



International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: www.ijrpr.com ISSN 2582-7421

G. Subramaniya Iyer: A Catalyst for Farmer Upliftment

Dr. C. Jeya Veera Devan

Assistant Professor, Department of History, Periyar University, Salem-636011, Tamilnadu, India. Email.id: jeveeradevan@gmail.com

Introduction

Numerous social and political organisations were formed in India between 1855 and 1905. Before and after the origin of the Indian National Congress, the Tribal and the oppressed classes formed various organisations for their welfare and presented their demands and appeals to the British.

Simultaneously, the newly emerging middle class also presented certain ideas and proposals for social reforms. The role of the press was also very significant in this effort. These efforts received a boost when Lord Curzon announced the Bengal Partition in 1905. This announcement served as a catalyst for the movement called the 'Swadeshi Movement'. It was during this period that the rise of the farmers too gained significance.

In a situation where majority of the Nationalists continuously insisted on demanding the exit of the British, only certain people realised that there were certain other needs and situations too that needed immediate attention – even before the idea of total independence of the country emerged. These people saw that the situation of the farmers were miserable that it would be catastrophic to wait long. G. Subramania Iyer was one among them. He was concerned about the welfare of agriculture, the people involved in and were dependent on agriculture, factory labourers and mine workers. The public life of G. Subramania Iyer began in this socio-political background. Though he began his career as a teacher, drawn by the politics of the freedom movement, he left that profession and turned out to be a freedom fighter.

Land Ownership System in Tamilnadu

Though the British had established themselves as a strong authority and power after breaking the opposition of the polygars in Tamilnadu, the polygar system of collecting land tax was in practice. Along with this, there also existed tenant farmers who cultivated the lands of the temples and the great land owners who earned their living by using the remains after paying the lease. There also existed many farmers who had no lands. The village system had around this time, attained the stability to fulfil the self needs as stated by Marx. In this situation the East India Company introduced the Ryotwari System in the year 1817. After the introduction of this system three land owner systems - Zamindari, Ryotwari and the Inamdari systems were in existence.

Zamindari System

This system was introduced in the Presidency of Madras by the East India Company between 1802 and 1805. According to this system, the right of administration was seized from the polygars after the rule of the East India Company. They were now named zamindars after losing their tax collection rights. However not all the polygars were converted into zamindars. Only those who were supporters of the Company during the polygar riots were converted into zamindars. In return, they paid tax to the British government based on the area of the zamindari land; this tax was a part of which they had collected from the natives.

Inamdari System

'Inam' is a Persian word meaning alms or donation. This word stood to denote the lands donated by the kings who ruled Tamilnadu to the Hindu temples and monasteries. Even during the rule of the Nawabs who were Muslims, lands were donated to Hindu temples and to Muslim mosques and dargahs. Moreover lands were provided to establish schools, traveller resting places and water points. These lands were either exempted from taxes or levied minimum taxes. These were Inam lands.

The experiments in the administration that were tried by the colonial government regarding the land rights and land income paved way to not only create variations in the land rights but also to suppress and exploit the land owners and the labourers. The statement of Colonial Fullerton regarding this is as follows:

‘The established practice throughout this part of the peninsula has for ages been to allow the farmer one-half of the produce of his crop for the maintenance of his family and the recultivation of the land, while the other half is appropriated to the sircar. In the richest soils, under the cowl of Hyder, producing three annual crops, it is hardly known that less than 40 per cent of the crop produced has been allotted to the husband man. Yet renters on the coast have not scrupled to imprison reputable farmers, and to inflict on them extreme severities of punishment, for refusing to accept of sixteen in the hundred, as the proportion out of which they were to maintain a family, to furnish stock and implements of husbandry, cattle, seed and all expenses incident to the cultivation of their lands. But should the unfortunate ryot be forced to submit to such conditions, he has still a long list of cruel impositions to endure. He must labour week after week at the repair of water –courses, tanks, and embankments of rivers. His cattle, sheep and every other portion of his property are at the disposal of the renter and his life might pay the forfeit of refusal. Should he presume to reap his harvest when ripe, without a mandate from the renter, whose peons, Kanakapillays and retainers attend on the occasion, nothing short of bodily torture and a confiscation of the little that is left him could expiate the offence. Would he sell any part of his scanty portion, he cannot be permitted while the sircar had any to dispose of: would he convey anything to a distant market, he is stopped at every village by the collectors of sunkum or Gabella (transit duties), who exact a duty for every article exported, imported, or disposed of. So unsupportable is this evil, that between Negapatam and Palghatucherry, not more than 300 miles, there are about 30 places of collection, or in other words, a tax is levied every ten miles upon the produce of the country: thus manufacture and commerce are exposed to disasters hardly less severe than those which have occasioned the decline of cultivation.’¹

K.S.Kalimuthu who quotes such documentations documented and expresses his views as,

‘The great body of the ryots are certainly poor, their food is deficient in quality as well as coarse and the clothing is scanty and their dwelling extremely mean: all these combined with gross ignorance. Thus the outcome of the early revenue policy of the Colonial government was that it not only perpetuated the inequalities inherent in the traditional agrarian society but also aggravated them thereby reducing the lower agrarian society in to a subject peasantry’²

Life of the Lower Level Farmers

Apart from the above stated three types of the land right systems, there were a large number of natives who possessed no other property other than their physical strength along with minor agricultural implements. Some among them were also former land owners. They had become landless farmers who had lost their lands due to debt, natural calamities and diseases that affect the crops.

Situation in Tanjore District

The Tanjore district of those days which comprises the Cauvery delta of Tamilnadu within it was called as the ‘Granary of Tamilnadu’. Several Saiva temples and certain Vaishnava temples which were built during the Chola period owned many fertile lands. The three Saiva monasteries namely Dharmapuram, Thirupanandhal and Thiruvaduthurai possessed such fertile lands. These temples and monasteries held the rights of the entire village in certain areas.

Great land owners were de facto brokers between those earned their living by cultivating these lands and the East India Company. Though they were supposed to be owners, they were actually lessees for generations. These lease lands belonged to the temples and monasteries as mentioned above. The area which they cultivated directly in the lease lands was considerably less. They acted as brokers between the land owners of the temples and monasteries who left these lands in lease to other farmers and the tenants who ploughed and cultivated these lands. As they were the brokers for the lands of the temples, monasteries and other institutions, they stood to gain by their right over numerous villages. These land owners adopted several repressive measures to increase their profits and income. Usually as it was traditional to offer grains instead of money as wages to the labour farmers, small measures were used in paying wages and bigger measuring cups were used to receive lease grains from the lessees. They never used the official measuring cups fixed by the British government that had government seal in it. These measuring cups were called by the names such as, ‘thombarai maraikaal’ and ‘mukka maraikaal’³.

Apart from exploiting the share of the farmers by using fake measuring cups, they also extracted more work from them by increasing their working time. The land owners of the district of Tanjore resorted to several cruel forms of punishment to the farm labour farmers who opposed them or refused to obey them. Moreover the systems of bonded labour, planters and padiyaal (measuring slave) were widely in existence.

Bonded Labourers

The bonded labour system was widespread in the district of Tanjore.⁴ If a person bought a lady with her children (a cluster of vassals or slaves) they were held as bonded labour. Nobody except the master who had thus enslaved the woman had the right to sell her. If there was no master then her

¹ Raghavaiyengar, S. Srinivasa ., , Memorandum on the Progress of the Madras Presidency, Asian Educational Services, Madras, 1988, pp.xxvii-xxviii.

² Kalimuthu, A.K., Colonial Economy and the Lower Peasantry – Tamilnadu Scene 1801-1947, Archana Publications, 2004, p.33.

³ Sivasubramanian, Aa., Varalarum Valakkarum, Kalasuvadu Pathippagam, Nagercoil, 2010, p.97.

⁴ Sivasubramanian, Aa., Tamilagathil Adimaimurai, Kalasuvadu Pathippagam, Nagercoil, 2005, p.69.

maternal uncle had the right to sell her. When a woman - slave had neither a master nor a maternal uncle, she was called by the name, 'Paradesi Kothu'. The sale deed regarding this was written in a palm leaf.

Moreover the bonded labourer was not given the right to give her daughter in marriage without the consent of the master. Only if and when the marriage was finalised with the consent of the master, the marriage expenses were borne by the master. He gave gifts for them during every Pongal. The children born of them and their birth and death expenses were the responsibility of the slave's master. If a slave woman decided to give her son in marriage, then her master had to give her the engagement money, sari and thali. However the children⁵ born of him would belong to the master of his wife.⁶

Such bonded labourers were used in farm work and for cattle rearing. If a master who has bonded labourers was not in need of the slave's labour then he would rent out his slave to somebody else and claim the wages.⁷ These masters had right over the property of the bonded labourers too. At certain places they even had rights over their cattle.⁸

Planters

The labour system of bonded planters widely prevailed in the agricultural areas of the Tanjore district. These labourers were subjected to various cruelties in this system. The planters worked in the name of 'sugandhai' under the mirasudars after signing literally in the papers for the debt of their ancestors. These planters were destined to live in the lands of the mirasudars by building huts there. They were not permitted to go to other places. In case they went out their huts were demolished and their cattle and other property looted.

Often when the planters were not able to work due to ill health they were forcibly dragged and made to work after being whipped and forced to drink diluted cow dung. They were compelled to finish their work which they started at dawn only at night. If they were provided lunch by the mirasudars then grains given as wages were taken off from their wages to compensate it. They were not permitted to eat their food in leaves or brass utensils. Food was provided to them in earthen wares or iron measuring cups. Their wives and children were destined to do the household work and rear their cattle of the masters. The planters were in such a position that they were not able to send their children to school.

Moreover the planters collected the ashes from their ovens in their houses and gave it as urea to the lands of the mirasudars free of cost. They had no right to consume the vegetables such as like cantaloupe or pumpkin that grew in the backyards of the huts they lived in and broad beans which crept on their roofs under which they sought shade; these were the properties of their mirasudars. They consumed the crabs and snails that lived in the fields as their food. They were in a situation such that they did not have the right to give their sons or daughters in marriage without the permission of the mirasudars.

As majority of the planters belonged to the untouchable castes, caste abuse was also thrust upon them. If they had to drive the bullock carts in the roads of the upper class people, they had to go by walk in front of the carts. They were denied permission to wear dhotis and were destined to wear loin cloth. The dhotis that were given to them once a year by their masters were emphasized to be tied around their heads without wearing it around their waist. Men were prohibited to wear shirts and women to wear blouses. Women had to tie their saris only up to their knee length. Beautiful ladies were subjected to the lust of the mirasudars. Neither the husband nor the wife was permitted to cry out loud when they were beaten up by the mirasudars.⁹

Serfdom

The farm slaves were used to maintain the water bodies that were essential for agriculture.¹⁰ The mirasudars took away the major share from the money that the government paid for this work and paid very less wages for the farm men. Apart from renting out these farm men, they also pawned

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⁶ Naidu, Ramasamy, Remarks on the Revenue System and Landed Tenures of the provinces under the Presidency of Fort. St. George, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Part-1, 1834, p.55.

⁷ Dharma Kumar, Land and Caste in South India, 1965, p.44.

⁸ Ibid, P.65.

⁹ Veeraiyan, K., Tamilnadu Vivasaya Eyakkathin Veera Varalaru, 1998, p.110-112.

¹⁰ Ludden, David, Peasant History in South India, 1989, pp.144-145.

them. The farm men were sold along with the agricultural fields.¹¹ The situation was such that if they wanted to liberate themselves they had to pay the amount twice as much as it was in practise.¹²

Padiyaal

'Padi' refers to measure and 'Aal' refers to slave.¹³ The land owner gave grains monthly as wages as per the written agreement he had made with the padiyaal. Moreover they were given the rights to collect the grains that scattered while threshing, they were given gruel for lunch. A dress and one rupee were provided to them during Pongal and Deepavali. Similarly dress and money were given to them during any occasion whether good or bad in the master's family. The master would deduct from the grains to be paid as wages if he had received any money in between for his needs. By new debts and agreement they became permanent slaves. Consequently they were destined to remain in the same status for generations. This system that existed during the period when there was slavery system continued to be in practice even after the Slavery Prohibition Act (1843) came into existence.¹⁴

In spite of the Slavery Prohibition Act, the officials of the British government performed the duty of safeguarding the slavery system that had an unofficial legal status among the landlords in this district. The reason they stated was that the agricultural production would be affected if the slavery system was abolished. In 1800 the Collector of Tanjore district tried to prevent the slaves of the untouchable castes from emigrating from this district to work under other land owners; he instructed the police to make them work for the government and the land owners.

Similarly when the slaves of the Trichy district tried to migrate to Coimbatore district, the Collector of Trichy district emphasized to the collector of Coimbatore through a letter that as per the deed they had signed with the land owners in their native districts, they were bound to work for their original owners and hence could not migrate and break their bonds. It is evident through this that the British government was convinced that agriculture would be adversely affected and the lands would remain barren which would lead to the loss of income if the slaves became free.¹⁵

The national leaders did not realize the plight of the rural agriculture labourers who lived as slaves in dissimilar names, as the articles and the speeches made by them proved it. But Subramania Iyer was exceptional and voiced out for the rural agricultural labourers.

G. Subramania Iyer and the Farmers

Subramania Iyer's concern for the farmers was the result of his direct contact with the farmers' problems in his native district. This concern became his life-long passion. The Madras Chamber of Commerce insisted on increasing the tax on agriculture and agricultural income stating that the income of the farmers has increased, G. Subramania Iyer said that this proposal was to be condemned in this situation where the Indian farmers and the rural industries and crafts and the workers dependent on them were already badly affected by the products manufactured or imported into India by the British. He also said that if the members of Chamber of Commerce considered that if the Indian farm workers earned more money through agriculture, he asked them to quit their business ventures and become agricultural workers and farmers. Moreover he pointed out that in a situation where the farmers paid ten rupees as tax when they earned rupees fifty as their annual income, the other professionals who earned five hundred rupees monthly also paid the same ten rupees as tax.¹⁶

G. Subramania Iyer appreciated that it was appropriate to have decided to demonstrate the English plough method brought from England in five districts from North Arcot to Tirunelveli for two months through the Director of Revenue settlement and Agriculture through Messrs. Benson and Samy Iyengar Company. Moreover he added that the duration was not sufficient and emphasized that instead they could concentrate on North Arcot district and select the villages alone leaving out the cities and demonstrate the ploughing method in their mother tongue. He also added that awareness can be created among people by conducting exhibitions related to this in advance.¹⁷

He continuously exposed the corrupt practices that prevailed among the income tax officers in Tanjore district. Specifically he wrote in his magazine about the bribery and corruption that was found amidst the income tax inspector and the village administrative officer in this district. Moreover he continuously published the news regarding the welfare of the farmers in his magazine.¹⁸

¹¹ Ibid, p.44.

¹² Ibid, p.65.

¹³ Sivasubramanian, A., Tamilagathil Adimaimurai, Kalasuvadu Pathippagam, Nagercoil, 2005, p.75.

¹⁴ Manickam, S., Slavery in the Tamil Country, 1982, pp.53-59.

¹⁵ Dharma Kumar, Land and Caste in South India, 1965, p.67.

¹⁶ Native News Papers Reports 1886, (Swadesamitran, 06.03.1886).

¹⁷ Ibid, (Swadesamitran, 03.07.1886).

¹⁸ Ibid, (Swadesamitran, 23.10.1890).

The acts that were enacted by British government in 1888-89 for providing land improvement loans were found to be of no use for the farmers. The reason behind that being that the act was under the jurisdiction of the income tax department. Hence G. Subramania Iyer emphasized to appoint special officers to execute this act and offer help in providing loans for the farmers.¹⁹

G.Subramania Iyer condemned the government for having collected heavy taxes from the farmers who were already burdened with other taxes by considering them as rich. Moreover he pointed out that the regulations of the forest department and the salt department were ruining their lives. He condemned the settlement department for increasing the land tax and for the unbearable rise of the Darkhast Rules. He also condemned the government for enforcing other taxes without cancelling the land tax on the agricultural land where cultivation was not done. Tax was also collected for the lands where cultivation was not done without water then. Moreover he pointed out the sad plight of the farmers who had to bribe the revenue inspectors for transferring patta and buying Darkhast lands. He also condemned the district collector and the sub collector for collecting money from the farmers during their visits to the villages.²⁰

Moreover he observed that the farmers had to give bribe- beginning from the district collector to the lowest servant in the government office to get the loans that were to be sanctioned to them according to the government's agricultural loan. Consequently, the farmers had to give away half of the loan as bribe and fell a prey to the greed of the private money lenders. Hence, to ensure that this system completely serves the farmers, he requested to recruit a special deputy collector to allocate loan to the farmers in time and need without any corruption or bribery.²¹

Also, G.Subramania Iyer pointed out that the standard of living of the farmers had not changed in proportion to the growth of education and civilisation elsewhere in India. He indicated three reasons for this imbalance: (i) excessive land tax (ii) failure of monsoon and (iii) adherence to the old and outmoded agricultural production methods without being aware of the modern agricultural methods. Moreover he added that the first reason can be eliminated with the help of the government. It so happened then that the farmers had to pay tax continuously even if they had cultivated once in their land and the tax rate kept on increasing every year. The reason being that land tax was not stable and it kept on changing in par with the times. He said that various disadvantages arise as a result of this and also said that the government has to come to an agreement with the farmers before they decide to increase the land tax. Moreover he opposed the practice of deciding the land tax based on the calculations of the tax paid by the farmers every year during the 'Jamabandhi' that was held under the president ship of the district collector. He said that it resulted in unnecessary crowd and confusion, with almost nothing significant being analysed or decided.

He condemned the government for taxing the farmers when the farmers themselves repaired the irrigation canal at their own cost even though the government had a Public Works Department to repair the irrigation canals. He also condemned the government for pressurising the farmers to pay road tax when the expenses for laying the public roads and rectifying the repaired roads were made out of the government revenue.

He also criticised the act of the collecting tax for growing palm trees in the patta lands and levying special tax for extracting toddy from it. Moreover he also criticised the act of collecting separate taxes for different crops in the same field. G.Subramania Iyer also added that such types of taxes had already been brought into practice within the past thirty years. He recommended the practice of waiving the tax during times when there were no other cultivation and also suggested a total cancellation of the tax when cultivation has completely been given up. Moreover he added that a new practice of levying tax for uncultivated lands in South India was becoming quite common.

Hence he insisted on the enactment of a permanent new land tax system to safeguard the farmers. Moreover he said that it should be 9 percent of the then tax and added that it should be revised once in every 20 to 30 years. Moreover he added that Ryotwari Patta has to be provided to the people along with the revenue settlement. He also emphasized that farmers could pay the fixed tax and be allowed to cultivate their desired crop. He said that as a result of this the situation of the government to take action based on the environment during famine would come to an end and they would lose nothing out of it. He said that even if there was something like it that would be the privilege given by the government to permanently safeguard the farmers. Moreover, he emphasized on passing a resolution regarding this issue in the Congress meetings.

He also found fault with the situation of not being able to use the barren lands in the villages for public utility. (The reason being that as the government had announced the poromboke lands as protected forest area, the cattle were not able to graze and the villagers were not able to get fodder for their cattle.) G.Subramania Iyer condemned the plight of the farmers who were not able to enter the forests to collect fuel and cut trees to design appliances for agricultural use due to the strict forest rules.²²

Agriculture Bank

While taking into consideration the plight of the farmers, G.Subramania Iyer placed certain recommendations to establish an agriculture bank. He suggested the following:

¹⁹ Ibid, (Swadesamitran, 15.07.1890).

²⁰ Ibid, (Swadesamitran, 23.01.1889).

²¹ Ibid, (Swadesamitran, 16.02.1889).

²² Ibid, (Swadesamitran, 13.11.1889).

1. Proper representative should be selected from districts where the banks are to be opened.
2. Necessary measures should be adopted to prevent bank authorities from indulging in malpractices, such as bribery and so forth, and every facility should be given to people to prefer complaints and to make appeals regarding such irregularities.
3. Property mortgaged in the bank should not have been previously encumbered, no registration fee should be demanded from the ryots, and sufficient care ought to be taken to see that the ryots do not spend the money thus borrowed otherwise than for the purpose for which it was expressly taken.
4. The bank may pay off the Sirkar kist due by the ryot and recover the same from him by instalments or by putting the lands, &c., to auction after the lapse of a reasonable length of time.
5. The bank should inflict severe punishment on those that infringe the bank rules and should also have a list of the ryots, who were honest in their dealings and of those that were dishonest, suspended on a conspicuous place in the bank premises.²³

He also made certain other recommendations such as

- Agriculture banks should be opened in all villages of Rs.3, 000 beriz and they should be kept under the management of the Collector or the Divisional officer.
- All applications for loans should be made to the Collector or to the Divisional officer and such loans should be granted only for following purposes; 1. Improvement of lands; 2. Sinking wells; 3. Repairing tanks; 4. Excavating channels; 5. Purchase of cattle; 6. Procuring seed-grains; 7. manuring; 8. buying agriculture implements; 9. Erecting houses; 10. liquidating debts previously contracted; 11. Paying Sirkhar dues. All applications should be duly certified by the village authorities to the effect that the purpose for which help is sought is true and that the applicant is trustworthy.
- Special rules should be framed requiring applications to send their applications in the month of February if their subjects refers to Nos. (2),(3),(4) and (9); in March if it refers to Nos.(1), (5) and (8); and in June if it refers to Nos.(6),(7) and (10) specified above; and the bank authorities should be required to dispose of the applications within thirty days after their receipt.
- The savings bank of the Postal department should be amalgamated with the agricultural banks. People taking loans from one bank in a certain village should return it to the same bank; but, if people desire to return the loan to a different bank in other villages, they should be governed by special rules as is the case with the post office savings banks.
- The bank should lend money at an interest of six per cent. per annum and it should not scruple to receive the interest in kind in case the people find it difficult to pay the interest in coin.²⁴

Moreover the villagers of Karikaalapuram were inconvenienced as the village munsiff of resided outstation instead of living in the village. When G. Subramania Iyer came to know about it, he insisted the government to direct the village administrative officer to reside in the village. Moreover he also insisted on providing medical facilities for the village.²⁵

There was water scarcity and so irrigation in the villages surrounding the Porur Lake in the Saidapet taluk were adversely affected. Consequently, the crops dried due to scarcity of water which led to the loss of revenue for the government. He said that if water was filled in the Porur Lake from the Chembarambakkam Lake through the Tanji canal for one week then it would be sufficient for a year. He also said that the lives of the people who lived depending on the Porur Lake would be safe thus.²⁶

G.Subramania Iyer criticised the Tanjore district collector, Mr. Thomas who acted against the mirasudars there. Moreover Mr. Price of the revenue department, apart from enquiring about the mirasudar meeting that was conducted at Tanjore from the mirasudars who went to Ootacamund to file a complaint against him, was also much interested in learning about the number of lawyers who participated in that meeting. It was during the case of the Chenglepet Thasildar Sivapathi that the then district collector Mr. Stokes enquired the mirasudars in a threatening tone. Subsequently, when the mirasudars filed a complaint to Mr. Sullivan at Ootacamund, he too posed unnecessary questions like Mr. Price had, and had also enquired who the Power of Attorney was for the mirasudars. Moreover, he had also threatened that the mirasudars can never succeed by filing civil case against the government. However later, when the mirasudars met Mr. Webster, the Governor of the Presidency of Madras and complained about the high-handed behaviour of the officials, he spoke in favour of them and convinced them.²⁷

When the mirasudars shared the village among themselves and was paying the tax for the lands in which they cultivated, they had rights on the lands in which cultivation was not done. It was then that G. Subramania Iyer said that the acts pertaining to the Darkhast land and the Rajinama land

²³ Ibid, (Swadesamitran, 11.05.1894).

²⁴ Ibid, (Swadesamitran, 29.06.1894).

²⁵ Ibid, (Swadesamitran, 06.03.1894).

²⁶ Ibid, (Swadesamitran, 23.03.1894).

²⁷ Ibid, (Swadesamitran, 26.06.1886).

have to be revised. He also added that the rights over the land that was not cultivated should be granted to the Pattadars for at least a minimum period of five years. He added that preference should be given to the Pattadars when the land is re distributed after the lease period.

Moreover G.Subramania Iyer condemned the officers of the irrigation department who harassed the mirasudars who were in need of their support and the Thasildars and the revenue inspectors who treated them badly in the agricultural issues. Hence he requested to segregate the irrigation department from the engineering department and bring it under the control of the district collector. He also emphasized the district collector and the revenue department to verify the accounts submitted by the revenue inspectors along with the false documents of the previous month.²⁸

G. Subramania Iyer's Contribution

It was during the era of the Swadeshi movement that labour strikes were conducted with the support of the leaders of the Nationalist movement to improve the working condition of the labourers and the hike in their wages as its priority. Bala Gangadhar Tilak from Bombay and V.O.Chidambaram from Tamilnadu ought to be mentioned here. G. Subramania Iyer did not involve himself in the job of establishing trade association and mobilizing the labourers such as this people. The Congress movement did not emerge as a mass movement during his period. These were stabilised only after the establishment of the Swadeshi Movement. However being a middle class intellectual, with the help of the government reports and the books, G.Subramania Iyer expressed with sympathy the plight of the labourers of India and Tamilnadu and worked for their welfare and upliftment.

Conclusion:

This chapter delves into the Indian land tenure systems prior to British colonization, contrasting them with the new systems introduced by the British such as Zamindari, Inamthari, and Rythwari systems. It explores the resulting impact on poor agricultural laborers and the plight of marginalized caste groups.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

The authors stated that they have no potential conflicts of interest related to this article's research, authorship, or publication.

Funding Acknowledgement

The authors received no financial support for this article's research, authorship or publication.

Author Contributions

The initial draft was written by the corresponding author, Priyanka A S., and the co-author, C Jeyaveeradevan, provided comments on the manuscript. Both authors read and approved the final version.

Acknowledgement

I extend gratitude to the co-authors for their valuable comments and feedback

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²⁸ Ibid, (Swadesamitran, 24.07.1894).

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