UNIT 1 AGRARIAN ECONOMY

Structure

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit you should be able to explain the:

- factors responsible for the expansion of agriculture in the Indian subcontinent,
- chronological pattern of land grant system,
- ideology behind land grants,
- character and role of various types of agrarian settlements,
- growth and nature of land rights,
- technological improvements in the sphere of agriculture,
- interdependence amongst different groups related to land,
- role of agriculturists in trade, and
- characterisation of early medieval agrarian economy.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The early medieval period in Indian history marks the growth of cultivation and organisation of land relations through land grants. These grants began around the beginning of Christian era and covered practically the entire sub-continent by the end of the twelfth century. In the early medieval period agricultural expansion meant a greater and more regular use of advanced agricultural techniques, plough cultivation and irrigation technology. Institutional management of agricultural processes, control of means of production and new relations of production also played an important role in this expansion. With this expansion, new type of rural tensions also emerged. Commercial activities in agricultural and non-agricultural commodities increased. All these aspects have been dealt in this Unit which ends with a discussion on the characterisation of early medieval agrarian economy. Let us start with the aspects related to agrarian expansion.
1.2 AGRARIAN EXPANSION

The agrarian expansion, which began with the establishment of brahmadesya and agrahara settlements through land grants to Brahmanas from the fourth century onwards acquired a uniform and universal form in subsequent centuries.

The centuries between the eighth and twelfth witnessed the processes of this expansion and the culmination of an agrarian organisation based on land grants to religious and secular beneficiaries, i.e. Brahmanas, temples and officers of the King's government. However, there are important regional variations in this development, both due to geographical as well as ecological factors.

1.2.1 Geographical and Chronological Patterns

Cultivation was extended not only to the hitherto virgin lands but even by clearing forest areas. This was a continuous process and a major feature of early medieval agricultural economy.

There is a view prevalent among some scholars that land grants started in outlying, backward and tribal areas first and later gradually extended to the Ganga valley, which was the hub of the brahmanical culture. In the backward and aboriginal tracts the Brahmanas could spread new methods of cultivation by regulating agricultural processes through specialised knowledge of the seasons (astronomy), plough, irrigation, etc., as well as by protecting the cattle wealth. However, this is not true of all regions in India, for, land grants were also made in areas of settled agriculture as well as in other ecological zones, especially for purposes of integrating them into a new economic order.

1 A Telugu Inscription of 10th century A.D. from Indu Kurupalle records the death of a hero after rescuing cattle.
Inscriptions from North Arcot in memory of those heroes who died protecting cattle during cattle raids.

The chronological appearance of the land grant system shows the following pattern:
- fourth-fifth centuries: spread over a good part of central India, northern Deccan and Andhra,
- fifth-seventh centuries: eastern India (Bengal and Orissa), beginnings in Western India (Gujarat and Rajasthan),
- seventh and eighth centuries: Tamil Nadu and Karnataka,
- ninth century: Kerala, and
- end of the twelfth century: almost the entire sub-continent with the possible exception of Punjab.

1.2.2 Ideological Background

Ideas relating to the gift of land emphasise the importance of dana or gift. The idea of dana or gift to Brahmanas was developed by Brahmanical texts as the surest means of acquiring merit (punya) and destroying sin (pataka). It appears to be a conscious and systematic attempt to provide means of subsistence to the Brahmanas. Grants of cultivable land to them and registration of gifts of land on copper plates are recommended by all the Smritis and Puranas of the post-Gupta centuries.

There were different items of gifts:
- food, grains, paddy, etc.
- movable assets like gold, money, etc. and
- the immovable assets, i.e., cultivable land, garden and residential plot.
Among the gifts are also included the plough, cows, oxen and ploughshare. However, the gift of land was considered to be the best of all types of gifts made to the learned Brahmana. Imprecations against the destruction of such gifts and the resumption of land donated to a Brahmana ensured their perpetuity. Thus land grants began to follow a set legal formula systematised through law books (Dharmashastras).

While the early land grants were made mainly to Vedic priests (Shrotriya fire priests), from the fifth to thirteenth centuries, grants were also made to temple priests. The temple, as an institution, assumed a more central role in agrarian expansion and organisation from the eighth century A.D. Grants to the temple, either plots of land or whole villages, were known as devoted in the south Indian context. It needs to be stressed that what began as a mere trickle, became a mighty current. The process of acquiring landed property was not confined to brahmanical temples. The non-brahmanical religious establishments such as the Buddhist and Jain monasteries (samghas and basadis) too, specially in Karnataka, Andhra, Gujarat and eastern India (Bihar and Orissa), vied with one another to become landed magnates (you will read more about this in Units 6-7 in Block 2).

Check Your Progress 1

1) Below in column “A” time periods are given. Pick the regions given in brackets and put in Column “B” against time period when land grant system appeared in that region (Central India, Bengal, Orissa, Northern Deccan, Andhra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Karnataka).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>A)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i) 4th - 5th centuries</td>
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<td>ii) 5th - 7th centuries</td>
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<td>iii) 7th - 8th century</td>
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<td>iv) 9th century</td>
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2) What were the different items of dana (gift) to Brahmanas? Which was considered as the best gift.

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1.3 AGRARIAN ORGANISATION

The agrarian organisation and economy were highly complex. This can be understood on the basis of intensive studies of the regional patterns of land grants and the character and role of the brahmadesa and non-brahmadesa and temple settlements. The growth and nature of land rights, interdependence among the different groups related to land and the production and distribution processes also help in a better understanding of the situation.

1.3.1 Character and Role of Various Types of Agrarian Settlements

Brahmadesa: A brahmadesa represents a grant of land either in individual plots or whole villages given away to Brahmanas making them landowners or land controllers. It was meant either to bring virgin land under cultivation or to integrate existing agricultural (or peasant) settlements into the new economic order dominated by a Brahmana proprietor. These Brahmana donees played a major role in integrating various socio-economic groups into the new order, through service tenures and caste groupings under the Varna system. For example, the growing
peasantisation of shudras was sought to be rationalised in the existing brahmanical social order.

The practice of land grants as brahmadeyas was initiated by the ruling dynasties and subsequently followed by chiefs, feudatories, etc. Brahmadeyas facilitated agrarian expansion because they were:

- exempted from various taxes or dues either entirely or at least in the initial stages of settlement (e.g., for 12 years);
- also endowed with ever-growing privileges (pariharas). The ruling families derived economic advantage in the form of the extension of the resource base, moreover, by creating brahmadeyas they also gained ideological support for their political power.

Lands were given as brahmadeyas either to a single Brahmana or to several Brahmana families which ranged from a few to several hundreds or even more than a thousand, as seen in the South Indian context. Brahmadeyas were invariably located near major irrigation works such as tanks or lakes. Often new irrigation sources were constructed when brahmadeyas were created, especially in areas dependent on rains and in arid and semi-arid regions. When located in areas of intensive agriculture in the river valleys, they served to integrate other settlements of a subsistence level production. Sometimes, two or more settlements were clubbed together to form a brahmadeya or an agrahara. The taxes from such villages were assigned to the Brahmana donees, who were also given the right to get the donated land cultivated. Boundaries of the donated land or village were very often carefully demarcated. The various types of land, wet, dry and garden land within the village were specified. Sometimes even specific crops and trees are mentioned. The land donations implied more than the transfer of land rights. For example, in many cases, along with the revenues and economic resources of the village, human resources such as peasants (cultivators), artisans and others were also transferred to donees. There is also growing evidence of the encroachment of the rights of villagers over community lands such as lakes and ponds. Thus, the Brahmanas became managers of agricultural and artisanal production in these settlements for which they organised themselves into assemblies.
5. Inscriptions of Kakatiya Ganapati (A.D. 1199) from Karimnagar District records a land grant made by the Governor of Chuneridesa to Manchi-Bhattapadhyaya, the priest of king Ganapati.

Secular Grants: From the seventh century onwards, officers of the state were also being remunerated through land grants. This is of special significance because it created another class of landlords who were not Brahmanas.

The gift of land on officials in charge of administrative divisions is mentioned as early as c. A.D. 200 (the time of Manu) but the practice picks up momentum in the post-Gupta period. Literary works dealing with central India, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bihar and Bengal between the tenth and twelfth centuries make frequent references to various kinds of grants to ministers, kinsmen and those who rendered military services. The rajas, rajaputras, ranakas, mahasamantas, etc. mentioned in Pala land charters were mostly vassals connected with land. The incidence of grants to state officials varies from one region to another. To illustrate, while we hear of about half a dozen Paramar official ranks, only a few of them are known to have received land grants. But very large territories were granted to vassals and high officers under the Chalukyas of Gujarat. The available evidences suggest that Orissa had more service grants than Assam, Bengal and Bihar taken together. Further, the right of various officials to enjoy specific and exclusive levies—irrespective of the tenure of these levies—was bound to create intermediaries with interests in the lands of the tenants.

Devadanas: Large scale gifts to the religious establishments, both brahmanical and non-brahmanical, find distinctive places in inscriptive evidences. These centres worked as nuclei of agricultural settlements and helped in integrating various peasant and tribal settlements through a process of acculturation. They also integrated various socio-economic groups through service tenures or remuneration through temple lands. Temple lands were leased out to tenants, who paid a higher share of the produce to the temple. Such lands were also managed either by the sabha of the brahmadeya or mahajananas of the agrahara settlements. In non-Brahmana settlements also temples became the central institution. Here temple lands came to be administered by the temple executive committees composed of land owning non-Brahmanas, e.g. the Velalas of Tamil Nadu, the Okkalu, Kamnu, etc. of Karnataka.
different groups were assigned a caste and ritual status. It is in this process that people following "impure" and "low occupations" were assigned the status of untouchables, kept out of the temple and given quarters at the fringes of the settlement.

The supervision of temple lands was in the hands of Brahma and non-Brahma landed elite. The control of irrigation sources was also a major function of the local bodies dominated by landed elite groups. Thus the Brahma, the temple and higher strata of non-Brahmanas as landlords, employers and holders of superior rights in land became the central feature of early medieval agrarian organisation.

The new landed elite also consisted of local peasant clan chiefs or heads of kinship groups and heads of families, who had kani rights i.e. rights of possession and supervision. In other words, several strata of intermediaries emerged between the King and the actual producer.

1.3.2 Rights in Land

An important aspect relating to land grants is the nature of rights granted to the assignees. Rights conferred upon the grantees included fiscal and administrative rights. The taxes, of which land tax was the major source of revenue, theoretically payable to the King or government, came to be assigned to the donees. The reference to pariharas or exemptions in the copper plate and stone inscriptions registering such grants indicate that what was theoretically payable to the King was not being completely exempted from payment but the rights were now transferred to the grantees. This was apparently based on the sanction of the dharmashastras, which sought to establish the royal ownership of land and hence justify such grants, creating intermediary rights in land.

Although there is some evidence of a communal basis of land rights in early settlements, the development of private ownership or rights is indicated by the fact that the grantees often enjoyed rights of alienation of land. They also enjoyed other hereditary benefits in the settlements. Land gifts were often made after purchase from private individuals. Hereditary ownership seems to have developed out of such grants, both religious and secular.

1.4 TECHNOLOGICAL IMPROVEMENTS

During the early medieval period there was an increase in irrigation sources such as canals, lakes, tanks (tataka, eri) and wells (kupa and kinaru). That the accessibility to water resources was an important consideration in the spread of rural settlements is shown by regional studies. Keres or tanks in south Karnataka, nadi (river), pushkarini (tank), srota (water channel) etc. in Bengal and araghatta-wells in western Rajasthan used to be natural points of reference whenever distribution and transfer of village lands had to be undertaken. Naturally, the concern for water resources contributed to the extension of cultivation and intensification of agricultural activities. Water-lifts of different kinds operated by man and animal power were also known. Epigraphic sources record the construction and maintenance of such irrigation works between eight and thirteenth centuries. Many of the lakes/tanks of this period have survived well into the modern times. Some of them were repaired, revived and elaborated under the British administration. The step wells (vapis) in Rajasthan and Gujarat became extremely popular in the eleventh-thirteenth centuries. They were meant for irrigating the fields as well as for supplying drinking water.

The increase in the number of irrigation works was due to an advance in irrigation technology. There is evidence of the use of more scientific and permanent methods of flood control, damming of river waters, sluice construction (with piston valve and cisterns) both at the heads of canals and of lakes and tanks. Flood control was achieved gradually through breaching of rivers for canals and mud embankments which ensured the regulated use of water resources.

Lakes or reservoirs were more commonly used in semi dry and rain fed areas, as well as river basins, where the rivers dried up in summer. Construction of water reservoirs was not only a measure of lowland irrigation but also a part of the overall supply system.
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was initiated by ruling families and maintained by local institutions such as the sābha (Brahmana assembly) and ur (non-Brahmana village assembly) in Tamil Nadu. Maintenance of lakes/tanks etc. i.e. desilting, bund and sluice repair was looked after by a special committee of local assemblies and cesses were levied for the purpose.

Royal permission was accorded for digging tanks or wells, when gifts were made to Brahmans and temples. Land was demarcated for construction and maintenance of canals and tanks, etc. Digging of tanks was considered a part of the privileges enjoyed by the grantees and an act of religious merit. Hence, resourceful private individuals also constructed tanks.

No less significant were the improvements in agricultural implements. For example, a tenth century inscription from Ajmer refers to "big" plough. Similarly, separate implements are mentioned for weeding parasitic plants. Vriksharurveda mentions steps to cure diseases of trees. Water lifting devices such as araghatta and ghatiyantra are mentioned in inscriptions and literary works. The former was specially used in the wells of Rajasthan in the ninth-tenth centuries. The Krishisukti of Kashyapa prescribed that the ghatiyantra operated by oxen is the best, that by men was the worst while the one driven by elephants was of the middling quality.

Advanced knowledge about weather conditions and their use in agricultural operations is noticeable in such texts as the Gurusamhita and Krishinakshara.

More than one hundred types of cereals including wheat, barley, lentils, etc. are mentioned in contemporary writings on agriculture. According to the Shunyapurana more than fifty kinds of paddy were cultivated in Bengal. The knowledge of fertilizers improved immensely and the use of the compost was known. Cash crops such as arecanuts, betel leaves, cotton, sugarcane, etc. find frequent mention. Rajashekhara (early tenth century) tells us about the excellent sugarcane of north Bengal which yielded juice even without the use of pressing instrument. Commodity production of coconut and oranges assumed special importance in peninsular India during this period.

Marco-Polo hints at increased production of spices when he says that the city of Kinsay in China alone consumed ten thousand pounds of pepper everyday which came from India. He also mentions the great demand for Indian ginger in European markets. Harvesting of three crops and rotation of crops were known widely. Thus, advanced agricultural technology was being systematised and diffused in various parts of the country causing substantial boom in agricultural production.

6. A Kannada Incription (on hero-stone) of 9th century A.D., from Navall, records the construction of a tank in memory of hero in the reign of Vira Nalimaha...
Check Your Progress 2

1) How did brahmadeyas helped in agrarian expansion?

2) What is the difference between brahmadeya, secular, and devadana grants?

3) What was the nature of rights enjoyed by land grantees?
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4) Describe briefly the main methods of irrigation.

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1.5 RURAL TENSION

Notwithstanding agrarian expansion, the rural landscape was far from being a homogeneous scene. There is, to begin with, heterogeneous and stratified peasantry. Unlike the age old and pre-Gupta gahapatis we now have graded personnel associated with land: Kshetrik, karshaka, halin and ardhik. Regrettably, there is hardly any indication of landownership in these terms, which seem to be referring to various categories of cultivators. The conversion of the brahmadeyas into non-brahmadeyas and that of the latter into agraharas were potential sources of tension in rural areas. The damara revolts in Kashmir, rebellion of the Kaivarthas in the reign of Ramapal in Bengal, acts of self immolation in situations of encroachments on land in Tamil Nadu, appropriation of donated land by shudras in the Pandya territory, are indices of distrust against the new landed intermediaries. The fact that donors often looked for land where cultivation was not disputed also shows the seeds of turmoil. The possibility of the hero-stones in and around agraharas also has the potential of throwing light on rumblings beneath the surface in agrarian settlements.

Why does the concept of brahmahatyata (killing of a Brahmana) become very pronounced in early medieval times? Answers to this question raise doubts about the validity of “brahmana-peasant alliance” and “peasant state and society” (see Sec. 1.7). This is, however, not to deny other possible areas of tension within rural society between Brahmanas and temples and within ranks of secular land holders.

1.6 AGRICULTURE AND THE EXCHANGE NETWORK

It is sometimes maintained that in the early medieval economic organisation, which was a predominantly agrarian and self-sufficient village economy, production was mainly subsistence oriented and was not in response to the laws of the market. Hence there was little scope for economic growth. Craftsmen and artisans were attached either to villages or estates or religious establishments. Hence there was no significant role for traders and middlemen, who only procured and supplied iron tools, oil, spices, cloth, etc. to rural folk. In other words the functioning of the market system was extremely limited.

The aforesaid picture is certainly true for the period 300-800 A.D. However, the subsequent 500 years witnessed a rapid increase in the number of agrarian settlements and the growth of local markets (see Unit 2) initially for local exchange. Subsequently, the need for regular exchange within a region and with other regions led to organised commerce. This in turn led to the emergence of merchant organisations, itinerant trade and partial monetisation from the ninth century. Though the relative importance of these features varied from one region to another (See also Units 3 and 4) the increasing role of agriculture in this new economy is easily seen.

Agricultural products came to be exchanged with items of long distance trade carried on by itinerant traders. This development also led to a change in the pattern of landownership towards the close of the early medieval period. Merchants and economically influential craftsmen, like weavers, invested in land i.e. purchased land
called the Jagati-kottali (community of weavers) and the community of Telligas (oil pressers) were active participants in agriculture. The former are repeatedly mentioned as excavating tanks and laying out gardens.

1.7 THE CHARACTERISATION OF EARLY MEDIEVAL AGRARIAN ECONOMY

Different views have been put forward regarding the nature of the overall set up of early medieval agrarian economy. On the one hand, it is seen as a manifestation of feudal economy, while on the other it is dubbed as a peasant state and society.

The salient features of 'Indian Feudalism' are:

1) Emergence of hierarchical landed intermediaries. Vassals and officers of state and other secular assignee had military obligations and feudal titles. Sub-infeudation (varying in different regions) by these donees to get their land cultivated led to the growth of different strata-of intermediaries. It was a hierarchy of landed aristocrats, tenants, share croppers and cultivators. This hierarchy was also reflected in the power/administrative structure, where a sort of lord-vassal relationship emerged. In other words, Indian feudalism consisted in the gross unequal distribution of land and its produce.

2) Another important feature was the prevalence of forced labour. The right of extracting forced labour (vishti) is believed to have been exercised by the Brahmana and other grantees of land. Forced labour was originally a prerogative of the King or the state. It was transferred to the grantees, petty officials, village authorities and others. In the Chola inscriptions alone, there are more than one hundred references to forced labour. Even the peasants and artisans come within the jurisdiction of vishti. As a result, a kind of serfdom emerged, in which agricultural labourers were reduced to the position of semi-serfs.

3) Due to the growing claims of greater rights over land by rulers and intermediaries, peasants also suffered a curtailment of their land rights. Many were reduced to the position of tenants facing ever growing threat of eviction. A number of peasants were only ardikas (share croppers). The strain on the peasantry was also caused by the burden of taxation, coercion and increase in their indebtedness.

4) Surplus was extracted through various methods. Extra economic coercion was a conspicuous method. With the rise of new property relations, new mechanisms of economic subordination also evolved. The increasing burden is evident in the mentioning of more than fifty levies in the inscription of Rajaraja Chola.

5) It was relatively a closed village economy. The transfer of human resources along with land to the beneficiaries shows that in such villages the peasants, craftsmen and artisans were attached to the villages and hence were mutually dependent. Their attachment to land and to service grants ensured control over them by the beneficiaries.

In brief, a subject and immobile peasantry, functioning in relatively self-sufficient villages buttressed by varna restrictions, was the marked feature of the agrarian economy during the five centuries under survey.

The theory of the existence of autonomous peasant societies is put forward in opposition to the theory of Indian feudalism. It is based mainly on the evidence from South Indian sources.

According to this theory, autonomous peasant regions called the nadus evolved in South India by early medieval times. They were organised on the basis of clan and kinship ties. Agricultural production in the nadus was organised and controlled by the nattar, i.e., people of the nadu, organising themselves into assemblies, i.e., nadu. Members of this assembly were velahas or non-Brahmana peasants. Their autonomy is indicated by the fact that when land grants were made by the kings and lesser
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Chiefs, orders were issued with the consent of the nattar. Orders were first addressed to them. They demarcated the gift-land and supervised the execution of the grant because they were the organizers of production. The Brahmans and dominant peasants became allies in the production process. Apparently, the exponent of this hypothesis share the notion of rural self-sufficiency, which is an important component of Indian feudalism. The theories of Indian feudalism and autonomous peasant societies have their adherents and claim to be based on empirical evidence. However, early medieval agrarian economy was a highly complex one. In order to understand its character and to provide a general framework for its study, detailed studies of its regional patterns will have to be worked out.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Give a few causes for tensions in rural areas during the period under review.

2) What was the pattern of commerce in early medieval period? Did it effect the pattern of land ownership?

3) Give five salient features of Indian feudalism.

1.8 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit the survey of agrarian economy during the five centuries between the eighth and thirteenth highlights:

- Perceptible expansion of agriculture in practically all over the Indian sub-continent as a result of land grants. While the hitherto virgin lands and forested areas attracted this expansion, grants were also made in regions which were already under cultivation,

- The deep rooted ideological interests of religious establishments—both brahmanical and non-brahmanical, which sang praises of gifts of land,

- The emergence of various types of agrarian settlements with graded land rights,

- Growing interests of non-agriculturists in land, specially those of state officials, traders, artisans, etc.,

- The spurt in technological improvements—in irrigation, agricultural implements, crops and cropping pattern etc.
• the mutual relationships amongst different groups related to land underlining seeds of rural tension, and
• the debate on the characterisation of early medieval agrarian economy focussing on the distinguishing traits of “Indian feudalism” and “Peasant State and Society”.

1.9 KEY WORDS

**Agrahara**: Primarily a rent free village in the possession of Brahmanas.

**Ardhika**: A cultivator who tills land of others and gets half the crop as his share.

**Basadi**: Jain monastic establishment.

**Brahmadeya**: Generally tax free land or village given as gift to Brahmanas.

**Damar**: Powerful officials in Kashmir who developed landed interests and were opposed to Brahmanas.

**Devadana**: Rent free land gifted to brahmanical temples deities. Its Jain and Buddhist counterpart is **pallichanda**.

**Dharmashastra**: Brahmanical scriptures, law books.

**Halin**: Ploughman

**Karshaka**: Tiller of soil.

**Mahajana**: A sort of assembly of Brahmanas.

**Mahasamanta**: The “great chieftain”, feudatory of a higher rank than samanta.

**Parihara**: Exemptions from taxes and obligations (privileges granted to the donees of rent-free land).

**Peasant State and Society**: A set-up where peasants are “free” to own means of production and cultivate land according to their interests.

**Peasantisation**: Process through which people unconnected with land were encouraged to undertake cultivation as a profession.

**Ranaka**: Title of feudatory ruler.

**Shrotriya**: Brahman, learned in the Vedas.

1.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) i) Central India, Northern Deccan and Andhra
   ii) Bengal, Orissa, Gujarat and Rajasthan
   iii) Tamil Nadu, Karnataka
   iv) Kerala

2) You should include in your answer items like foodgrains, gold, money, cultivable land, garden, plough, cows, oxen, etc. Gift of land was considered the best. Also see Sub-sec. 1.2.2

Check Your Progress 2

1) **Brahmadeya** could help in agrarian expansion because these were exempted from land revenue and enjoyed other privileges, therefore, the grant holders had more incentives to develop these lands. Besides most of these lands were virgin and making them cultivable helped in expanding the cultivable area. Also see Sub-sec. 1.3.1.

2) **Brahmadeya** grants were given to Brahmanas only while secular grants were given to state functionaries in lieu of their salaries and **devadana** grants were given to brahmanical as well as non-brahmanical temples. Also see Sub-sec. 1.3.1.
3) The grantees had such rights as collection of land revenue, other taxes and maintain administrative control. See Sub-sec. 1.3.2.

4) Your answer should include such devices as wells, tanks, lakes, canal. You should also mention the water lifting devices such as ghatiyantra, araghatta and the use of animal power. See Sec. 1.4.

Check Your Progress 3

1) The main reasons for tension were the conversion of brahmadeya lands into non-brahmadeyas and agraharas, encroachment on other land and number of intermediaries. See Sec. 1.5.

2) The commercial activities within a region, and with other regions were undertaken. Agriculture produce was exchanged with other products often from distant regions. The investment in land by merchants and influential craftsmen changed the pattern of landownership. Also see Sec. 1.6.

3) Your answer should include such features of Indian feudalism like emergence of hierarchical landed intermediaries, prevalence of forced labour, curtailment of land rights of peasants, economic subordination by surplus extraction and existence of a relatively closed village economy. Also see Sec. 1.7.