the police who assisted the Mansabdar in enforcing the Abkari rules and extorted fowls, etc. And the last, the non-establishment of a separate administration for the agency, though the country was brought under the Schedule of Act XIV of 1874, and the operation of the ordinary law of the country. The agency men dreaded the plains, and the unscrupulous *sowcars*, taking advantage of this, harassed the tribals by getting ex-parte decrees against them.

Based on the Sullivan report some remedial measures were taken by the government:

⁶⁵ Reddy Prasad Reddy, 1987,op.cit.

- i) The Mansabdari tenure of Rampa and the *mokhasa* tenure of the villages in the plains were cancelled and the lowland villages were added to the assessed villages of the taluk in which they were situated.
- ii) A settlement was made with the Muttadars on the basis of the agreement of 1848. Those who were loyal but obliged to retire during the rebellion were, after enquiry into their claims, confirmed or reinstated in the possession of their lands under the conditions of the Muttadars were to pay annually to the Government a fixed rent and Akbari tax and to give assistance to the Government in maintaining law and order⁶⁶.
- iii) Rampa *mutta* which was under the enjoyment of the Mansabdar, was resumed by the government and given to Muttadar of Marrivada (3 villages) and to munsif of Chodavaram (10 villages) for their assistance to the government during the rebellion.
- iv) The licenses of the toddy renters were cancelled and the Rampa area was exempted from the toddy tax.
- v) The Scheduled Act XIV of 1874 was brought into force. The sub-Magistrate's station was transferred to Kothapalle and was invested with subordinate civil jurisdiction under the Government Agent, to look into the petty suits between tribals and traders.
- vi) The Sub-Magistrate was ordered to visit the area once in three months and the Agent was required to make visit to the *Muttas* once in a year (Judicial Department. No.109, 16th January, 1880).

The implementation of the recommendation seemed to have finally enabled the colonial government to reestablish the control.

It was not long before the colonial administrators started eyeing the rich forest resources of this area. Earlier they wrote-off the hill tracts of northern circars as virtually 'worthless' and merely as a source of danger to the adjacent plains but by the last decade of 19th century they realized that the virgin forest resources as an area of great

⁶⁶ A warning was added that if the Muttadar failed in his duties his *Mutta* was liable to be resumed.

economic potential. This section is an attempt to explain the process of establishing colonial control over forests and curtailing tribals' access to the forests of this region irrespective of the resistance from the tribals of this region.

As observed, before 1888 the merchants took leases of the forests from the Muttadars and engaged the tribals in felling operations. In 1888, the Conservator of Forests noted that, "the forest in the eastern part of the Godavari District will be worth very little if the whole of the Rampa country is to be worked by private contractors". Then the Agent of the Government of Godavari reported that the Muttadars were willing to make over the forests of the Government if a reduction was made in the *Kattubadi* (rent) and if they and their royts were allowed the privileges they now enjoyed, viz., to gather all forest produce, and to take timber they require for building and for agricultural purposes free of charge.

Accordingly, proposals were made in 1889 in which the Government desired to declare their right over the forest before taking up the question of reservation. But when they actually declared in 1890 that the Rampa forests were the property of the State, it was considered that it would be sufficient to notify that the Muttadars should not lease out the forest and there was no need to place the forest under the forest department.⁶⁷ They thought that it would be enough to control the exploitation of timber by regulating the transport and by levying revenue there on from outside Rampa, without taking recourse to Forest Act. A *thana* and check post was established outside Rampa for realizing revenue.⁶⁸ In 1892, the administration thought that no time should be lost in deciding what parts of the Rampa forest were to be permanently reserved and in making them off and stated that then alone it would be possible to restrict '*podu*' cultivation within defined limits and conserve and work the reserve forests in a proper way.⁶⁹ The Government observed that the question of forest protection should be handled with the

⁶⁷ Revenue Department, Go.Miss.No.181, Dated 3rd Feb, 1890, Government of Madras, Madras.

⁶⁸ Board of Revenue Proceedings, .No.13, Dated, 12th Jan, 1891, Government of Madras, Madras.

⁶⁹ Ibid, No.458, Dated, 23rd August 1892.

greatest caution, that the forests there were not being denuded to the same extent as those on the Ganjam hill slopes and that there was urgent need for measures of forest conservation. It was also strongly opposed in taking any steps towards restricting shifting cultivation. Further, it ordered that the Muttadar who derived considerable income from these forests should, out of equity and policy be compensated for the loss sustained by the virtue of the State assuming control over the forest, by the grant of permanent, annual allowances amounting to half of their net income from forests, calculated on the average of the last three years. The payment was made contingent on the Mokhasadars and Muttadars giving proper assistance to the officers of the Government in carrying out any forest regulations which it may decide to introduce. Twenty-seven of the 30 Muttadars in Rampa got forest compensation aggregating in all to Rs.3, 630 per annum.⁷⁰

In 1893, the Special Assistant Agent of Polavaram reported that the excessive reservation in Polavaram and Yellavaram had a disquieting effect on the population and Rampa was already being treated by the Forest Department as a reserved forest, and that Forest officials had been interfering with the felling of trees in Rampa itself. This led to a peremptory order from the Government excluding all forest officials from the agency pending enquiry on the matter. The investigation into the question of 'over reservation' was made and at the end of 1893 Forest Department was readmitted into the Agency, with the exception of Rampa. With regard to Rampa, they considered that no further orders were required except a permit for the forest officer to visit the country occasionally with the previous written permission of the Government agent or his assistant, in order to inspect and report on matters on which either of those officers required information.⁷¹

But during the absence of forest officials in the agency, the tribals of the riverside villages who depended on forest produce complained that they were unable to obtain permits for cutting of timber. They feared of prosecution if they attempt to cut without permits even though they were assured that they could do so freely. The absence of

⁷⁰ Ibid, G.O. No.1280 (for.No.323), Dated 21st December 1892,

⁷¹ Seshagiri Rao , 1931,op.cit.

forest officials also facilitated smuggling of Rampa produce and evasion of payment of revenue.⁷² In 1893, the Government appointed T. Arundel, the then Member of Board of Revenue to report on the arrangements for controlling the export of timber from Rampa and on the collection of revenue. He recommended that the extension of the Forest Act to Rampa for all the operations, and submitted draft rules for transport of timber by land and river there from. The Government accepted the proposals and approved the draft rules, but continued the order that no forest officer, except the conservator, should enter Rampa.⁷³

In 1912, the then conservator of forests, Lushington, inspected Rampa and brought to the notice of the Government some of the pernicious effects of the permit-system. In his description, “it is true that almost any where I went I heard abuses that were alleged to see occurring in Rampa and it stands to reason that as these forests are being heavily exploited and burned at the same time and have nothing done towards their protection or improvements, they must be rapidly deteriorating..... from what I heard the amount of produce brought out is only a little of what is actually cut; for there is no supervision over the felling and it is alleged that many trees are felled before one is selected there from, the cost of felling being infinitesimally small compared with the cost of carting”.⁷⁴

Then the Board asked F.A. Seager, the District Forest Officer, Lower Godavari to submit proposals for protection and improvements, which were accepted in 1914. The main features of his proposals were: “that an area of 300 square miles of ‘inaccessible forests’, were not to be subjected to exploitation or ‘*podu*’. The area should be surveyed and ‘*poduing*’ the area and in the remaining area of accessible, while allowing ‘*podu*’, uninterrupted felling were to be restricted and be brought under control: a). by localizing them every year, b). by raising the seigniorage rate by 50 percent, c), by employing a special land revenue staff to mark the trees selected for felling, and d). by paying the

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Board of Revenue Proceedings, GO.No.108, Dated: 10th Feb, 1894, Government of Madras, Madras.

⁷⁴ Quoted in Seshagiri Rao, 1931,op.cit.

Muttadars two *annas* for each tree felled as a reward for assisting in the prevention of felling of unmarked trees”.⁷⁵

The District Forest Officer selected 19 blocks of forest extending over 75 square miles, for reservation in `accessible forests' during three years period of 1914-15 to 1916-17. Only four of these were surveyed and reserved. These activities restricted the access of forest to the tribals and interfaced in the normal life of the tribals by restricting *podu* cultivation and other activities. Until then, throughout the hill region the tribals were enjoyed absolute freedom to undertake shifting cultivation in any part of the forest and to collect minor forest produce. The colonial government, especially from the beginning of the 20th century had forcibly usurped the right to the collection of the minor forest produce, which hitherto was enjoyed by the hill tribes. The collection of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) was done entirely either by the Forest Department or by the contractors under the supervision of colonial government. Tribals were not allowed to enter into the forests to collect MFP and graze their cattle freely and even tapping of toddy. While the scope for all traditional activities had been severely restricted, tribals turned as wage labourers of Forest Department and private contractors and they were paid low, however which became another system of ruthless exploitation.

During that period forest department was biggest employer of the tribals. They were employed for various forest operations, including road works, used to pay at lower rate, and frequently employed *vetti* (free labour) labour. Forest contractors were also big employers of tribal labour and Forest Department was expected to see that tribals got their fair wages which itself was paying low wages to the tribals.⁷⁶

Such a change in the attitude of the British is because of the emergence of hills and forests as a source of enormous gain and the willing to protect the traders, moneylenders and contractors who use the instruments to extract surplus. The State assumes growing authority with the spread of formal institution of the courts, police and

⁷⁵ Revenue Department (Forest), GO.No.140, Dated, 15th Jan, 1914, Government of Madras, Madras.

⁷⁶ Atluri Murali, 'Alluri Sitaramaraju and Manyam Rebellion of 1922-24' in *Social Scientist*, Vol: 131, April, 1984.

the expanding mobility provided by the roads. All these forces undermined the traditional economy and society⁷⁷. Restrictions on shifting cultivation, creation of reserves, increased axe tax, prevention of customary right to make toddy and collection of forest produce were the measures, which resulted in rebellion during 1922-24.

As reported by a correspondent of *Andhra Patrika*, a news paper from Kakinada, the reason for the revolt was that “the people of agency area are not allowed to move freely in the reserves. When they had gone they are not allowed either to get toddy or to cut down wood, the authorities would obstruct them and even subject them to punishment..... The people here are used to the drinking of *jeeluga* toddy and as heavy tax is levied on it, unable to bear their hunger, they must have revolted”.⁷⁸ The revolt was spread all over the agency area and continued up to 1924. Due to the revolt, the grievances of the tribals had acquired importance in the colonial administration and the process of reservation was halted until the outbreak of the rebellion.

After the 1922 rebellion the colonial government appointed Special Forest Officer to investigate the possibilities of reserving the Rampa forests, by locating the better forests, valuable species and extraction cost by road and river; the possibility and advisability of future reservation and management⁷⁹. But the government did not approve the recommendation of the Special Officer and suggested that each village should be given a definite area in which *podu* could be carried on with certain restriction. A Special Forest Officer should be appointed to carry out the work of demarcating the blocks to be reserved, and to advice the limits of forests to be reserved in the northern

⁷⁷ Narasimha Reddy, ‘Political Economy of State Property and the Commons: Forest of the Rampa Country of South India’, This paper presented at the Fifth Annual Common Property Conference on *Reinventing the Commons*, International association for the Study of Common Property, Bodo, Norway, dated 24-28, May, 1995

⁷⁸ Quoted in Mangamma ,1983,op.cit.

⁷⁹ The report recommended that the early survey and notification of the 15 blocks already selected and to select, survey and notify a further area to 225 square miles of good forests in ‘inaccessible area’, See for details Revenue Department(Forest), GO.No.140 , Dated,15th Jan, 1914, Government of Madras, Madras.

zone, which should work under the order of the Agent and ultimately that the reserves should be handed over to the District Forest Officer lower Godavari⁸⁰

Ultimately, the forest policy to be adopted in the Rampa country was defined by the Government in 1936.⁸¹ The prohibition against the entry of forest officers into Rampa was relaxed for Yellavaram division but the northern zone of the Chodavaram was closed to the forest officers below the rank of Extra Assistant Conservator of Forests without the permission of the Agent of the Government. It was decided that the Agent should make the classification of the special unreserved forests on the advice of the District Forest Officer and in consultation with the Muttadars. And the settlement was restarted and 22 blocks in the southern zone was declared under section 16 by 1942 covering the area of 63,231.5 hectares. The total reserved area during 1888-1942 was 122,389.51 hectares. Due to the prohibition on the entry of forest region only 3664.13 hectares were reserved in Ramapchodavaram area. The prohibition into the northern zone of Rampa was continued up to 1955.⁸²

In the process of reservation of forests the colonial government constructed roads in the hill tracts of Rampa. Construction of roads facilitated the entry of the market economy and commercialization of natural resources. These promoted markets in Yeleswaram, Gokavaram and Krishnadevipet and weekly market centres in principal hill villages like Chodavaram, Kota, Lamasingi and Addateegala. At these centres traders from the plains purchased tamarinds, gall-nuts, oranges, mangoes and other forest products and forwarded them to the main produce markets at Rajahmundry and Kakinada, from where they were exported even to London and Hamburg.⁸³ But by the

⁸⁰ By 1933, 15 blocks with an area of 15,400 ha. were constituted and the settlement was in progress in a further area of 51,526 ha., comprising 11 blocks. But it was found that the Rampa country was exempted from the operation of chapter II of the Madras Forest Act under Go.No.411 Revenue Department, Dated, 9th June 1894 and hence the notification of the blocks as reserved forest was null and void. All settlement work was stopped and the Special Forest Officer was withdrawn from Rampa. See for details Development (Mis) , GO.No.1101, Dated, 31st July, 1926, Government of Madras, Madras.

⁸¹ Development Department (Mis), GO.No.1490, Dated, 28th Aug, 1936, Government of Madras, Madras

⁸² Mis, GO.No.1227, Dated, 8th June, 1955, Government of Madras, Madras.

⁸³ Revenue Department, G.O No: 2221, Dated, 25th Sep, 1928, Government of Madras, Madras.

1920's the hills had become a part, albeit a very small part, of the international economy. On the other hand, large-scale commercial exploitation forest had begun.⁸⁴ This commercial penetration had not waited for the road building of the 1880's but it opened the rates to professional traders, moneylenders and contractors into this region.

**Range wise Reservation of Forests in Kakinda Division During
1882-1942 (in hectares)**

Year	Sudikonda	Kakinada	Gokavaram	Eleswaram	Addateegala	R.C.Varam	TOTAL
1888	-	4242.38	-	26403.87	-	-	30646.25
1890	-	149.37	-	-	-	-	149.37
1891	-	1311	-	11363.12	-	-	12675.10
1892	5468.70	-	-	-	-	-	5468.70
1895	3081.26	-	-	-	-	-	3081.26
1896	6938.54	-	-	-	-	-	6938.54
1898	-	3802.22	-	3361.79	-	-	7164.01
1899	-	-	-	14.57	-	-	14.57
1900	-	-	-	5711.32	-	-	5711.32
1905	-	-	-	1049.75	-	-	1049.75
1921	-	19434.83	-	-	-	-	19434.83
1941	-	-	9787.71	-	7652.26	3664.13	21104.41
1942	-	-	-	-	8951.40	-	8951.40
Total	15488.50	28940.78	9787.71	47904.42	16603.66	3664.13	122389.51

⁸⁴ David Arnold, 1982, op.cit, pp.82-142.

	(12.7)	(23.6)	(8.0)	(39.1)	(13.6)	(3.0)	(100)
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Source: Forest Working Plan, Kakinada Division 1990-2000

(Table:VII.4)

The traders used advance money to tribal in return for specified quantity of tamarinds to be delivered at the end of the harvest. Traditionally land was not a saleable commodity to tribals. When the tribes fail to repay debts more fertile and accessible land passed into the hands of traders, who either retained the tribal as tenant or leased the land to migrants from the plains. Besides this, contractors exploited the forests by offering between Rs.1000 to 1500 woodcutting fees to Muttadars. One of the most profound consequences of the intrusion of the trader and moneylender into the forest was the alienation of land.

The entry of the trader-moneylender and contractor introduced a new system of land use and labour in the place of *podu* and the traditional economy. The commercial exploitation of the forests and the extension of settled agriculture were alien to the tribals, which made them as either poor tenants or labourers for the forest contractors (Arnold 1982). State control advanced through the institutions of civil administration, such as courts, police, other government offices, etc. As State ownership gets consolidated and formalized and decision-making recedes farther away from the field, the special relationship of the tribals with forests is less appreciated. Their rights are viewed as a 'burden' on the forests and an impediment to forest management and the *de facto* and conventional command of the tribals over resources is completely denied.

One can observe that over the period, on one side Manasabdar who created a general belief that all his acts, had the approval of the government including the collection of excess rents harassed the tribals had the approval of the government. Government peons and police too began extracted cash and in kind as they liked and traders from the plains obtained decrees in the country courts against the tribal debtors. On the other side, the Forest Department and contractors got access to the remote areas, alienated them from their traditional livelihood and converted them into hired forest labour.

The Reserved Forests in Agency Areas

The introduction of Forest Act and the Technical management of the state Forests may be said to date from 1883 in which year the Act of 1882 (Madras Forest Act) came into force. The policy adopted was to conserve and as far as possible improve the forest, especially on mountain and hill slopes, where Forest growth can exert its greatest influence on local economic conditions and to manage them both as a source of revenue to Government and for the general benefit of the agricultural population.⁸⁵

The Chief event of the year 1882-83 relating to the forest was the coming into force of the Madras Forest Act 1882 on the 1st January 1883 and the amalgamation of the Jungle Conservancy Fund with the Forest Department which took place on the 18th December 1882. Two circles were formed, the Northern and the Southern and each under a conservator in 1883.⁸⁶ The conservators were made inspecting and consulting officers, with authority in the matters of finance and they themselves were placed under the Board of Revenue⁸⁷. The District Forest Officers were placed under the orders of collectors. The Northern circle consisted of the following districts. They were: 1. Ganjam; 2. Vizagapatam; 3. Godavari; 4. Krishna; 5. Nellore; 6. Cuddapah; 7. Kurnool; 8. Bellary; 9. Ananthapur; 10. Niligiris.

As regards the Forest reserves previous to the passing of the Forest Act, an area of 812 square miles in the northern circle was under management by the Forest Department or the Jungle Conservancy Fund, and it was from this area that the new reserved forests were selected.⁸⁸ Before the Madras Forest Act V of 1882, the Central Province Forests Rules were made applicable to the Madras Forest in 1874 with a four-fold classification of Forests. In the first, the felling of Teak was prohibited, in the second the varieties of Timber were to be cut with permission while the third were left for the cultivation by the hill tribes.

⁸⁵ G. T. Boag, *The Madras Presidency 1881-1931*, Madras, 1933, p.61.

⁸⁶ E.P. Stebbing, *Forests of India, Vol.II*, John Lane, London, 1922, p.437.

⁸⁷ Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency during the year 1882-1883, Government Press, Madras, 1883, p.27.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Among the three Agency areas, the best Forests were those in the Godavari Agency. The trade in Timber on the Godavari existed from the earliest times to the British period from 1786 onwards and continues till today⁸⁹, when the forest conservancy first began in 1874, the permit system was producing the highest revenue. In 1876-77 forests of 138 miles under conservancy were reserved. Birlu, the Deputy Conservator of Forests, reported unfavorably on these reserves. Brandis who was then the advisor to the Government of Madras on the future forest policy recommended the abolition of the forest conservancy without introducing even the Forest Act.

This constant neglect attracted the attention of the Secretary of the State for India in 1878 and he called for the vigorous action on the part of the Madras Government to consider whether there should be general conservancy of forest area under the operation of liberal enactments, (either) in the interests of the state/the people, than the formation of close reserves for fuel.⁹⁰ They did not come to any conclusion about these matters and made a beginning by sanctioning the closing of the existing reserves and the prevention of entry into them of cattle, sheep or goat for grazing purposes⁹¹.

I. Impact of forest administrative - From the British Perspective

The following is a chronological narrative of the development of the forest administrative and management systems in the agency areas, which give us a picture of the progressive intrusion and control of the forest tracts.

In Godavari agency the special assistant agent was made permanent under G.O. No.1903, dated 20th July, 1883. First he was in charge of the Bhadrachalam Taluk only. In 1883 he was given power to entertain complaints within the agency tracts of the Godavari District except the Juddangi *Mutta*⁹². The Toddy revenue of the hill tracts was

⁸⁹ F.R.Hemingway, 1907, p.95.

⁹⁰ Dr.Brandis Memorandum on the Demarcation of the Forests in the Madras Presidency, 1878, Madras, p.6.

⁹¹ Dr. Brandis Memorandum 1878, op.cit, p.6.

⁹² Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency during the year 1883-1884, Government Press, Madras, 1884, p.4.

given up and the arrack farm of each villages were leased out to the villages themselves, except in the villages of the Bhadrachalam Taluk, where it was sold by the contractors. Roads were extended both in the Bhadrachalam taluk and Rampa⁹³.

In the same year 18 miles road was constructed in the Rampa country. The land falling under the category 'reserved', was gradually extended. The Reserved Forests in 1882-83 of 812 sq. miles was raised in 1883-84 to 5, 27,360 acres or 824 sq. miles.

The most important additions to the proposed reserves were:

1. The Goomsur Taluk of Ganjam District.
2. The Krishna Forest and those in other Districts also.

The Sal Forests of Goomsur proved to be of much value. The selection of fuel and fodder reserves commenced in Ganjam and Vizagapatam⁹⁴.

There was only one plantation consisting of Teak trees in Ganjam. In Vizagapatan two plantations previously called Topes were placed under cultural operations⁹⁵ Free passes were granted for the removal of timber for building purposes and for agricultural purposes.

During 1884-85 the forest department was fully engaged in the work of selecting, demarcating, issuing notifications and generally carrying out the process necessary to the construction of reserved forests under the Act.⁹⁶ The opium farming system introduced in 1883-84 in the greater part of the presidency was extended during the year to the remaining districts. In the hill tracts of Ganjam, Vizagapatam and Godavari free licenses continued to be issued except in parts where the licenses were sold by auction. The contract for the supply of opium in the hill tracts was given to a native firm of Jaggayapet⁹⁷. In the Northern circle 4,596 acres were finally notified as reserved

⁹³ Ibid, p.8.

⁹⁴ Ibid, p.80.

⁹⁵ Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency during the year 1883-1884, Government Press, Madras, 1884, p.81.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 1884-1885, 1885, p.24.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 1883-1884, 1884, p.34.

forests⁹⁸. In Ganjam free grazing was allowed while in Godavari a charge was made in some or all of the forests.⁹⁹

In the year 1885-86 the forest act was extended to Bhadrachalam and proposals were made and approved for extending the present reserves¹⁰⁰. During the year 1885-86 under report the work of the forest department consisted mainly of the selection of forest for reservation and the settlement of boundaries and rights in reserve tracts. In Godavari, grazing in forest reserves was permitted on payment in certain tracts.¹⁰¹ As mentioned earlier after extending the forest act to Bhadrachalam and Rekapalli, by a notification, it increased the existing twelve reserves of 68.82 sq.miles to 28 reserves of 530 sq.miles¹⁰². Further the grazing tax in the Zamindari villages was abolished under orders of Government in January 1885. The forest area attempted to be protected from fire during the year was 3,69,561 acres of which 3,55,008 acres were actually reserved.

The forest divisions (10) in the Northern Circle correspond with the districts of the same name. They were subdivided into ranges and beats.¹⁰³

The Chief natural forests in the Agency areas are:

In Ganjam The large sal forests of Goomsur and the Molivihill in Berhampore. In Vizagapatam Forests of Golgonda hills in the south-west and of Palkonda in the north. In Godavari Forest of the upper Godavari in the Bhadrachalam and Rekapalli Taluks and the Lakkonda forests in Rajahmundry Taluk.¹⁰⁴

The Chief timber trees yielding revenue were sal in Ganjam, Sal and teak in Vizagapatam and Teak and Iron wood in Godavari. Besides, a large proportion of the

⁹⁸ Ibid, p.24.

⁹⁹ Ibid,p.80

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 1885-1886, 1886, p.8.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 1883-1884, 1884, p.25.

¹⁰² Ibid, p.10.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 1883-1884, 1884, p.89.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

revenue was also coming from minor forest produce such as Tangedu, Gallnuts, Soapnuts, Tamarind etc.

Grazing was allowed free in unreserved lands and village forests, but was liable to be taxed in reserved land and in reserved forests. The restrictions were, however, gradually introduced.¹⁰⁵

Further arrangements were being made in almost all the districts to supplement the natural growth of the forests by artificial planting and by sowing seeds of useful trees in blanks and badly stocked areas. Experiments with the seeds of Mahogany, Eucalyptus and Coniferous and Maples were also made with the hope of increasing revenue.¹⁰⁶ Revenue increased as progress was made with the opening of tracts and the construction of rest houses afforded ample facilities for traffic and inspection of forest work.¹⁰⁷

The area of the reserved forests under the forest act was increased during the year from 65,552 acres or 102 sq.miles to 3, 03,390 acres or 474 sq.miles.¹⁰⁸ And special rules were passed to regulate the transit of timber from the forests of Bhadrachalam and Rekapalli Taluks in the Godavari District.¹⁰⁹

The forest area attempted to be protected from the fire during the year was 7, 47,758 acres of which 6,50,064 acres were actually reserved.¹¹⁰

In Ganjam there was good reproduction of sal in the Kalimba reserve and at the Mozzagoda plantation teak seedlings were coming an well. In the Sarvasiddi forest in Vizagapatam, the growth of seedlings was encouraging¹¹¹. Free grants were extensively issued in Vizagapatam and Cuddapah and some 185 tons of timber were given away to ryots, whose houses had been burnt. The revenue in the past year had not been

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p.90.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p.91.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p.92.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 1886-1887, 1887, p.7.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p.24.

¹¹¹ Ibid, p.59.

commensurate with the largely increased expenditures, because larger expenditures was incurred in felling operations and in the demarcation and improvement of forests¹¹².

The areas of reserved forests in the northern circle rose to 625 sq.miles or by more than 30% as compared with the figure of the year preceding¹¹³. It was increased by 150 ½ sq.miles. Nearly 8,00,000 acres of forest tracts were protected from the fire during the dry season with varying success. A new ghat road between Koraput and Jeypure was begun, and a new road in Peddapuram agency in the Timmkapuram - Ramavaram road.¹¹⁴

The area of forests reserved under the act in northern circle rose from 625 sq.miles in 1887-88 to 631 sq.miles in 1889. Owing to the scarcity prevailing in Ganjam district some of the reserves in the district had to be opened to free grazing¹¹⁵. The year was an uneventful one in the Vizagapatam Agency; perhaps the main feature was the great increase of communication which took place between the uplands and the low country. This was largely due to the high prices of grain in the plains which drove many carts above the ghats in search of grain.¹¹⁶

The question of ownership of the Rampa forests was finally settled in February 1890 in favour of the Government¹¹⁷. In Bhadrachalam 4 forests had been finally notified as reserved. Forest reserves up to 12 were approved by the Government in the Peddapuram Agency and were demarcated.¹¹⁸ By 1889 the results of the forest management in the Andhra Districts showed a surplus of Rs.42,047/-.¹¹⁹ Though there

¹¹² Ibid, p.168.

¹¹³ Ibid, 1887-1888, 1888, p.20.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, pp.5-8.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 1888-1889, 1889, p.20.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p.8.

¹¹⁷ Ibid,1889-1890, 1890, p.8.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Board of Revenue Proceedings, No: 11, G.O.153A, Dated, 18th March, 1889, Government of Madras, Madras.

was a gradual increase from 1886-87 onwards in the administrative expenditure on forests in the northern circle still there were good surplus.

The area of forests reserved under the forest act in the northern circle including leased forests rose from 826 sq.miles to 1,839 sq.miles¹²⁰. In the Godavari forests, reserves of Coringa and Gollavaram yielding annually a revenue of rs.45,000 from 1887 to 1890 increased to Rs.75, from 1891 and 1892 onwards.

The tracts of the Godavari Agency were extended with the inclusion of 62 villages formerly forming part of the plains, and the whole was placed under the charge of special assistant agent.¹²¹ A third circle was formed comprising of 8 districts of which 3 districts belong to the northern circle and 5 to the southern circle. The Headquarters of the northern, central and southern circles were fixed respectively at Waltair, Madras and Coimbatore¹²². These circles were:

Northern Circle	Central Circle	Southern Circle
Ganjam	Cuddapah	South Canara
Vizagapatam	Nellore	Malabar
Godavari	Chinglepet	Nilgiris
Krishna	North Arcot	Coimbattoor
Kurnool	South Arcot	Madura
Bellary	Salem	

¹²⁰ Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency during the year 1890-1891, Government Press, Madras, 1891, p.21.

¹²¹ Ibid, 1891-1892, 1892, p.5.

¹²² Ibid, p.79.

Ananthapur	Trichinapally	Tinnevelly
	Tanjure	

(Table:VII.5)

The area of forests reserved under the Act rose from 5,112 sq.miles to 7,175 sq.miles. Grazing in forests and reserved lands was allowed free or on reduced rates.¹²³ Further, the development of trade between the agency and the plains was the most marked feature of the year 1891-92 in Vizagapatam¹²⁴. In Ganjam the Gullery-Rambha Road was completed during the year 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of the Jiruguppa-Ramdeopeta and Murmur-Tatlunka Roads in Godavari District were constructed.¹²⁵ During the year the Kansuloor bloc in the Godavari district was made into a reserve forest.¹²⁶ 10 acres in Godavari were newly planted with *casuarina*.

The area of the reserved forests rose from 7,175 sq.miles to 9,436 sq.miles. Progress was made in the selection of lands for reservation.¹²⁷ The first section of the East Coast Railway from Bezwada to Rajahmandry with the length of 93 miles was opened in the 20th February 1893. A further section of the East Coast Railway from Rajahmandry to Vizianagaram with a branch from Samalkot to Kakinada was also in progress.¹²⁸

Grazing fees were levied for the first times in Ganjam.¹²⁹ The decrease in timber extraction was mainly due to the fact that the jungles from which removals were made in former years were nearly exhausted. The falling of firewood was due to want of demand

¹²³ Ibid, p.22.

¹²⁴ Ibid, p.9.

¹²⁵ Ibid, p.82.

¹²⁶ Ibid, p.4.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 1892-1893, 1893, p.22.

¹²⁸ Ibid, p.27.

¹²⁹ Ibid, p.79.

from the public works department in Ganjam.¹³⁰ Large quantities of timber were felled by Rampa merchants for sale at Rajahmundry where it was brought on payment of seignorage. Minor forest produce consisted of tamarind, Gallnuts, Soapnuts, Jogileaves, marking nuts, honey and Tangedu bark. The hill men were professional collectors of produce for the middlemen and merchants in the towns who engaged them in their service and marketed the goods themselves.¹³¹

The railway between Bezwada and Rajahmundry was opened for goods and passenger traffic. Further from Godavari to Kakinada and from Samalkot to the Vizianagaram 171 miles link was opened for passengers and goods in August, 1893.¹³²

The area under reserved forests kept expanding, slowly but surely and most often in an undramatic manner. By 1893-94, the area of reserved forests rose from 9,436 sq.miles to 10,786 sq.miles.¹³³ The railway lines under construction were,

1. Vizianagaram to Cuttack, 2. Mayavaram to Muttupet,¹³⁴ both of them were 250 miles.

In Ganjam, the Government asserted its full rights over the forest in the Parlakimidi Maliahs, both against the Zamindar and the Bissoyis. A large quantity of timber in the Chokapad mutta was sold for use as sleepers in the railway.¹³⁵ The increase in the revenue occurs in all the circles, but chiefly in the northern circle, it was mainly due to

1. The large advance received from the East coast railway for the supply of sleepers in Ganjam.
2. The large demand for bamboos for sugar cane plantations in the Godavari area.¹³⁶

¹³⁰ Ibid, p.80.

¹³¹ Board of Revenue Proceedings, G.O.No.210, Dated, March 13th,1893, p.17.

¹³² Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency during the year 1892-1893, Government Press, Madras, 1893, p.141.

¹³³ Ibid, 1893-1894, 1894, p.20.

¹³⁴ Ibid, p.27.

¹³⁵ Ibid, p.10.

¹³⁶ Ibid, p.78.

The financial results of the forest in the northern circle by 1892-93 and 1893-94 continued to be good, leaving a surplus of Rs.2, 77,595. Further, wages rose to a noticeable extent in Ganjam and Bellary, this was due to the great demand for labour in the East coast Railway works.¹³⁷

The following year there was yet another increase in reserved forests from 10,786 sq.miles to 11,466 sq.miles,¹³⁸ This was mainly due to forest reservations in Yellavaram division. The area of reserved forests advanced from 11,466 sq.miles to 12,388 sq.miles.¹³⁹ By 1896 the reserved forests increased to 12,388 sq.miles. For the first time in this year the forest act was introduced in the Jeypore state in Vizagapatam district.¹⁴⁰

The limit of 300 acres or 1 sq.mile as the area adopted for each reserve in Madras by 1895 was considered not too small by the Government of India.¹⁴¹ This was due to the New Forest Policy of 1894. Under which reservation was limited ordinarily to areas of one sq.mile and above.¹⁴²

The following year there was a net addition of 750 sq.miles to the area of reserved forest making a total of 13,138 sq.miles.¹⁴³ This was because the forest of the Vizianagaram estate came for the first time under the operation of the Madras forest act V of 1882.¹⁴⁴ The increase in the areas of reserved forest occurred mainly in the district of Vizagapatam, Godavari and Kurnool.¹⁴⁵ No working plans were framed for the forest

¹³⁷ Ibid, p.19.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 1894-1895, 1895, p.19.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 1895, p.19.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 1895, p.8.

¹⁴¹ Board of Revenue Proceedings, G.O.No.261, Dated, 10th May, 1895, p.26.

¹⁴² Ibid, 1895-1896, 1896, p.19.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 1896-1897, 1897, p.6.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, p.9.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, p.65.

in the Ganjam, Vizagapatam. In Godavari District the only plan for the Coringa and Upputur Mangrove forest and the Narasapur plantations were prepared.¹⁴⁶

The special attention of all the Collectors was drawn to the instructions of the Government in the matter of safeguarding the interests of the *ryots* when making arrangements for the sale of forest produce and particularly against setting up prohibitive prices upon leaves required for the use of manure or upon small timber for domestic purpose.¹⁴⁷ Forest offences comprised injury by fire, unauthorized felling, illicit grazing and other offences. Most of these occurred in the Godavari District.¹⁴⁸ The year was unfavourable to natural reproduction, especially in the districts of the northern circle owing to drought and to the drainage in the reserves by cattle and grass cutters.¹⁴⁹

By 1896-97, the total percentage reserve area of forest in the Andhra districts, excluding the Zamindar and Inam Villages, was 12.53 in Ganjam 30.13 Vizagapatam and 24.51 in Godavari District.¹⁵⁰

The total area of reserved forests by 30th June 1898 amounted to 13,775 sq.miles, a net addition during the year being 637 sq.miles.¹⁵¹ There was a famine in Bhadrachalam and Polavaram division in the Godavari Agency. Gratuitous relief was given and advances were given to needy Koya *ryots*. On account of the distress and the stoppage of advances by Sowcars to Koyas, there were cases of looting in the Polavaram and Yellavaram division.¹⁵²

Enquiries were made as to whether and to what extent Zamindars and other proprietors had encroached upon lands reserved for communal purposes at the time of the permanent or the *Inam* settlement and as they showed that encroachments had been

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, p.67.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, p.64.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, p.67.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, p.68.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, p.217.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 1897-1898, 1898, p.24.

¹⁵² Ibid, p.6.

extensive in the past and liable to occur in the future, the Government decided to resort to legislation for the purpose of protecting such lands from encroachments by vesting them in local boards or municipal councils.¹⁵³

There was a net addition of 974 sq.miles of reserved forests during 1899-1900, which raised the total to 15,862 sq.miles on 30th June 1900.¹⁵⁴ In 1900-1901 the net addition was 727 sq.miles of reserved forests.¹⁵⁵ The privileges allowed by the rules under section 26 of the forest act were generally availed by the public. A list of trees which villages were prohibited from felling in unrestricted lands was sanctioned in Ganjam and for the Vizianagaram state forests.¹⁵⁶

From the above description it can be noted that in the last decade of the last century, there was much progress in the forest administration. In the Godavari district, Rekapalli, Bhadrachalam and Rampa were the chief agencies. Reservation work proceeded quickly. Forests in the Yellavaram division were reserved in 1893, while reservation of forests in Polavaram was delayed till 1899. The area of the other forests reserved in sq.miles came to 13 sq.miles in Amalapuram, 460 sq.miles in Bhadrachalam, 86 sq.miles in Kakinada, 72 sq.miles in Beddapuram, 111 sq.miles in Polavara, 34 sq.miles in Rajahmundry and 166 sq.miles in Yellavaram, in all 942 sq.miles.

Seigniorage on forest produce and grazing receipts were collected regularly. Timber was always, carried down the Godavari river while inspection *Tanas* were appointed to check the permits.¹⁵⁷ *Casuarina* plantation was started in about 85 acres while experiments with other foreign samples were not successful. Better class forest existed in Polavaram and Yellavaram. In Yellavaram, there were 47 sq.miles of good forests with a fairly large timber. The small timber was available in an area of 96 sq.miles. Rampa forests were not reserved and fuel was allowed on permits. Forests in

¹⁵³ Ibid, p.12.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 1899-1900, 1900, p.21.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 1900-1901, 1901, p.20.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, p.68.

¹⁵⁷ F.R. Hemingway, p.101.

Bhadrachalam were of 3 ranges. They were: 1. The Rekhapalli Range, 2. The Mavorigudemk Teak Range. 3. The Bhadrachalam Range.

The chief timber markets were Kakinada, Rajahmundry, Ellore, Narasapur, Ramachandrapuram and Amalapuram. Bulk of the revenue and forest produce came from Yellavaram and Rampa forests. Large quantity of *Nuxvomica* and gall nuts were sent to London and Hamburg, Wax to London, Colombo, Calcutta and Bombay, Horns to London, and France, Skins to Madras, Sikakai to Madras, Cuddalore, Tuticorin etc.¹⁵⁸

There was a steady increase in the reserved forests and the exploitation was carried on mainly by means of felling which was classified as clear or regenerated felling. The collection of general produce was leased to contractors, classified under 4 heads namely Timber, Fuel, Bamboo and Minor Forest produce. There was a rise of 38.9% in the yield of Bamboo which rose from 29, 95,58,554 cannes in 1900-01 to 31,92,17,618. This was due to the increase in the sugar cane cultivation in the Godavari.¹⁵⁹

The natural reproduction of the forest growth was quite good. Measures were taken to encourage shrub jungles in all districts. Further arrangements were made in several districts for the supply of forest produce to meet the wants of the people including permits for the sale and use of timber and firewood. In Ganjam most of the minor forest produce was left for the consumption of Khonds. In Vizagapatanam, the hillmen were allowed to collect and sell the produce to merchants in weekly markets.¹⁶⁰

Many people complained against the grazing fees, not so much against their imposition, but against the way in which they were collected. The local ryots nearest to any forest reserve were given priority for their cattle before the cattle of other villages were allowed to graze. This right was recognized by Government as early as 1895.¹⁶¹

Up to 1890 the Madras Forests were divided into three categories as 1. Reserved Forests 2. Protected Forest and 3. Unreserved Forests. After 1890 the division was into

¹⁵⁸ Cited in A.V. Ramana Rao, *Economic Development of Andhra Pradesh, 1766-1957*, Bombay, 1958, p.338.

¹⁵⁹ Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency during the year 1901-1902, Government Press, Madras, 1902, p.165.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, p.172.

¹⁶¹ Board Proceedings (Forest), Dated, 4th February, 1895, Government of Madras, Madras, p.69,

reserved and unreserved forests. Before this an effort was also made to constitute village forests about 1886.¹⁶² In Madras the while of the area brought under control was managed by the forest department. The Madras Government observed, “if it is desirable to protect any area at all it is necessary to reserve it absolutely” and the experiment of placing the management and control of grazing areas in the hands of the village communities had been tried already and failed.¹⁶³

Panchayat management of forest was tried twice and given up by 1894. The Government said “The Village Communities cannot be trusted to have the management and control of their grazing areas. The experiment has been tried in the past and has been proved that the grazing rights are often becoming objects of speculation on that, the produce itself rapidly deteriorated while the absence of control leads to the formation of factions in each village and the oppression of the party which happens to be the weakest”.¹⁶⁴ But the subsequent administration under the forest department too did not bring about any improvement except incurring colossal expenditure, wide spread discontent, annoyance and worry.

II. Impact of forest administration - From the Tribal Perspective

The history of tribal revolts and its recurrent features goes to confirm that the tribal groups during pre-colonial days lived in isolation. In the absence of transport and communication facility, it was not possible for the medieval rulers to take interest in tribal life. When the colonial rulers introduced the land revenue pattern in India they did not consider the existing regulations of the tribal population.

Tribal Insurgencies

The 18th and 19th century history of tribal areas of Andhra area was full of resistance movement against British government’s interference and exploitation through

¹⁶² Ibid, Dated, 21st January, 1886, Government of Madras, p.47.

¹⁶³ Board of Revenue Proceedings, G.O.No.889, Dated, 17th December, 1849, Government of Madras, Madras, p.63.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, G.O.No.844, 1890, Government of Madras, Madras,; Also see G.O.No.899, 1894, Government of Madras, Madras, p.97.

intermediary Zamindars. There was a general impression that the tribal areas of Madras Presidency were peaceful in this period and there were no movements in these areas. This impression gained acceptance because there were very few studies on this subject. Why did the tribals resist at all? What were the measures taken by British to pacify such movements? Whether the British were successful in their effort? Besides getting answers to these questions, the study also aims at building up record of academic value.

Tribal Insurgencies in Andhra: A Historical Outline

In this study, the tribal movements or disturbances can be studied under four phases in Agency areas of Andhra during colonialism. The British government introduced various measures for suppressing of rebellions as they introduce the concept of Agency for only the control of law and order in Agency Areas. The bases for the division of the tribal movements are the changes took place in the agency administration in Andhra. The each phase has its historical importance. These phases are as follows;

1. The First Phase: 1724-1784
2. The Second Phase: 1785-1835
3. The Third Phase: 1836-1857
4. The Fourth Phase: 1858-1919
5. The Fifth Phase: 1920- 1947

First Phase of Tribal Insurgencies (1724-1784)

The first phase of disturbances in tribal areas of Andhra was reported from 1724 to 1784. A very few sources are available for assessment of the nature of the tribal movements in agency areas of the Andhra in the first phase.

Hill Reddi Insurgencies (1724-1776)

In 1724 the Hill Reddis of Godavari district plundered Ellore and Nidadavole. They kept up desolator resistance against the forces sent to suppress them. When attacked, they dispersed only to reassemble in difficult passes and ravines and it was with

difficulty that tranquility was restored.¹⁶⁵ The reasons for such an action resorted to by Reddis are not known from the available records. It was continued up to 1776.

Savara and Khond Insurgencies (1767)

Similarly, during 1767, the Savaras, Khonds and other tribal people who live in hilly regions of Ganjam often made depredations into the plains and it was customary for the Zamindars to keep in their numerous Bissoyis to prevent the hill people from breaking into the country and plundering it. These Bissoyis had their forts and they were assigned lands in return for the services they had to render.¹⁶⁶ Here also the reasons for tribals plundering plains were not given.

In the absence of such information in both above cases, it appears as if the tribals in early periods indulged in plundering plains areas. But this may not be true considering the behavior and culture of tribals as exists even today. As such there must have been some other reasons like outsiders trying to exert undue influence, or interference, severe food problems, instigation by outsiders etc.

Second Phase of Tribal Insurgencies (1785-1835)

Insurgencies of the Zamindaries in Polavaram and Gutal (1785-1790)

Between 1785 and 1790, there were several disturbances in the Zamindaries of Polavaram and Gutal and in adjoining hills Godavari district which required the interference of military authorities before they could be repressed.¹⁶⁷ Most of the troublesome plains Zamindars lived in hilly tracts. The Zamindars of Polavaram, Gutala and Kothapalli belonged to such a category.¹⁶⁸ These Zamindars were also reported to be

¹⁶⁵ F.R. Hemingway, 1907, op.cit, p. 28.

¹⁶⁶ M. Venkatarangaiah, *The freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra)*, Vol: I, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, 1997, p.21

¹⁶⁷ Henry Morris, *A Descriptive and Historical Account of the Godavari District in the Presidency of Madras*, Trubner and Co. Ludgate Hill, London, 1878, p. 24.

¹⁶⁸ M. Venkatarangaiah, 1997, op.cit, p.38.

related to Munsabdar of Rampa who was another troublesome Zamindar in the Godavari district. The details of these disturbances are mentioned in the following.

In 1785, Dasu Reddi, the Polaygar of hill fort Nagavaram attacked and captured Gutala taking the younger Raja and his mother as prisoners. The British Government however has put down the insurgents and restored these places to their original owners. Three years later *i.e.*, in 1788, the tribute from Gutala to British fell into arrears and in the interest of better management of the estate, the British government placed this Zamindari under the control of Diwan of Polavaram this was resented by the mother of the young Raja and she staged *fituri* in 1789 with the help of some hill tribes. She was, however, defeated by the government troops sent against her and the Zamindari was handed over to her stepson Mangapati Devu, the Raja of Polavaram.

The next trouble rose in 1799 to 1800 from this Mangapati Devu and his brother, when the government ordered sequestration of his estate until the tribute and arrears that fell due were cleared. The Rajah had fled to Rampa where his relative was the Mansabdar. There, he took the help of Linga Reddi, a hill chief with number of Koya followers obviously with the cooperation of Mansabdars of Rampa and went on plundering several villages in Polavaram estate. The government military forces had to capture the fort of Polavaram and declare a reward of 10,000 for apprehension of Mangapati who by then escaped from Rampa country into Nizam's territories which were adjoining to these areas. From exile, he renewed attacks in 1800 A.D with the help of hill chief, Linga Reddi and it was only after Permanent Settlement in 1802 in the new revenue system, the period of revolts came to an end.¹⁶⁹

In the early 19th century there were a number of disturbances in the agency areas. There were many causes for the uprisings of tribals in agency areas. The main cause for the uprising was introduction of new revenue settlements. Even though the revenue administration of British did not percolate into tribal areas, the British slowly entered into tribal areas through Zamindars to raise their revenue. They had even ignored the

¹⁶⁹ M. Venkatarangaiah, 1997, *op.cit*, p.38.

misdeeds of Zamindars only to woo them. This had received adverse reactions as can be seen from happenings in Rampa.

The Problem in Rampa

The Rampa was once the chief place of a small Zamindar and this chief was having control over the whole Rampa country.¹⁷⁰ According Hemingway, the earliest records mentioned that the Zamindar also called as Munsabdar or Rajah of Rampa was an independent ruler. Here a doubt arises whether the zamindar of Rampa was a tribal or not? Because he had given for the following reasons:

(i). He was said to be relative of zamindas of Polavaram and Gotal who took shelter under him when the British military invaded Polavaram zamindar in 1799-1800 as already mentioned.

(ii). The tribal chiefs were referred to as Muttadars while the chief of Rampa was referred to as Munsabdar or Zamindar and Muttadars were his subordinates. The Munsabdars of Rampa, therefore, must be a non-tribal Zamindar like the non-tribal zamindars of Polvaram, Gotal etc.

Incursions of Mansabdar of Rampa

Between 1803 and 1813, Sri Rama Bhupathi Dev, Mansabdar (in old records, the words Munsabdar and Mansabdar were used for the same person) of Rampa was reported to have descended with armed force from the hills and took forceful possession of some villges in the plains.¹⁷¹ In order to make friendship with the Munsabdar, the British in 1813 handed over the possession of these villages as Mokhasas (free gift of villages) along with his ancestral possessions in the hills free of *Peshkash* (rent) on the condition that he maintained law and order in them. This Mansabdar died in 1835 leaving a daughter and an illegitimate son. The Muttadars recognized her as heir to the Mansabdar and she remained unmarried. But, in course of time, the Muttadars suspected her chastity

¹⁷⁰ F.R. Hemingway, 1907,op.cit, p.271

¹⁷¹ Agency Land Tenure and Administration, Collectorate, Kakinada, Not Dated.

and driven her out of the country. Therefore, the British had to keep the estate under Court of Wards from 1840 to 1848. Then in 1849, the Muttadars agreed to accept the illegitimate son of the late Munsabdar as Mansabdar. He was given the post of Mansabdar by the British on the recommendation of the tribal Muttadars and after a written agreement that he will protect the interests of Muttadars on payment of rent by the latter. He started confiscating *muttas* one by one. He was also oppressing the people, the details of which are given a little later.

Insurgencies in Anakapalli Estate in Vizagapatnam Agency (1832-1834)

It was around this time (1832-34), Jagannadha Raju of Anakapalli Estate in Visakhapatnam district committed depredations on villages with the help of Naganna Dora, the Diwan of Zamindar of Golukonda who was described as “a double faced scamp, who had long fomented rising against Government”.¹⁷² When the troops were sent against him after the arrival of George Russel, Member of Board of Revenue, he fled to Rampa in Godavari.¹⁷³ However, he was caught and hanged in 1834. Like the Polavaram case, this was also a case of non-tribal zamindar fomenting trouble in tribal areas to achieve his personal ends and Rampa seems to be hiding place to these zamindars.

Third Phase of Tribal Insurgencies (1836-1857)

The Gumsur War (1836)

In case of Malaiahs of Ganjam district, the Khonds and Savaras revolted against the interference of outsiders which was popularly known as Gumsur War. The highlands Ganjam district (Parlakhimidi Zamindari) of ten referred to as Malaiahs (Meaning Mountains) in the old records were inhabited by the aboriginal tribes, mainly the Khonds

¹⁷² M.Venkatarangaiah, 1997, op.cit, p.36.

¹⁷³ Full Report of George Russel Commission, 1832 to investigate causes for disturbances in “Vizayanagaram and Parlakhimidi Zamindariea of Ganjam” in selection from Records of Madras, No.XXIV-I, Government of Madras, Madras, 1956.

and Savaras. According to Mazumdar¹⁷⁴, an intimate and interdependent feudal relationship subsisted between the Oriya aristocracy and their tribal subjects. Secondly, the tribal chiefs have strong spirit of independence. The Oriya aristocracy received free service through the local Oriya headmen called *Patro*. Thus customary practice was known as *Bethi*. This unpaid service and free gifts which were originally tokens of tribal's regard and loyalty to Oriya elite to develop into symbols of elite's domination on their tribal subjects. This led to several disturbances.

While the Hindu Rajas performed the tribal rites and rituals, they also participated in social functions and festivals of tribals. Therefore, the problem of dealing with Oriya elite by British bore within it, the problem of dealing with their tribal subjects and vice-versa even though the tribals resented the exploitation of Oriya elite. For example, in 1836, a military campaign was waged against the disobedient Rajah of Gumsur, who was one of the oldest, hills Zamindar of Ganjam, belonging to Bhanja family. The British Government came into conflict with his tribal subjects (the Khonds) also because of this relationship. The British Government's hunt for the Raja sheltered by the tribals escaped into a full scale war against the tribesmen. The Gumsur war that broke out in 1836 has expedited the action on the part of the government.

Russels Report on Insurgencies

It was during this period that Russell, special commissioner was appointed to ascertain the causes of disturbances of 1832 in Vizagapatnam district and Parlakimidy Zamindari of Ganjam District.¹⁷⁵ In this report he observed that the imperfect manner in which the authority of the company had been established in these hilly tracts, with no place power or knowledge about the nature and geography, made it difficult for the government to given the country²⁸. he, therefore, said that a policy be adopted to suit the colonial interest both to add to the weight and influence of the local country and to remove as far as possible the existing causes of irrigation on the part of the hills

¹⁷⁴ P.K.Mishra., *Culture, Tribal History and Freedom Movement* (ed), Agam Kala Prakasham, Delhi, 1989, p.149

¹⁷⁵ Dubey, S.N, and Ratna Murdia, *Lamd Alienation and Restoration in Tribal Communities in India*, Himalya Publishing House, Bombay, pp.9-10

Zamindars arising from the unbending form of regulation procedure. He further suggested that these areas now exempted from the jurisdiction of the ordinary country and be placed exclusively under the collector of the district in whom should be vested the entire administration of civil and criminal justice that rules for his guidance be prescribed by order in council. In the following year, Sir Frederick Adam, Governor of Madras visited Circars and some hints were thrown out in his minute on the expediency of exempting the hill Zamindari from General Regulations.¹⁷⁶

The second report of Russel's was published in 1836 in which he suggested the need for removing the existing causes of irrigation on the part of hill Zamindars by exempting the areas from ordinary laws. He suggested for placing the areas exclusively under the collectors of the district in who should be vested the entire civil administration of government and also criminal justice. In this report he observed that the imperfect manner in which the authority of the company had been established in these hilly tracts, with no place power or knowledge about the nature and geography, made it difficult for the government to given the country. He, therefore, said that a policy be adopted to suit the colonial interest both to add to the weight and influence of the local country and to remove as far as possible the existing causes of irrigation on the part of the hills Zamindars arising from the unbending form of regulation procedure. He further suggested that these areas new exempted from the jurisdiction of the ordinary country and be placed exclusively under the collector of the district t in whom should be vested the entire ad ministration of civil and criminal justice that rules for his guidance be prescribed by order in council.

Meanwhile disturbances again started in 1839. This necessitated state intervention more cautiously. In these circumstances the government accepted Russell's proposals which formed the basis of the act XXIV of 1839, leading to the formation of Vizagapatam and Ganjam Agencies Act in 1839. It was an important Act for the administration of justice and collection of revenue in certain parts of the districts of Ganjam and Vizagaptnam.

¹⁷⁶ V.N.V.K. Sastry and K.V.Subba Reddy, *Evolution of Scheduled Areas and Changes in Muttadari System in Andhra Area*, Tribal Cultural Research and Training Institute, Hyderabad, 1991.

Golugonda Insurgencies (1845-1848)

The Golugonda Zamindar was given a Sanad by British during Permanent Settlement of 1802 fixing a '*Peshkash*' (rent) of 1000 rupees¹⁷⁷. In the year 1836, the incapacity of the Zamindar, Ananda Bhupati to administer the Zamindari has brought the estate to the verge of ruin. Therefore, to avoid further confusion, he was induced by the district officers to resign in favour of Jamma Devamma, the widow of his predecessor. This selection was highly distasteful to the hill Sardars(Muttadars) for two reasons, namely, i). They were not consulted and ii). The succession in earlier times was always through male members. The (Raani) queen was carried away to the jungles by the hillmen and she was murdered there. The Zamindar, Ananda Bhupathi was sentenced for life imprisonment by British government for abetting the Rani's murder.

In the year 1837, the Zamindari was put to public auction for arrears and was taken over by government for a sum/ of 100 rupees. Even though the Muttadars were not disturbed of their tenures, they felt that the extinction of their ancient Hindu chief had seriously lowered their own status as they were directly subjected to the surveillance of the Collector's native 'Amin' (smaller official). They united to rise against the government for the restoration of Zamindar to Bupathi family. In this process, they withheld payments of rents, barricaded the hills from all corners, and constantly plundered the plains villages with fire and sword. The tribal Chiefs had declared Chinna Bhupathi of 19 years as their Raja and for 3 years i.e, from 1845 to 1848; they successfully held the Zamindari in spite of military forces. Ultimately, the British had to yield to this and Chinna Bhupathi was assigned the Zamindari as a representative of the ancient Zamindar of Golugonda.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, p.34.

A few years later, disturbances broke out among the Savara of Parlakhimidi and also in the tribal areas of Ernagudem and Tadimalla taluks of Golugonda area for one more time while the exploitation of Mansabdar of Rampa continued unabated.

Insurgencies in Ernagudem and Tadimalla Taluks in Godabara District

These two disturbances occurred on account of personal enmity between two plains village headmen. However, the help rendered by the hill men when the British military marched into the hills was an important feature to be noted in these disturbances. Only a brief account of the incident was given hereunder only to show the help of tribals was taken even in petty quarrels between local plains chiefs.

One Korukonda Subba Reddi, headmen of Koruturu village in the upstream of Godavari River, wanted to obtain a rich widow in marriage for his son.¹⁷⁸ But, she became a concubine of one Sunkara Swamy, village Munsif (village officer who collects rents) of Buttayagudem which was nearly 40 kms southeast of Polavaram in the forest. In order to take revenge on Sunkara Swamy, a large body of Koya tribal followers were taken to carry her off force. When this could not be achieved, the Bhuttayagudem village was plundered. About 60 polices were sent from Rajahmundri by British government along with the Thasildar of Taluk to the plundered village. They took some tribals as prisoners. But their efforts to catch the culprits fell in vain as the hill men under the leadership of Subba Reddi armed with matchlocks and bows and arrows attacked the Thasildar and polices. They not only released the prisoners, but also carried off Sunkaraswamy to hills where he was murdered.

The point to be noted here was that the tribal chiefs and the tribal, who had close truthful relationship with plains Zamindars, helped them even in their family quarrels and has gone to the extent of attacking even British forces.

Insurgencies in Golugonda (1857-1858)

¹⁷⁸ Agency Land Tenure and Administration, Collectorate of Kakinada, Not Dated.

Once again in 1857 and 1858, disturbances broke out under leadership of Sanyasi Bhupati, nephew of Chinna Bhupati.¹⁷⁹ But this time the reasons were not known. Sanyasi Bhupati was sentenced to transportation for life but was detained as state prisoner at Vizagapatnam.

Fourth Phase of Tribal Insurgencies (1858-1919)

While this confusion was going on, the Andhra came under the rule of the Crown in 1858. The coincidence was that the resistance by the Muttadars of Rampa also came to the fore by 1858.

Insurgencies of Savaras (1864)

Two out breaks of hill Savara tribes occurred in the mountainous country lying between Gunupur and Peddakhimidi (Palakhimidi) in Ganjam district. The first occurred in July, 1864, when one of the hill chiefs of Puttasingi village was hastily and improperly arrested by an Inspector of Police. The villagers fell upon the police, murdered several of the party and rescued their chief. The Rajah of Jeypore and his Diwan have captured the actual murders and handed over to British. The Raja of Jeypore received some valuable presents from British government in acknowledgement of their service. Five out of fourteen prisoners were hanged while the remaining nine were sentenced to life imprisonment. Orders were also passed in 1865 to station a strong police guard at a central place in the Savara Hills. But this could not be established due to renewed resistance by the Savaras. Therefore, the government had to assemble larger police force and the Savaras were forced to accept the continued presence of the police force without much resistance.

Rampa Insurgency (1879)

Furer-Haimendorf points out these movements were defensive. Fore example, Santhal rebellion in Bihar, the Bhil Rebellion in Khandesh, and the Rampa Rebellion in

¹⁷⁹ V.N.V.K. Sastry and K.V.Subba Reddy, 1991, op.cit, p.37

East Godavari District, was the last resort of tribesmen driven to despair by the encroachment of outsiders on their land and economic resources... illegal extortion and oppressiveness of a corrupt police were the immediate causes of Rampa Rebellion in 1879. While under the previous administration shifting cultivation has been virtually unrestricted, the Madras government trebled the land revenue and excluded the tribal cultivators from certain areas.¹⁸⁰

The rebellion was suppressed in 1880. The various orders passed from time to time with the view of ameliorating the conditions of tribal population of the East-Godavari Agency were ultimately consolidated in legislation known as the Agency Tracts Interest and Land Transfer Act 1917. The regulations of this Act formed a mode for similar legislation in other tribal areas. The most important feature of this Act was that it restricted transfer of land from tribals to outsiders¹⁸¹.

In March, 1879 under the leadership of Thamman Dora, a Koya leader of the Bhupathi Palem, the tribals captured six police personal and severed their heads for sacrifice to the goddess.¹⁸² The reason for the rebellions as follows,

The depredations of Munsabdar of Rampa continued unabated. Discontentment was also growing among the hill tribals against the Mansabddar as the excise police of British, their police activities and exploitation by traders from plains etc. were occurring with his convenience. The Chopakonda hill *mutta* located eight miles South- West of Chodavaram was paying a quit rent of Rs. 21 and it contained six villages, in 1849, the Mansabdar of Rampa obtained possession of this *Mutta* on the ground that the Muttadar has disappear. In case of Borrachintalapalem *Mutta*, situated 14 miles northeast of Chodavaram, containing 14 villages, the Muttadar died without legitimate children in 1871. The Munsabadar of Rampa at once annexed this property. He has annexed several

¹⁸⁰ Furer-Haimendorf, *Tribes in India: The Struggle for Survival*, Oxford University Press, 1992, New Delhi, pp.36-37.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, p.38.

¹⁸² Manohara Rao, K, and D.L.Prasad, "Tribal Movements in Andhra Pradesh" ,in Singh, K,S,(Ed), *Tribal Movements in India*, Vol:II, Manohar, New Delhi, pp.353-372.

other Mutta like this. The Munsabdar has also arrogated his powers in collecting excise rents from the Muttadars.

The Akbari Act of 1864 was in operation in agency areas. In the Koya and Konda Reddi villages, the Mansabdar was allowed by British to make arrack for their own consumption on payment of nominal fee of two *annas* a head per annum for every male over 14 years of age. The rules require that the village headmen or Muttadar should take out a license and supply arrack to Koya and Konda Reddi residents. But in practice, no actual license was granted but rented to outsiders. The quit rent levied and collected by British from Muttadar also included the toddy tax (*Chingurupannu*). While the renters always pestered the Muttadars to pay *Chingurupannu* the Mansabdar levies additional tax called '*Modalupannu*' at the rate of one half or two thirds of *Chingurupannu*.¹⁸³

The police who had assisted Mansabdar in introducing the new toddy rules also suppressed the people adding some more problems to the tribals. By this time the traders from low country also started taking advantage of the simplicity of hill men. In satisfaction of a debt of Rs.5/- it was reported that cattle and produce worth Rs. 100/- had been carried off. They had also obtained ex-parte decree and confiscated the movable properties. Some times, the traders were reported to have brought some fair looking young men neatly dressed to look like officers. In the presence of these fake officers holding fake documents they took away the movable properties of tribals. The restiveness has reached a peak when six policemen captured by tribals at Rampa, was sacrificed before the Chef Shrine. The leaders were reported to have announced that rebellion was their only hope. These disturbances have also spread to the adjoining Ducharathi and Guditeru areas of Visakapatnam district and later on to adjoining Badrachalam areas in Nizam's Dominions.

In the beginning of the fight was very grim. The tribals adopted guerilla tactics and withdrew into the forests after attacking the company's troop. In the end of the 1879 the government of Madras dispatched six regiments of infantry, two companies of sappers and minors, a squadron of cavalry, one wing of infantry besides several hundreds

¹⁸³ F.R.Hemingway, 1907, op.cit, p. 273

of policemen. The tribals were ruthlessly suppressed and their opposition lasted till in Novemeber, 1880.¹⁸⁴

Insurgencies in Badrachalam Areas

These areas formed part of a large estate called Hussainbad Zamindari which was also known as Palvancha estate.¹⁸⁵ The Zamindari of Badarachalam for most of the time was also the Zamindar of Palvanch. This area was under Nizam's rule till it was transferred to Badrachalam area in 1860. The Badrachalma zamindar always kept up a troop of Rohillas who received very little payment for their services and permitted to live chiefly by looting the country around. The area was divided into ten *Samutus*, each of which contained around 25 Koya villages. Each *Samuthu* was headd by a Koa leader to supply for a month, free of charge, a hundred Koa tribals to carry burdens, fetch supplies etc., for the Rohillas. It was also reported that the Rohillas frequently stripped the Koya women, off their clothes and regarded them as objects of ridicule. The whole Koya country was at the mercy of Rohillas.

Rekapalli Estate which regarded part of Bhadrachalm zamindari was, however, in cetral province administered by British. Here traditional practice of shifting cultivation on hill slopes was allowed without any restriction. The assessment on it was only four *annas*, an axe. When these areas were transferred to Madras Government, the government of Madras, even though ruled by same British government levied thrice the amount as tax besides imposing fines on Koyas felling certain trees declared as reserved trees. Moreover, for manufacturing of arrack from *Ippu flower*, which is a traditional practice for tribals, tax had to be paid by them when these areas formed part of Madras Government. This led to lot of confusion and tribal became restless as the government's control on their way of life-increased manifold. The chief leaders of the rebellions were Chandraiah, Sardar Jamgam Pulikanta Sambaiah, Tammanna Dora and Ambul Reddy.

¹⁸⁴ V.Raghvaiah,, *Tribal Revolts*, Andhra Rastra Adimajati Sevak Sangham, Nellore, 1907 pp.30-40.

¹⁸⁵ Administrative Report on Agency, East Godavari District, District Collector, East Godavari District, 1956.

The above incidents given so far clearly shows that all the areas were burning with unrest and the hill people laid blame for all these injustices on government and Government Rules and Regulations and thought that the only remedy lies in rising against the authorities.¹⁸⁶ The British once again sent a large contingent of sepoy and military and posted them in the Northern and Eastern portions of Rampa Country to control disturbances.

Insurgencies in Vizagapatnam (1886-1899)

In 1886, several Konda Dora preists in Vizagapatnam district declared that hill Gods had directed a Fituri and they burnt and looted police station at Gudem and burnt rest house at Gudem and Chintapalli.¹⁸⁷ While they were proceeding towards Lammasingi, they were captured by police. Again in 1891, the house of a police constable who had shot Thagi Veeraiah Dora, was looted and at K. D. Peta, five constables were killed besides carrying away all the arms and ammunitions from police station. They also fore to the building before leaving the police.

Fifth Phase of Tribal Insurgencies (1920-1947)

In the British administered Palnadu area in Guntur district, the Chenchu and shepherded castes sent their cattle into reserve forest without paying grazing fee and proclaimed 'Swaraj'. This resulted in violence in 1922 at Veldurti and other places when three persons were killed in police firing. The Congress leaders like Konda Venkatappaiah took the lead in this movement.

Between 1922 and 1924, the tribals of Rampa country and adjoining Chintapalli areas in East Godavari and Visakhapatnam districts respectively rose against British under the leadership of Alluri Sitarama Raju. Eventually Raju was captured in an accidental encounter on May 6th, 1924 and was promptly reported shot while attempting

¹⁸⁶F.R. Hemingway, 1907, op.cit, p. 273

¹⁸⁷ List of Muttas Settled in Visakhapatnam Agency, Collectorate, Visakhpanam, 1918.

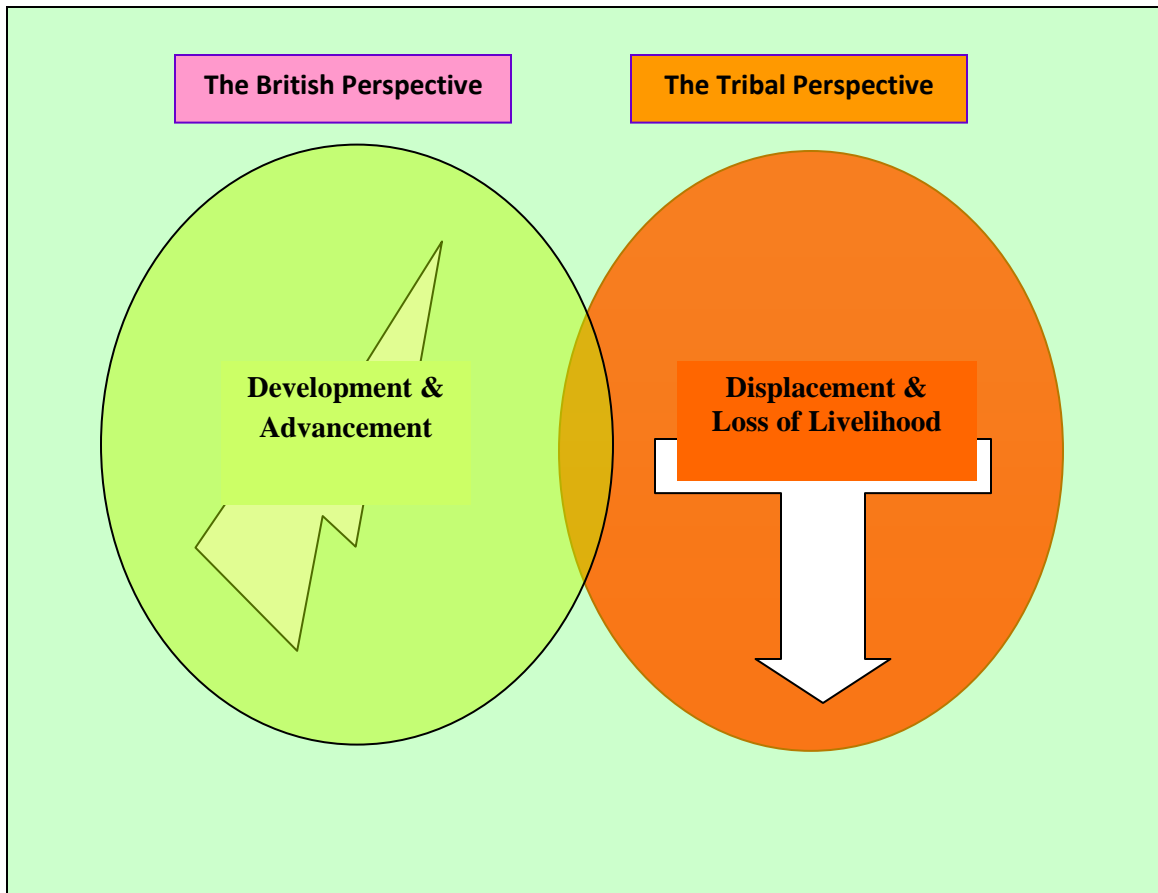
to run away.¹⁸⁸ While the book ' *Ryot Revolt in Manyam* ' published I 1922 by Ativada Grandha Mandali at Guntur described the rebellion as “ a class war”, attempts were made by Congress party to treat this movement as part of Indian independence movement. This was done in spite of the fact that many leaders of Congress did not agree with the violent methods adopted by Raju to achieve the goal. It was at this time the Agency Act of 1922 was promulgated which empowered the Agent to detain any person without any judicial proceedings.¹⁸⁹

The Impact of the British rule over the tribal lands and forestry can be viewed as a conflict between two opposing forces. For the British it is a struggle for power and maintenance of the statuesque and for the tribes it is a struggle for their very survival. The impact is studied from two perspectives; the British and the Tribal.

Impact from the perspectives: British and the Tribal

¹⁸⁸ Sumit Sarkar, “Primitive Rebellion and Modern Nationalism” in K.N.Panikkar ,(ed), *Nationalism and Left Movement in India*, Vikasa Publishing House, New Delhi,1980, p.1

¹⁸⁹ J. Mangamma, *Alluri Sita Rama Raju*, Andhra Pradesh State Archives, Hyderabad, 1983, p.iii.



(Diagram:VII.6)

For the British it is viewed as development in terms of conservation of forest resources and exploitation of forest wealth for infrastructural development such as railways, shipyards, and roads and buildings. In the process they encouraged outsiders from the plains to inhabit in the tribal villages for promoting settled agriculture. The tribals were discouraged from carrying out shifting cultivation. For them the British rule is displacement and loss of livelihood.

Having displaced from their native environs, the tribals resorted to revolts and insurgencies. However these revolts were all led by the non-tribals. Five phases in the tribal revolts are identified in this thesis:

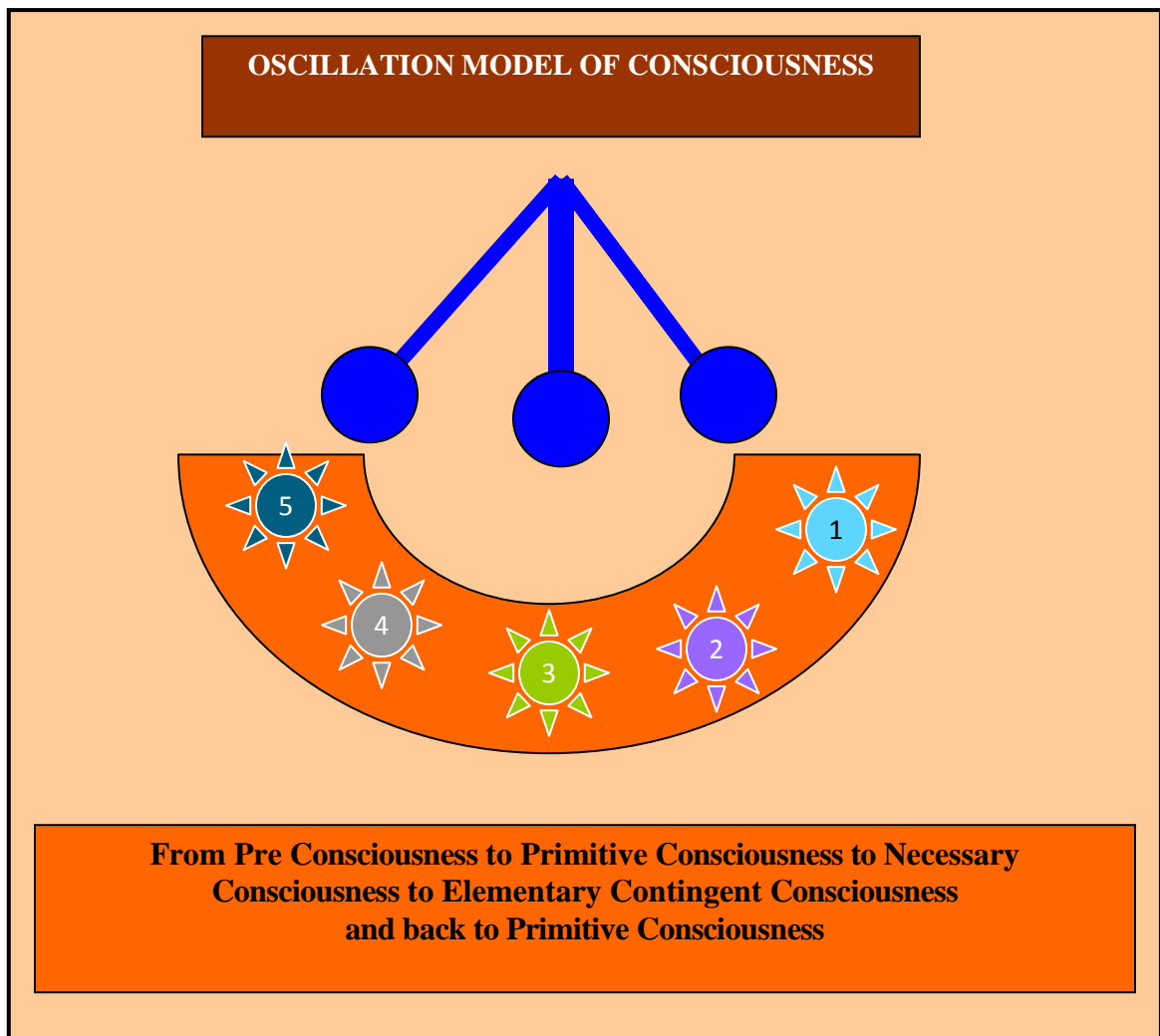
- I. The First Phase is in the years of 1724-1784 wherein the tribals resorted to plundering the plains' habitations owing to the early interventions of the

British through the outsiders living in the non-tribal areas. The first phase can be seen as the phase of **'Pre-Consciousness'** as this is driven by instinct for survival.

- II. The Second Phase can be seen during the years 1785-1835 in which the tribals revolted in support of their native overlords such as Mutadars, Zamindars and Mansabdars who almost became their relatives. These overlords as tax collectors were implanted long ago during the times of Gajapatis and became part and parcel of the tribal society. The newly introduced land revenue settlements with exorbitant rents made the Mutadars, Zamindars and Mansabdars to provoke the tribes against the British in defense of their own rights over the tribal lands. The second phase can be seen as the budding of **'Primitive-Consciousnesses'** because of the fact that they could identify their enemy.
- III. The Third Phase of 1836-1857 witnessed the tribal unrest owing to the infiltration of non-tribals into the tribal lands as merchants and moneylenders. The presence of non-tribals in the tribal areas is due to the neo-zamindars/munsabdars and mutadars from Orissa region who were given the settlement rights by the British. At this phase the tribals in support of their native overlords revolted against the neo-overlords. The third phase can be seen as the phase of **'Necessary Consciousness'** which is being aware of the presence of the 'other' (outsiders) as exploiters.
- IV. In the Fourth Phase of 1858-1919, the tribals revolted against the loss of their rights over Abkari and other minor forest produce. In this phase also the tribals were led by the non-tribal leaders to protest against the British administrators. This phase can be viewed as **'Contingent Consciousnesses'** as the tribes are conditioned to appropriate the forest produce freely for their every day sustenance. When the restrictions were imposed by the British, the tribes had no other go but to revolt with the support of non-tribal leadership.

- V. The Fifth Phase of 1920- 1947 tribal revolts witnessed the leadership of non-tribals hailing not from their overlordship but from the politically and ideologically motivated youth such as Alluri Sitarama Raju who aspired for freedom from the British rule. However, the ideology of Freedom Struggle did not percolate to form as ‘full-blown consciousness’ within the tribes due to their plight to interior forest lands. The idea of ‘nation’ is not felt by the tribes and wherefore their support to the new leadership remained to ‘**Primitive Consciousnesses**’.

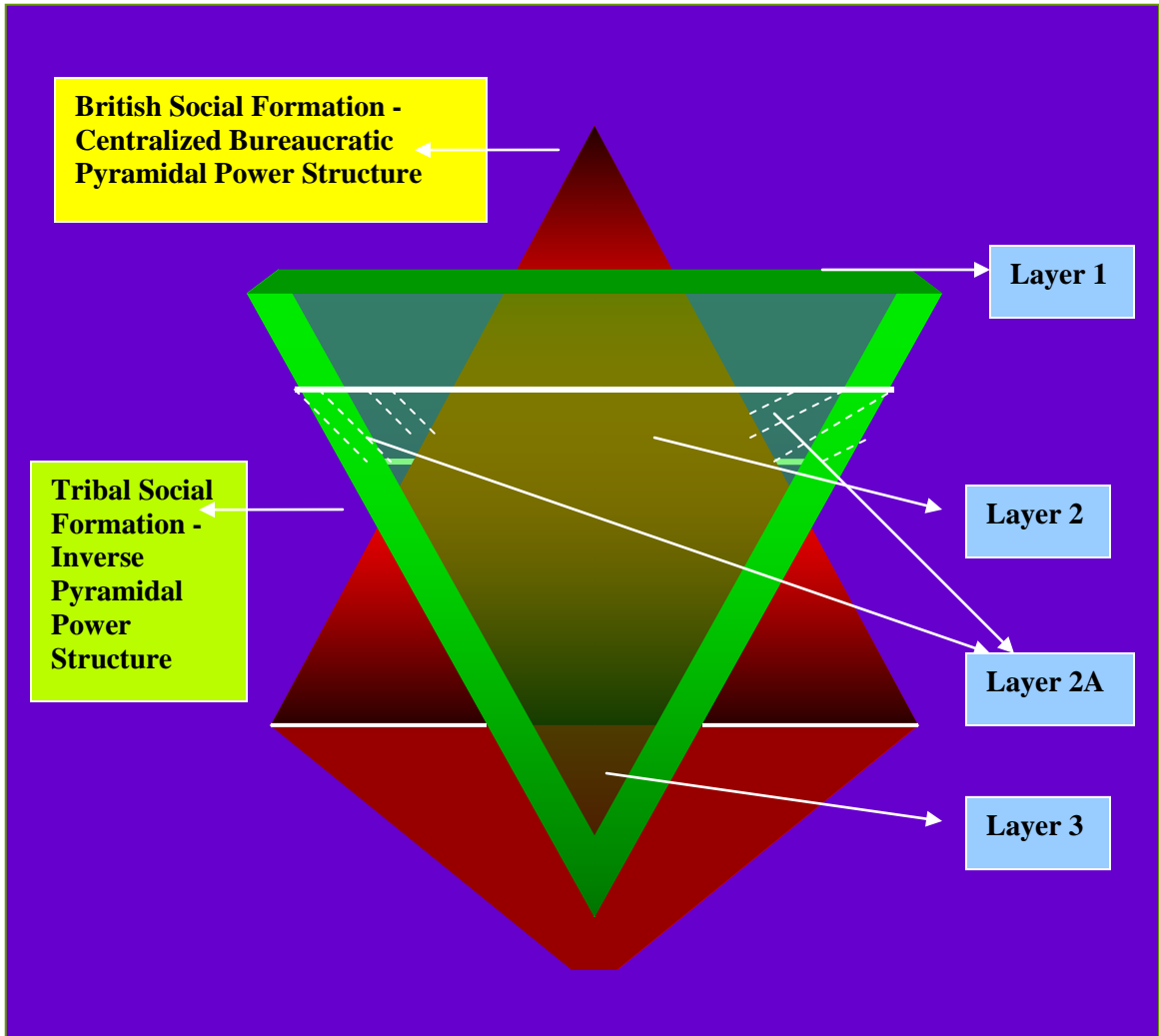
The following diagram illustrates the ‘**Oscillation Consciousness Model**’ of the tribal movements in the Agency area.



(Diagram: VII.7)

The primary cause of the tribal revolts as per this thesis lies at the deep structural level. The superimposition of pyramidal power structure of the British organized on the principles of centralized bureaucratic system over the inverse pyramidal power structure of the tribal social formation has resulted in the tribal revolts. The social formation of the tribes in Madras Presidency was semi nomadic and consequently represents “inverse pyramidal structure” wherein the tribal clans enjoyed freedom from the impositions of clan elders and chieftains. The clan elders and chieftains quite often than not exhibited ceremonial power and exerted power at times of dispute to solve the issues pertaining to rites of passage, customs and traditions. The colonial regime of the British organized in a manner of “pyramidal power structure of Centralized bureaucratic system” in which at the apex the rulers of the British Empire wielded power through the native intermediaries known as the *zamindaries/mansabdars* and *muttadars* to govern the populace.

Structural Superimposition Model



(Diagram:VII.8)

- Layer 1: Tribal clans
- Layer 2: Elders of the Clans/muttadars
- Layer 2 A: Zamindars/Mansubdars
- Layer 3: Tribal Chieftains

The British super imposition of their “pyramidal power structure” over the “inverse pyramidal power structure” of the tribals and this created structural aberration resulting in tribal revolts and insurgencies. The super imposition at the structural level was done by the British through the policies and forest laws based on two significant Schools of Thought known as “Orientalism” and “English Utilitarianism”. These Schools of Thought (as a part of ‘intellectual history’) affected the lives of people in both tribal and non-tribal ecosystems. A section of Orientalists viewed tribals as ‘pure’ and

`innocent'. Another Section of Orientalists perceived the tribes as `barbaric' and `uncivilized'. The British anthropologists are the foremost who collected the data on the tribes and represented them in these two Orientalists perspectives. The English Utilitarianism championed the cause of Positivism which aims at transforming the data from men and material to numbers so as to manipulate them to suit to their statecraft. They upheld that formulation of laws would benefit the majority and hence resorted to making policies and forest laws.

Chapter VIII

Conclusion

A Sum Up

The present study examines historical background of the colonial policies, implementation and its impact on tribal society in Madras Presidency. It proposes to examine how the colonial state, in the name of forest conservation, imposed several restrictions on tribal areas with support of local rulers who were mainly responsible for the implementations of colonial policies in respective areas.

The Madras Province occupies the Southern portion of the Indian peninsula. The province may be broadly divided into three convenient regions based on the consideration of language, Physical and tenural conditions. They are a) the Northern Telugu districts, b) the Southern Tamil districts, and c) the West Coast districts of Malabar and Canara. There were three major Agency areas in Madras Presidency i.e Ganjam Agency, Vizagapattanam Agency and Godavari Agency. The present study mainly focuses on above-mentioned Agency areas in Andhra during colonial period.

There are three important factors to bear in mind in studying tribal histories. Firstly, reconstruction of tribal history is very difficult task, precisely because they have had no written records by themselves. Whatever records are available, they are written by 'others', with different interests and compulsions. These are mostly divorced from the objective and subjective conditions of the tribal people. For the understanding of social formation of the tribal society one has to study the theoretical concepts. Secondly, all the studies on the tribes under the British rule viewed colonialism as a hegemonic construction and applied the same to the tribal areas as well as to lands of the main stream of the cast society. But it may not be correct because the nature of British exploitation was different from region to region and even among various tribal communities. Thirdly, it is the British, for the first time in the history, which could affect the tribal social organization through formulations of policies and administrative mechanism which eventually had far-reaching effect on their livelihoods.

As such, the studies on tribes were taken up thus far by two major disciplines known as Anthropology and History. The Anthropological studies were broadly ethnographic in nature and hence, concentrated on livelihoods and religious practices. The Historical studies, on the other, dealt with interventions of State authority into the tribal life and its policies effect on the tribes. To accommodate both, the Literature Survey is organized into three sections; the first section deals with the works on tribals from the historical perspective; the second section consider the works on tribals form anthropological perspectives and; the third section reflects on the works done exclusively on the Agency region of Andhra Pradesh which is the subject area of the present thesis.

The following can be summarized from the literature survey of all the three sections.

- ❖ The British policies were the root cause of the tribal insurgencies in tribal areas.
- ❖ The nature of the tribal revolts were not properly assessed in terms of Subaltern studies' framework for tribal/peasant insurgencies. At least six forms of insurgencies were identified by the Subaltern studies but the examples come from different parts of the tribal belts in India. No single tribal history was taken up by the Subaltern studies to demonstrate the presence of all the six forms or at least few forms of protest. Therefore the Subaltern studies are not comprehensive in analyzing the tribal insurgencies.
- ❖ The Anthropologists who worked on the tribals were much interested for giving ethnographic account of the every day life of the tribals. Though some of the development anthropologists suggested various schemes for the upliftment of the tribals, they did not look into historical forces that operated for the backwardness of the tribals. Like Subaltern studies, the Anthropological studies also gave a broad framework for classification of tribal movements by considering the revolts of different tribes of different regions in the Country.

In this thesis an attempt is made to study the tribals of Agency areas of Andhra in order to look for deep structural issues which evoked the response of the tribals. The manifestation of the response of the tribals as the insurgencies needs to be labeled so as to understand their nature.

The main objective of the present study is to analyze the evolution of colonial policies, implementation, and its impact on tribal society in Madras Presidency. To carry out of this task, two fold methods are followed; one, the Historical Method and the other, Ethnographic Method drawn from the accounts of the ethnographers and reports of the administrators. It is pertinent to mention here that the data on the tribes is not based on the fieldwork but grossly drawn from the works of other anthropologists and the British administrators. Being a student of History, the data collection in the thesis grossly drawn from the archival sources and less importance is given for the field data. This may be considered as one of the limitations of the thesis.

The term 'tribe' has assumed different meanings in different historical contexts. The conceptual understanding of the tribe by the scholars during the 19th century was based on the stages of evolution and other features like relative isolation, common territory, common name and a common language, simple social formation, strong kinship bond, single social rank, distinct customs, existence of youth dormitory, common ownership over land and the natural resources and low level of technological development of few such attributes. In the context of Indian Social frame, the term tribe acquires a significant meaning for it represents a distinct group of people whose social formation is totally different from the other social groups whose identity lies in 'caste hierarchy'. The tribe constitute isolated autochthonous communities living in the hilltops and forest regions with communal property holding as the primary mode of production with little social ranking. Hence, they are treated distinctly and given a separate status in the Constitution.

Having a separate existence in the rich forestlands the tribes have become a source of contest for the monarchical, feudal and colonial States. In this Chapter how the tribals were viewed by different schools of thought such as Colonialists, Nationalists and Subalternists is discussed. The Colonialists' views were largely drawn from the English Utilitarianism and Orientalism wherein the tribals were depicted as Innocent, barbaric and uncivilized and therefore to be brought into the fold of development; where as the Nationalists' perspective appreciated the tribal system of self governance. The Subaltern perspective only analyzed the tribal insurgencies and put forth a framework for studying

such tribal revolts as an academic discourse. This was further taken up by the anthropological studies and they too categorized the tribal revolts from the ethnographic perspective. The Anthropological and Sociological writings dealing with tribal movements have been classified under two categories *viz* Macro and Micro perspective. The anthropologists and the Subalternists who did much contribution to tribal studies than any other disciplinary scholars viewed the tribal revolt types as if they are uniform and spread across the subcontinent alike. This misnomer is perhaps due to methodological error caused by universalisation of the data. No single tribe or tribes of a single geographical local were taken for in-depth the study to assess their resistance movements from an historical perspective. Deeper structural levels on which the tribal societies are organized would perhaps give a clue to the tribal movements in India and hence, an attempt is being made in this thesis to study the tribal communities from the framework of 'social formation'. The concept of social formation is found to be a useful tool to study scientifically the social groups which are at different levels of development in terms of civilizations. The Marxist apparatus of 'Historical Dialectical Materialism' contributed much to the epistemology of human origins and their progression from simple to complex societies in a given historical frame. For Marx and Engels the analytical tool, 'Historical Dialectical Materialism' showed the path from primitive communism to full blown communism for the welfare of all sections of society wherein the 'state' and 'class' withers away leaving all resources to be shared by all in utmost egalitarian manner. The 'Base and Superstructure model' as well 'Two-class theory model' propounded by Marx and Engels has become the foundation for understanding social formation of a given stage of cultural advancement of a society.

Marx used the term 'social formation' first in his economic manuscript to mean society as a system constituted by the economic, political, and ideological aspects in their interconnection. Marx and Engels used the term to designate society in terms of its mode of production. Social formation is, therefore generally defined as a concept of the social whole consisting of the same structural levels that figure as part of the characteristics of the mode of production. In the social production of their means of existence, men enter into definite, necessary productive relationships which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The aggregate of those productive

relationships constitute the economic structure of the society, the real basis on which a juridical and political superstructure arises and to which definite forms of social consciousness correspond. The mode of production of the material means of existence conditions the whole process of social, political, and intellectual life.

Any society in a given culture is not in isolation but cohabits with other and therefore, there bound to different modes of production giving vent to different politico-religious ideologies and socio-economic organizations thus making the social formation a complex phenomenon. However the dominant one tries to subvert the other modes of productions thereby results in clash and resistance. In the case of tribal societies of the Agency areas of the Andhra Pradesh, the inroads of the British brought in the interests of capitalist of mode of production and this resulted in the tribal resistance giving no scope for the British to change the very fabric of the tribal social formation. The colonial mode of production has initiated a proto capitalist socio economic formation in urban and semi-urban centres. The rural India too responded to this process through commercialization of agriculture to some extent. As a result absentee landlordism and middle class grew to a considerable extent and challenged the inroads of colonialism. However, the tribal societies being semi-nomadic and practicing communal ownership of land remained single entity groups without having class formation as such and hence, primitive. Even the colonial regime failed to alter the situation and Infact worsened the life style of the tribes by displacing them form their communal ownership.

The definition and framework of the concept of social formation adopted in this thesis are derived from the theory of mode of production restated by the structuralist-theorists and anthropologists of Marxian tradition. Instead of viewing social formation as a combination of ‘ modes of production’, it can de defined as an ensemble of a few unevenly evolved ‘ forms of production’ interconnected to one another and structured by the dominance of one form that need not necessarily be superior to the rest in terms of technology and productivity. The expression ‘mode of production’ is widely in use to mean a specific social totality of epochal identity almost on a par with ‘social formation’. The concept of social formation is to illustrate and exemplify in the light of the theory of mode of production, how the regional particular history in terms of specific concrete

details, in their interconnections constitute the abstract totality, the system, and render concrete knowledge possible. Historical analysis can, then, reach out beyond mere description and classify the combinations of forms of production and fragments of forms of production, which go into the making of any given social formation. Kosambi's observation is relevant here: "No single mode prevailed uniformly over the whole country at any one time; so it is necessary to select for treatment that particular mode which, at any period, was the most vigorous, most likely to dominate production, and which inevitably spread over the greater part of the country, no matter how many of the older forms survived in outward appearance.

An analysis of the mode of production debate help in locating the multiple dimensions of domination, exploitation and marginalization of a particular class engaged in organization of productive activities. The major arguments on the debate about the mode of production fell into multiple dichotomies and analyses. The major characterizations of the mode of production in agriculture were weaved around semi-feudal, semi-capitalist, feudal and capitalist. But, as a whole, these differences in characterization were endorsed to the specific social formation, which came to be significantly stressed as the 'colonial economy'.

In this debate, one can find that a straightaway application of Marxist's Mode of Production in tribal social formation would not hold since their social formation is based on kinship relationship, ancestral relations and traditional customs (laws) etc. The communal mode of production plays a significant role in the shaping of tribal society which is marked by the absence of private property and division of classes. In this light, it is important to appreciate the fact that, though Marxist mode of production cannot be the sole theoretical frame to capture the tribal society, yet we cannot overlook the location/situatedness of the tribal social formation within the overall colonial economy. This raises the need to combine Marxist mode of production with the communal mode of production formation to understand the holistic and historical interaction between tribal social formation and colonial social formation. The primacy of Marxist mode of production in this context lies in its theoretical use to understand the contradictions brought in by colonial socio-economic structure into the indigenous tribal societies for

example their exploitation of labour and forest produce towards the accumulative appetite. On the other hand, the tribal social formation would offer insights into the self-sufficient and kinship-oriented tribal social economy and their various ways of encounter with the colonial accumulative economy. Therefore, though not 'class' and 'capital', but 'labour' and 'accumulation' as the conceptual frames in Marxist mode of production can be useful in our understanding of the ways in which colonial economy aggressively attempted to appropriate the tribal mode of production. At the same time, 'community' and 'kinship' as the major concepts of tribal social formation offered the tribal society a space to negotiate with the colonial economy.

The agency areas which are part of the Northern Circars included the present Srikakulam, Vizayanagaram, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari and West Godavari, Krishna and Guntur districts of Andhra Pradesh and Ganjam and some parts of the Koraput districts of Orissa. The 470 miles of coastal area comprising of above districts lay between the Gundlakamma in the Guntur district of A.P and Chilaka Lake in Orissa. The hill tracts of Andhra were the home of many tribals like Koyas, Konda Reddys, Bagathas, Kondadoras or Konda Kapus, Badabas, Ghonds, Savaras, Jatupas, Valmiki, Mudodaras, Parjas, Kotias, Ghasis, Dombas, Erukulas and Yanadis Gadabas, Gonds, Valmiki, Erukulas and Yanadis as well as small groups like Ronas, Pattunayakas and Bhils. Few dominant tribes such as Konda Reddys, and Koyas were taken for a detail study in order to show the salient features of the tribal social formation in the Agency areas.

Understanding of contemporary tribal societies requires a basic appreciation of the historical processes that have determined the course of successive changes which have affected the peoples of India, including the tribal societies. Gradually, the demand was generated to define the tribe as a type of distinct social formation. However, it has always been difficult task before the scholars. The conceptual understanding of the tribe by the scholars was based attributes such as - the stages of evolution and type of society and other features like relative isolation, common territory, common name and a common language, simple social formation, strong kinship bond, single social rank, distinct customs, existence of youth dormitory, common ownership over land and the natural

resources and low level of technological development. These features resulted in the structure of social formation of tribe as 'Reverse Pyramidal power structure' model.

The geographical location and the tracts of wooded hills offered little scope for stable forms of agriculture other than shifting cultivation or slash and burn cultivation on hill tops, which was practiced from time immemorial called *podu* in the Andhra area. After reaping few harvests the land was left fallow and agricultural work started a fresh on new ground. This practice of shifting cultivation patterned semi-nomadic life. At each new place, they erected field houses or thatched huts for living, out of material taken from the surrounding jungles. The plough was not used but they used digging sticks for making holes to sow-seeds of jowar and pulses. Beside what was grown and the forest produces, toddy was important element in their subsistence economy. Men, women and children consume it. It is drawn by the hill people from date, Palmyra and sago palm trees from March to June, when the fields had been cleaned and food stocks are low. They almost lived upon Palmyra and sago palm toddy, they also prepare brew from rice and *samai*. Whether it was in worship, ceremonies or in entertaining guests, these local drinks are served and no festival ended without drinks and dance.

The village is the basic unit of social and political organization in tribal areas, whether a single tribe or the different tribes inhabit it. Customs play a vital role in many spheres of tribal life. The day-to-day activity of the tribal is inherently controlled by certain beliefs and codes of conduct prevailing in tribal society. Every village has a village council to carry out and control various activities of local interest, under the village headman. The position of the village head is generally hereditary. In multi-tribe villages, each tribe has its own tribal council and the head of the tribal council plays an important role in maintaining inter-tribal and intra-tribal harmony. In addition, there is a single village council comprising representatives from each tribal council in the village.

The common activities of the village council are preparation for festivals observed by the whole village, arrangements to assist the needy in the village, punishment of offenders and solving disputes. In taking decisions about all such matters, the members of the village council, whilst having the right, generally do not ignore the suggestions made by any individual in the village. The deliberations of the council take

place in the open, amidst all the villagers. The decisions arrived at are usually in conformity with traditional tribal practices and acceptable as far as possible to all members of the community. Thus, the headman never rules their co-villagers but acts as representative and spokesperson in its dealings with government and with the outside world. The village council preserves village communal property. Topes of the trees are the joint property of the villagers and the income there from, especially from tamarind, is distributed among the villagers. In this hierarchy, the burden of outside authority was never felt by the tribals

Thus far, tribal social formation as an epistemological category is not considered by the existing literature and hence, the process of analysis is devoid of deep structural implication in the tribal studies. The social formation of the tribes in Madras Presidency was semi nomadic and consequently represents “inverse pyramidal structure” wherein the tribal clans enjoyed freedom from the impositions of clan elders and chieftains. The clan elders and chieftains quite often than not exhibited ceremonial power and exerted power at times of dispute to solve the issues pertaining to rites of passage, customs and traditions. Though the Muttadar was politically above his subjects, socially he was considered as one among the tribals. Inter dining and inter tribal marriages were common. There were no restrictions on the tribals in expressing their opinion in their social organisation which allowed every individual to follow his interests as long as these did not conflict with the concerns of his fellow tribesmen. The Muttadar used to maintain law and order, settle disputes, organize ceremonies, perform rituals and act as a link between tribal and their overlords. Owing to the communal ownership of land, the tribal society by and large failed to generate any classes within. It does not mean that the tribal society is not divided into groups. In fact it is the ritual compulsion that stratified the tribal society in to different groups. Since it is not the economic base that divided the tribal society, it remained almost classless society. Only the outsiders as representatives of state power right from the medieval times tried to form as separate political entity and showed tendencies towards class formation. The British administration showed the tendency of the external powers intervention into tribal society and tried to disrupt the tribal social formation.

The gradual extension of either the Muttadari system or the Mansabdar's authority over a period brought small changes in the tribal society of Rampa. However, such geographical and political isolation was progressively reduced with the establishment of the British control over this region. The dictates of colonial control and interests gradually necessitated more and more direct intervention and control of the tribal society, mostly the forests. This intervention was totally unlike previous intrusions from the plains, which brought in its wake new forms of exploitation against which the tribals struggled throughout the 19th century.

The present work examines the colonial revenue policies applied to the tribal areas of the Andhra in Madras Presidency. It seeks to demonstrate the operation of colonial land revenue settlements on tribal lands and attempts to analyze the impact of such policies on the tribal society during British colonial rule. It is argued, in particular, that colonial land revenue policies did not consider the interests of tribals and transformed them to landless labourers. The consequence of the colonial land revenue settlements were the emergence of various revenue officials in the tribal society such as Zamindars, Munsabdars, Muttadars etc., and their main duty was to collect revenue and favour the government. One important feature of the British rule in India is that when the colonial rulers occupied the plains and main lands of the county, they formulated policies first to grab the revenues and resources and later designed the administrative apparatus to execute the policies. It is the policy driven administration that the British adopted in the plains and the main lands. Contrary to this, in the forest regions and hilly terrains the system of British governance was to formulate administrative apparatus first and later to support it by forest policies. As the Europeans in general and the British in particular use forest produce, especially timber for most of the infrastructural activities such as shipyards, ships, railways, bridges, palaces etc., the forest administration has paramount concern for them and hence, designed the administrative apparatus for the forest management. When the resistance is faced from the natives of the forests, the British resorted to policy making for monopolizing forest resources. This pushed the forest tribes into interiors of forest. The British policies ultimately lead to the immigration of non-tribals from plains to forest areas with vested interests of cornering resources in tribal areas and also caused the out-migration of some tribals from forest villages into interior

forests on account of loss of resources mainly due to exploitation of non-tribal traders, moneylenders and landlords.

The consequence of the colonial policies were the emergence of various revenue officials in the society such as Zamindars, Munsabdars, Muttadars etc. their main duty was to collect revenue and favour the government. The Muttadari system played an important role in the tribal society, which strengthened the feudalistic nature of administration that new social formation took, had taken place. The main parts of the work focus on the colonial revenue policy and elucidate the survey and settlement techniques in different hill areas.

When the tribal areas came under the English control, there was no regular survey of the hill areas for a long time. Uncultivated and wastelands were given to the Zamindars perpetually and without extra rent. The burden on the hill Zamindars was more as their income was limited to the resources of the poor farmers for the areas, who themselves struggled for their existence. Not only the poor peasants, but even the Zamindars many a time, had to borrow from traditional moneylenders to pay their own rents in time to the Government. Many times the survey could not be completed because of the nature of the land and people. It took nearly a hundred years for the British to enter the areas with the help of the Muttadars. Though the surveyor made a preliminary visit in A.D. 1815, the actual survey of this difficult terrain began in A.D. 1820 and continued for 15 years. An assessment was made on the basis of old record, and revised periodically.

The extension of authority in the name of checking incursions can be seen as a deliberate and determined attempt of the British government in order to plunder the forest wealth. This enabled the plains trader to exploit the tribals under the cover of judiciary and official machinery. The English who came as merchants and settled as rulers in the great Indian plains, in this hill region too, gradually expelled the local authority in a phased manner. The alien administration surrounded the hill people, shook their economy, and shattered their social fabric. The tribals caught between their different exploiters eventually had two alternatives, rebellion, or migration. Migration from the forest was unthinkable and hence an armed uprising was almost inevitable

The colonial administrative policies successfully subjugated the tribes of the Agency areas in Andhra region. The British administration adopted the 'Centralized Bureaucratic Pyramidal Power Structure' to administer the Agency areas of the Subcontinent. During the year 1864 the then British India Government started the Imperial Forest Department and appointed Dr. Dietrich Brandis, a German Forest officer as Inspector General of Forests in 1866. Having recognized the need to have a premier forest service to manage the varied natural resources of the vast country and to organize the affairs of the Imperial Forest Department, Imperial Forest Service was constituted in 1867. Having realized the importance of a multi-tier forest Administration in the federal and provincial Governments for effective management of forest resources the British India Government also constituted Provincial Forest Service and Executive & Subordinate Services, which were quite similar to the present day forest administrative hierarchy. The subject of "Forestry" which was managed by the Federal Government until then was transferred to the "Provincial List" by the Government of India Act, 1935 and subsequently recruitment to the Imperial Forest Service was discontinued. The Indian Forest Service, one of the three All India Services, was constituted in the year 1966 under the All India Services Act, 1951 by the Government of India. The main mandate of the service is the implementation of the National Forest Policy which envisages scientific management of forests and to exploit them on a sustained basis for primary timber products, among other things. The forest officials were to work closely with the revenue officials for effective control of the resources. Thus the 'Centralized Bureaucratic system of governance based on Pyramidal Power Structure was designed as administrative apparatus by the British.

In order to fully exploit the economic and cultural resources of the country, the British rulers introduced various institutional structures and policies in Indian provinces. In addressing the demand for more intimate knowledge and exploitation of Indian forest resources, British policy makers evolved an elaborate administrative structure, a stringent legal code, and a body of scientific practice incorporated in the form of Forest Laws. These formulations culturally alienated the indigenous societies. The edifice of state forestry was erected on the foundations of law, bureaucratic structures, and scientific knowledge that excluded contiguous village communities from forests in two ways. First,

physical access was restricted. Second, the use value of the forest for subsistence was minimized by altering species composition and reducing biological diversity. Forest conservation was meant to conceal the real considerations of the British Empire's need for raw materials and to justify the expropriation of forests from "traditional" forest users in order to more fully exploit the forests. The forest resource base compelled the colonial state to formulate administrative and legal interventions for the management of the forests in the Madras Presidency through policy device. It was in this context that the legal ideas and debates on the forest legislation were pronounced in the Madras Presidency.

The rules for implementation of Ganjam and Vizagaptnam Agency Act of 1839 were framed only in 1860. Accordingly, in 1839 a separate system of administration was established in the agencies. The administration of civil and criminal justice and collection of revenue shall, be vested in the collector of district and shall be exercised by him as 'Agent' for the state government concerned. The areas administered by Agents came to be known as 'Agency' areas since that enact of the Act of 1839. But the procedures for separate treatment were not laid down. Therefore, Ganjam and Vizagaptnam Agency Act of 1839 became in effective. This had led to a detailed review by the British government and the Scheduled District Act, 1874 was enacted.

The Scheduled District Act of 1874 was a landmark in the administration of tribal areas as this act has laid down procedures for separate treatment for the areas notified under the provisions of the Act. Most of the areas notified were inhabited predominantly by aboriginal tribes as the other areas were deleted in 1864. Second important aspect was that this Act owes its origin from Ganjam and Vizagapatnam Act, 1839. The third important aspect to be noted was that the Act itself comes into existence as a Government of India Act as a result of growing unrest in tribal areas of the country and the need for separately administering these areas. As such, even though exclusion of the area started as a measure for maintenance of law and order, it assumed protective aspects also.

It was further enacted that the collectors as Agents to the governor should have the power of making laws; accordingly, the collector of Vizagapatnam, became the agent to the governor in respect of all the agency tracts included in his district. While the

collector of Ganjam became the agent to the governor in respect of all the agency areas included in his district.

As for the Godavari agency, the tracts ceded by the Nizam in 1862 became part of the Madras Presidency in 1874 and in 1879 these tracts together with certain portions of the Vizagapatam agency were formed into the Godavari agency and placed under the collector of Godavari under the scheduled districts Act XIV of 1874. In 1879 under section 6 of this act rules were framed for the guidance of the Government agent in the administration of the Godavari agency.

In the agencies both civil and criminal justices were differently administered. These tracts were covered with hills and jungles had scarcely any communications. In such a country it was felt the ordinary law of the land was unsuited and a special system had consequently been introduced. A precedent existed in the case of the agencies of Vizagapatam and Ganjam. In consequence of the nearing turbulence in these districts which led to the appointment of a special commission under the chairmanship of Russell in 1832. On the recommendations of the committee, these two tracts were excluded, by act XXIV of 1839. From the operation of the ordinary law and were placed under the direct administration of the collectors of those districts, who were empowered with special and extraordinary powers, within them in their capacity as Agents to the Government.

By the time Scheduled District Act, 1874 was enacted, several discussions were going on in the British Government on the desirability of continuing the intermediary Zamindars in the tribal areas especially after the experience with Mansabdar of Rampa. The Government of Madras has sent M. E. Sullivan, 1st Member, Board of Revenue to enquire into the course of Rampa rebellion and suggested some remedies. He gave his report in 1879, January, 1880, Government of Madras in which he not only analysed the problem but also suggested for settlement of *muttas* directly in Agency Areas as most of these were usurped by the Mansadars resulting in conditions of unrest and loss of faith in the government. The next important event in the agency administration was that the enactment of Agency Tracts Interest and Land Transfer Act, 1917. By the time this Act was promulgated, a change in the attitude of British government towards Agency tracts

can be seen clearly. While the mood of British government at the time of promulgation of Ganjam and Vigagapatnam Act, 1839 was only to exclude the areas for purposes of law and order, the Scheduled district Act, 1874 has an element of protection to the scheduled areas. In the Act-I of 1917, the anxiety of the Government to protect the economic interests of tribals and also on land was more pronounced because of increasing exploitation. Therefore, in the every beginning of the Act, mention was made about the expediency to limit rate of interest and to check transfer of land in Agency tracts of Ganjam, Vijzagaptnam and Godavari districts from tribals to others.

By Government of India Act, 1919, the areas were removed from purview of Legislatures but limits of exclusion deferred in their extent and degree. Thus arose two categories namely “wholly excluded areas” and “Areas of modified exclusion”. The Godavari and Visakhapatnam Agency areas were declared as backward tracts and were included in the constituencies returning members to the provincial Legislature and also nominated members to represent the tribals. In the year 1920, all the Agencies were kept under one Agency Commissioner. The object of placing all the Agencies under one officer was to speed up the pace of development of resources of the rich tract and also to improve the conditions of the hill men. But in 1923, this post was abolished as a measure of retrenchment. All these once again show only the various alternatives tried by British government to administer these areas but with little success. In the year 1921, Agency District Board covering agency areas in Visakhapatnam and East Godavari district with headquarters at Waltair (Visakhapatnam) was constituted. This Board was abolished in 1936. As such, it was to be concluded that the law and order approach was more prominent in British administration of scheduled areas. Later on the Government of India Act, 1935 the government was given powers to administer these areas.

The Impact of the British rule over the tribal lands and forestry can be viewed as a conflict between two opposing forces. For the British it is a struggle for power and maintenance of the statuesque and for the tribes it is a struggle for their very survival. The impact is studied from two perspectives; the British and the Tribal. For the British it is viewed as development in terms of conservation of forest resources and exploitation of forest wealth for infrastructural development such as railways, shipyards, and roads and

buildings. In the process they encouraged outsiders from the plains to inhabit in the tribal villages for promoting settled agriculture. The tribals were discouraged from carrying out shifting cultivation. For them the British rule is displacement and loss of livelihood.

Having displaced from their native environs, the tribals resorted to revolts and insurgencies. However these revolts were all led by the non-tribals. Five phases in the tribal revolts are identified in this thesis: (1) The First Phase is in the years of 1724-1784 wherein the tribals resorted to plundering the plains' habitations owing to the early interventions of the British through the outsiders living in the non-tribal areas. The first phase can be seen as the phase of **'pre-consciousness'** as this is driven by instinct for survival. (2) The Second Phase can be seen during the years 1785-1835 in which the tribals revolted in support of their native overlords such as Mutadars, Zamindars and Mansabdars who almost became their relatives. These overlords as tax collectors were implanted long ago during the times of Gajapatis and became part and parcel of the tribal society. The newly introduced land revenue settlements with exorbitant rents made the Mutadars, Zamindars and Mansabdars to provoke the tribes against the British in defense of their own rights over the tribal lands. The second phase can be seen as the budding of **'primitive consciousness'** because of the fact that they could identify their enemy (3) The Third Phase of 1836-1857 witnessed the tribal unrest owing to the infiltration of non-tribals into the tribal lands as merchants and moneylenders. The presence of non-tribals in the tribal areas is due to the neo-zamindars/munzabdars and mutadars from Orissa region who were given the settlement rights by the British. At this phase the tribals in support of their native overlords revolted against the neo-overlords. The third phase can be seen as the phase of **'necessary consciousness'** which is being aware of the presence of the 'other' (outsiders) as exploiters. (4) In the Fourth Phase of 1858-1919, the tribals revolted against the loss of their rights over abkari and other minor forest produce. In this phase also the tribals were led by the non-tribal leaders to protest against the British administrators. This phase can be viewed as **'contingent consciousnesses'** as the tribes are conditioned to appropriate the forest produce freely for their every day sustenance. When the restrictions were imposed by the British, the tribes had no other go but to revolt with the support of non-tribal leadership. (5) The Fifth Phase of 1920- 1947 tribal revolts witnessed the leadership of non-tribals hailing not from their overlordship but from the

politically and ideologically motivated youth such as Alluri Sitarama Raju who aspired for freedom from the British rule. However, the ideology of Freedom Struggle did not percolate to form as ‘full-blown consciousnesses’ within the tribes due to their plight to interior forest lands. The idea of ‘nation’ is not felt by the tribes and wherefore their support to the new leadership remained to ‘**primitive consciousnesses**’. This can be viewed as the ‘**Oscillation Consciousness Model**’ of the tribal movements in the Agency area.

The primary cause of the tribal revolts as per this thesis lies at the deep structural level. The superimposition of pyramidal power structure of the British organized on the principles of centralized bureaucratic system over the inverse pyramidal power structure of the tribal social formation has resulted in the tribal revolts. The social formation of the tribes in Madras Presidency was semi nomadic and consequently represents “**inverse pyramidal structure**” wherein the tribal clans enjoyed freedom from the impositions of clan elders and chieftains. The clan elders and chieftains quite often than not exhibited ceremonial power and exerted power at times of dispute to solve the issues pertaining to rites of passage, customs and traditions. The colonial regime of the British organized in a manner of “**pyramidal power structure of Centralized bureaucratic system**” in which at the apex the rulers of the British Empire wielded power through the native intermediaries known as the *zamindaries/mansabdars* and *muttadars* to govern the populace. The British super imposition of their “pyramidal power structure” over the “inverse pyramidal power structure” of the tribals has created structural aberration resulting in tribal revolts and insurgencies. The super imposition at the structural level was done by the British through the policies and forest laws.

The colonial forest policies implemented in the tribal areas had initiated far-reaching changes. The colonial state tried to convert tribals into cheap labour force to be employed in the reserve forests. As the new pattern of work which was unfamiliar to tribals they resisted the initiatives by the forest department. At the same time, the forest department imposed strict restraints on *podu* cultivation, which was an important source for livelihood. Therefore, tribals on the one hand, lost their traditional livelihood source and on the other, became cheap labour employed by the Forest department and plain

based merchants. Thus, the colonial forest policies deprived the livelihoods of tribals and exposed the tribal areas to wider exploitation both by the government machinery and plain based merchants.

The prolonged debate on the forest legislation in the Madras Presidency represents an example on how the formulation process of the forest policies was carried out in colonial India and how the colonial state acquired the monopolistic control over the forest resources in spite of differences within the bureaucratic structure on the one hand and imperial and provincial government on the other. An important fact here is that the colonial forest policies have evolved out of a diversified contestation within the colonial bureaucratic structure. The prolonged disagreement between the government of India and Madras on one hand, and differences between the Forest and Revenue department on the other, influenced the nature of the debates and discourse on the forest policies in the Madras Presidency. Finally however, it was the interests of the colonial state characterized by a system of state monopoly over forests that have prevailed upon. Such a change in the attitude of the British is because of the emergence of hills and forests as a source of enormous gain and the willing to protect the traders, moneylenders and contractors who use the instruments to extract surplus. The State assumes growing authority with the spread of formal institution of the courts, police and the expanding mobility provided by the roads. All these forces undermined the traditional economy and society. Restrictions on shifting cultivation, creation of reserves, increased axe tax, prevention of customary right to make toddy and collection of forest produce were the measures with which the British controlled the tribal areas.

Findings:

- It is found that thus far, tribal social formation as an epistemological category is not considered by the existing research on tribal studies and hence, the process of analysis is devoid of deep structural implication in the tribal studies.
- The anthropologists who did much contribution to tribal studies than any other disciplinary scholars viewed the tribal revolt types as if they are uniform and spread across the subcontinent alike. This misnomer is perhaps due to

methodological error caused by universalisation of the data. No single tribe or tribes of a single geographical local were taken in for in-depth study to assess their resistance movements from a historical perspective. Deeper structural levels on which the tribal societies are organized would perhaps give a clue to the tribal movements in India.

- The tribe constitute isolated autochthonous communities living in the hilltops and forest regions with communal property holding as the primary mode of production with little social ranking. The social ranking too is attributed not to occupation (economic category) but to assigned ritual obligation (cultural category) that a kin group is assigned with.
- The social formation of the tribes in Madras Presidency was semi-nomadic and consequently represents “inverse pyramidal structure” wherein the tribal clans enjoyed freedom from the impositions of clan elders and chieftains. The clan elders and chieftains quite often than not exhibited ceremonial power and exerted power at times of dispute to solve the issues pertaining to rites of passage, customs and traditions. Owing to the communal ownership of land, the tribal society by and large failed to generate any classes within. It does not mean that the tribal society is not divided into groups. In fact it is the ritual compulsion that stratified the tribal society in to different groups. Since it is not the economic base that divided the tribal society, it remained almost classless society. Only the outsiders as representatives of state power right from the medieval times tried to form as separate political entity and showed tendencies towards class formation.
- The consequence of the colonial land revenue settlements were the emergence of various revenue officials in the tribal society such as Zamindars, Munsabdars, Muttadars etc., and their main duty was to collect revenue and favour the government. The colonial land revenue policies did not consider the interests of tribals and transformed them to landless labourers.
- One important feature of the British rule in India is that when the colonial rulers occupied the plains and main lands of the county, they formulated policies first to

grab the revenues and resources and later designed the administrative apparatus to execute the policies. It is the policy driven administration that the British adopted in the plains and the main lands. Contrary to this, in the forest regions and hilly terrains the system of British governance was to formulate administrative apparatus first and later to support it by forest policies.

- As the Europeans in general and the British in particular use forest produce, especially timber for most of the infrastructural activities such as shipyards, ships, railways, bridges, palaces etc., the forest administration has paramount concern for them and hence, designed the administrative apparatus for the forest management. When the resistance is faced from the natives of the forests, the British resorted to policy making for monopolizing forest resources. This pushed the forest tribes into interiors of forest. The British policies ultimately lead to the immigration of non-tribals from plains to forest areas with vested interests and also caused the out-migration of some tribals from forest villages into interior forests on account of loss of resources mainly due to exploitation of non-tribal traders, moneylenders and landlords.
- The British administration adopted the Centralized Bureaucratic Pyramidal Power Structure to administer the Agency areas of the Subcontinent in which at the apex the rulers of the British Empire wielded power through the native intermediaries known as the *zamindaries/mansabdars* and *muttadars* to govern the tribal populace.
- The Impact of the British rule over the tribal lands and forestry can be viewed as a conflict between two opposing forces. For the British it is a struggle for power and maintenance of the status quo and for the tribes it is a struggle for their very survival. The impact is studied from two perspectives; the British and the Tribal. For the British it is viewed as development in terms of conservation of forest resources and exploitation of forest wealth for infrastructural development such as railways, shipyards, and roads and buildings. In the process they encouraged outsiders from the plains to inhabit in the tribal villages for promoting settled

agriculture. The tribals were discouraged from carrying out shifting cultivation. For them the British rule is displacement and loss of livelihood.

- Having displaced from their native environs, the tribals resorted to revolts and insurgencies. Five phases in the tribal insurgencies are identified in this thesis. However these revolts were all led by the non-tribals.
- Based on the level of consciousness, the tribal insurgencies in Agency areas are studied and found the tribals traversed between **'Pre-consciousness'** to **Primitive Consciousness'** to **'Necessary Consciousness'** to **'Contingent Consciousnesses'** and back to **'Primitive Consciousnesses'** in the Agency area. This pendulum swing is considered as **'Oscillation Model of Consciousness'** in the thesis.
- The primary cause of the tribal insurgencies as per this thesis lies at the deep structural level. The superimposition of **'Pyramidal Power Structure'** of the British, organized on the principles of centralized bureaucratic system, over the **'Inverse Pyramidal Power Structure'** of the tribal social formation has resulted in the tribal insurgencies.
- The British super imposition of their "pyramidal power structure" over the "inverse pyramidal power structure" of the tribals has created structural aberration resulting in tribal revolts and insurgencies. The super imposition at the structural level was done by the British through the policies and forest laws.

Thus, the Tribal Social Formation in Madras Presidency especially with reference to Agency Areas of Andhra reveals the impact of the British rule over the forestry. Despite efforts to transform social formation of the tribes by depriving them the opportunities of the livelihoods by the British, they resulted in insurgencies and unrest in tribal areas.

As the written sources are scanty, the Historians failed to generate adequate models to explain the tribal insurgencies. Even the Anthropologists who relied much on the ethnographic accounts and oral sources failed to evolve any satisfactory model to elucidate the tribal revolts as such. Hence, a combination of both epistemologies is

attempted in this thesis to develop a model for the root cause of insurgencies in tribal areas of Andhra. A team work of both Historians and Anthropologists would certainly benefit the tribal studies in understanding comprehensively the ethnographical and the historical perspectives in an interdisciplinary manner cutting across the knowledge of disciplinary boundaries.

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