

APPOLO STUDY CENTRE

Basic source for
Tamil Nadu in Freedom struggle
TEST -11 (12.4.26)

Role of TamilNadu in Freedom struggle, Early Agitations against British Rule- Role of Women in Freedom Struggle		
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4. People's Revolt

Introduction

The establishment of political and economic dominance by the British over many parts of India after the Battle of Plassey, 1757 disrupted the political, social and economic order of the country. This led to the divesting many landlords and chieftains of their power and estates. Naturally, many of them revolted against the British. The English assumed the right of collecting the annual tribute from the Palayakkarar. The first resistance to the British was offered by the Pulithevar. Since then there had been rebellions by Palayakkarar such as the VeerapandiyaKattabomman, Oomathurai, Marudu brothers and DheeranChinnamalai.

Origin of Palayam

The Vijayanagar rulers appointed Nayaks in their provinces. The Nayak of Madurai in turn appointed Palayakkarar. Viswanatha became the Nayak of Madurai in 1529. He noticed that he could not control the chieftain who wanted more powers in their provinces. So with the consultation of his minister AriyanathaMudaliyar, Viswanatha instituted Palayakkarar system in 1529. The whole country was divided into 72 Palayams and each one was put under a Palayakkarar. Palayakkarar was the holder of a territory or a Palayam. These Palayams were held in military tenure and extended their full co-operation to be need of the Nayaks. The Palayakkarars collected taxes, of which one third was given to the Nayak of Madurai another one third for the expenditure of the army and rest was kept for themselves.

Early revolts of South India

Revolt of the Palayakkars

During the 17th and 18th centuries the Palayakkarars played a vital role in the politics of Tamil Nadu. They regarded themselves as independent. Among the Palayakkarars, there were two blocs, namely the Eastern and the Western blocs. The Eastern Palayams were the Nayaks ruled under the control of Kattabomman and the Western palayams were the Maravasruled under the control of Pulithevan. These two palayakkarars refused to pay the kist (tribute) to the English and rebelled.

The early struggle between the Palayakkaras and the East India Company had a strong political dimension. By the Carnatic treaty of 1792, consolidated the English power over the Palayakkars. The English got the right to collect taxes. The result was the outbreak of the revolt of Palayakkars.

Pulithevar

Pulithevar was the pioneer in Tamil Nadu, to protest against the English rule in India. He was the Palayakkarar of the Nerkattumseval, near Tirunelveli. During his tenure he refused to pay the tribute neither to Mohammed Ali, the Nawab of Arcot nor to the English. Further he started opposing them. Hence, the forces of the Nawab of Arcot and the English attacked Pulithevar. But the combined forces were defeated by Pulithevar at Tirunelveli. Pulithevar was the first Indian king to have fought and defeated the British in India. After this victory Pulithevan attempted to form a league of the Palayakkars to oppose the British and the Nawab. In 1759, Nerkattumseval was attacked by the forces of Nawab of Arcot under the leadership of Yusuf Khan. Pulithevar was defeated at Anthanallur and the Nawabs forces captured Nerkattumseval in 1761. Pulithevar who lived in exile recaptured Nerkattumseval in 1764. Later, he was defeated by Captain Campell in 1767. Pulithevar escaped and died in exile without fulfilling his purpose, although his courageous trail of a struggle for independence in the history of South India.

VirapandyaKattabomman

The Ancestors of Kattabomman belonged to Andhra. They migrated to Tamil country during the 11th century. As a feudatory under Pandyas, JagaveerapandiayaKattabomman ruled Virapandyapuram. Panchalankurichi was its capital. He later became a Poligar during the rule of Nayaks. He was succeeded by his son VeerapandyaKattabomman. His wife was Jakkammal and his brothers were Oomathurai and Sevathaiah.

Nawab of Arot

After the decline of the Vijayanagarempire, the mughals established their supremacy in the south. The Nawabs acted as their representatives in Karnataka. Panchalamkuruchipalayam was acted as an ally to the Nawab of Arcot. Hence it paid tribute to the Nawabs. But in 1792, the political condition had completely changed. Based on the Carnatic treaty of 1792, the company gained the right to collect taxes from

Panchalamkuruchi. The collection of tribute was the main cause for the rivalry between the English and Kattabomman.

Kattabomman met Jackson

In 1798, Colin Jackson, the collector of Ramanathapuram wrote letters to Kattabomman asking him to pay the tribute arrears. But Kattabomman replied that he was not in a position to remit the tribute due to the famine in the country. Colin Jackson got angry and decided to send an expedition to punish Kattabomman. However, the Madras government directed the collector to summon the Palayakkarar at Ramanathapuram and hold a discussion. In 1798, Kattabomman and his minister Siva Subramaniam met the Collector at Ramanathapuram. Upon a verification of accounts, Colin Jackson was convinced that Kattabomman had cleared most of the arrears leaving only 1080 pagodas as balance. During this interview Kattabomman and his Minister, Sivasubramaniam, had to stand before the arrogant collector for three hours. The Collector insulted them and tried to arrest Kattabomman and his minister. Kattabomman tried to escape with his minister. Oomathurai suddenly entered the fort with his men and helped the escape of Kattabomman. But unfortunately Sivasubramaniam was taken as prisoner.

Edward Clive and Kattabomman

After his return to Panchalamkuruchi, Kattabomman wrote a letter to the Madras Council narrating the behaviour of the Collector Colin Jackson. Edward Clive, the Governor of Madras Council ordered Kattabomman to surrender. The Madras Council directed Kattabomman to appear before a Committee. Meanwhile, Edward Clive dismissed the Collector for his misbehaviour and released SivaSubramania. Kattabomman appeared before the Committee, and found Kattabomman was not guilty. S.R. Lushington was appointed collector in the place of Colin Jackson, who was eventually dismissed from service.

The confederacy of Palayakkarars

During that time, Marudu Pandyan of Sivaganga formed the South Indian Confederacy of rebels against the British, along with the neighbouring Palayakkarars. This confederacy declared a proclamation which came to be known as Tiruchirappalli Proclamation. Kattabomman was interested in this confederacy. He tried to establish his influence over Sivagiri, who refused to join with alliance of the rebels. Kattabomman advanced towards Sivagiri. But the Palayakkar of Sivagiri was a tributary to the Company. So the Company considered the expedition of Kattabomman as a challenge to their authority. So the Company ordered the army to march to Panchalamkuruchi.

Fall of Panchalamkuruchi

Major Bannerman moved his army to Panchalamkuruchi on 5th September. They cut off all the communications to the Fort. In a clash at Kallarpatti, Siva

Subramaniam was taken as a prisoner. Kattabomman escaped to Pudukottai. VijayaRagunathaTondaiman, Raja of Pudukottai, captured Kattabomman from the jungles of Kalapore and handed over to the Company. After the fall of Panchalamkuruchi, Bannerman brought the prisoners to an assembly of the Palayakkarars and after trial sentenced them to death. Sivasubramania was executed at Nagalapuram. On the 16th October ViraPandyaKattabomman was tried before an assembly of Palayakkarar, summoned at Kayathar. On 17th October 1799, Kattabomman was hanged at the fort of Kayathar. Kattabomman's heroic deeds were the subject of many folk ballads which kept his memory alive among the people.

VeluNachiyar

VeluNachiyar was a queen of Sivagangai. At the age of 16, she was married to MuthuVaduganathar, the Raja of Sivagangai. In 1772, the Nawab of Arcot and the British troops invaded Sivagangai. They killed MuthuVaduganathar in KalaiyarKoil battle. VeluNachiyar escaped with her daughter VellachiNachiyar and lived under the protection of GopalaNayaker at Virupachi near Dindigul. During this period she organised an army and employed her intelligent agents to find where the British stored their ammunition. She arranged a suicide attack by a faithful follower Kuyili, a commander of VeluNachiar. She recaptured Sivagangai and was again crowned as queen with the help of Marudu brothers. She was the first queen to fight against the British colonial power in India. She is known by Tamils as Veeramangai and also known as 'Jhansi Rani of South India'.

Marudu Brothers

Marudu brothers were the sons of MookiahPalaniappan and Ponnathal. The elder brother was called Periyamarudu (VellaMarudhu) and the younger brother ChinnaMarudu. ChinnaMarudu was more popular and was called MaruduPandiyan. ChinnaMarudu served under MuthuVaduganathaPeriaUdayaDevar (1750-1772) of Sivaganga. In 1772 the Nawab of Arcot laid seige of Sivaganga and captured it. MuthuVaduganathaPeriaUdayaDevar, died in battle. However after a few months Sivaganga was re-captured by Marudu Brothers and Periyamarudu was enthroned as the ruler. ChinnaMarudu acted as his adviser. Due to the terrorist activities against British, he was called as "Lion of Sivaganga". In the later half of the eighteenth century the rebellion against the British was carried by Marudu Brothers in South India.

Causes for the conflict

Kattabomman was hanged to death and his brother Umaithurai and others fled to Sivaganga, where MaruduPandya gave protection to them. The merchants of Sivaganga did not like the interference of the company in their internal politics. The company waged war against Sivaganga for these two causes.

The South Indian Rebellion (1800-1801)

In February 1801 the brothers of Kattabomman, Oomathurai and Sevathaiah escaped from Palayamkottai prison and reached Kamudhi. ChinnaMarudu took them to Siruvayal, his capital. They reconstructed their ancestral fort at Panchalamkurichi. The British troops under Conlin Macaulay retook the fort in April and the Palayakkarar brothers sought shelter in Sivaganga. The English demanded Marudu Pandyas to hand over the fugitives, the latter refused. Conlonel Agnew and Colonel Innes marched against them. The Palayakkarar War assumed a much broader character than its predecessor. It was directed by a confederacy consisting of MaruduPandiari of Sivaganga, GopalaNayak of Dindugal, Kerala Varma of Malabar and KrishnappaNayak and Dhoondaji of Mysore. The English declared war against the confederacy.

The Tiruchirappalli Proclamation (1801)

The Marudu Pandyas issued a proclamation of Independence called Tiruchirappalli Proclamation in June 1801. The Proclamation of 1801 was the first call to the Indians to unite against the British. A copy of the proclamation was pasted on the walls of the Nawab's palace in the fort of Tiruchi and another copy was placed on the walls of the Vaishnava temple at Srirangam. Thus Marudu brothers spread the spirit of opposition against the English everywhere. As a result many Palayakkarars of Tamil Nadu went on a rally to fight against the English. ChinnaMarudu collected nearly 20,000 men to challenge the English army. British reinforcements were rushed from Bengal, Ceylon and Malaya. The rajas of Pudukkottai, Ettayapuram and Thanjavur stood by the British. Divide and rule policy followed by the English split the forces of the Palayakkarars.

English annexed Sivagangai

In May 1801, English attacked the rebels in Thanjavur and Tiruchi areas. The rebels went to Piranmalai and Kalayarkoil. They were again defeated by the forces of the English. In the end, the superior military strength and the able commanders of the British army won the battle. The rebellion failed and English annexed Sivagangai in 1801. The Marudu brothers were executed in the Fort of Tirupathur in Ramanathapuram District on 24 October 1801. Oomathurai and Sevathaiah was captured and beheaded at Panchalamkuruchi on 16 November 1801. Seventy three rebels were sentenced to Penang in Malaya, then called the Prince of Wales Island. Though they fell before the English, they were the pioneers in sowing the seeds of nationalism in the land of Tamil.

Thus the South Indian Rebellion is a land mark in the history of Tamil Nadu. Although the 1800-1801 rebellion was to be categorized in the British records as the Second Palayakkarar War. Under the terms of the Karnataka Treaty on 31 July 1801, the British assumed direct control over Tamil Nadu. The Palayakkarar system was abolished.

DheeranChinnamalai

DheeranChinnamalai was born at Melapalayam in Chennimalai near Erode. His original name was Theerthagiri. He was a palayakkarar of Kongu country who fought the British East India Company. The Kongu country comprising Salem, Coimbatore, Karur and Dindigul formed a part of the Nayak kingdom of Madurai but had been annexed by the Wodayars of Mysore. After the fall of the Wodayars, these territories along with Mysore were controlled by the Mysore Sultans. After the third and fourth Mysore wars the entire Kongu region passed into the hands of the English.

DheeranChinnamalai was trained by French military in modern warfare. He was along the side Tippu Sultan to fight against the British East India Company and got victories against the British. After Tippu Sultan's death Chinnamalai settled down at Odanilai and constructed a fort there to continue his struggle against the British. He sought the help of Marathas and MaruthuPandiyar to attack the British at Coimbatore in 1800. British forces managed to stop the armies of the allies and hence Chinnamalai was forced to attack Coimbatore on his own. His army was defeated and he escaped from the British forces. Chinnamalai engaged in guerrilla warfare and defeated the British in battles at Cauvery, Odanilai and Arachalur. During the final battle, Chinnamalai was betrayed by his cook Nallapan and was hanged in Sankagiri Fort in 1805.

Vellore Revolt (1806)

The family members of Tippu were imprisoned at Vellore fort after the fourth Mysore war. Some three thousand ex-servants and soldiers of Hyder and Tippu had also been moved to the vicinity of Vellore and their property in Mysore confiscated. It was quite natural that they were all unhappy and they hated the English. The Vellore fort consisted of large majority of Indian troops, a good part of it recently been raised in Tirunelveli after the Palayakkarar uprising of 1800. Many of the trained soldiers of the various Palayams were admitted into the English army. Thus the Vellore fort became the meeting ground of the rebel forces of South India. In 1803, William Cavendish Bentinck became Governor of Madras. During his period certain military regulations were introduced in 1805-06 and were enforced by the Madras Commander-in-Chief Sir John Cradock. But the sepoys felt that these were designed to insult them.

Causes for the revolt

- ✓ The strict discipline, new weapons, new methods and uniforms were all new to the sepoys.
- ✓ The sepoys were asked to shave the beard and to trim the moustache.
- ✓ The wearing of religious mark on the forehead and the use of ear-rings were also banned.
- ✓ The English treated the Indian sepoys as their inferior. There was the racial prejudice.

Immediate Cause

In June 1806, military General Agnew introduced a new turban, resembling a European hat with a badge of cross on it. It was popularly known as 'Agnew's turban'. Both the Hindu and Muslim soldiers opposed it. So the soldiers were severely punished by the English.

Course of the Revolt

The Indian soldiers were waiting for an opportunity to attack the English officers. Tippu's family also took part. FettaHyder, the elder son of Tippu, tried to form an alliance against the English. On July 10th in the early morning the native sepoys of the 1st and 23rd Regiments started the revolt. Colonel Fancourt, who commanded the garrison, was their first victim. The fort gates were closed. Meantime, the rebels proclaimed FutteHyder, as their new ruler. The British flag in the fort was brought down. The tiger-striped flag of Tippu Sultan was hoisted on the fort of Vellore.

Suppression of the Revolt

Major Cootes who was outside the fort rushed to Ranipet and informed Colonel Gillespie. Col. Gillespie reached Vellore fort. He made an attack on the rebel force. The revolt was completely suppressed and failed. Peace was restored in Vellore. On the whole, 113 Europeans and about 350 sepoys were killed in the uprising. The revolt was suppressed within a short period. It was one of the significant events in the history of Tamil Nadu.

Effects of the Vellore Revolt

- ✓ The new methods and uniform regulations were withdrawn.
- ✓ The family of Tippu as a precautionary measure was sent to Calcutta.
- ✓ William Cavendish Bentinck was removed from his service.

Causes for the failure of the Revolt

- ✓ There was no proper leadership to guide the soldiers properly.
 - ✓ The rebellion was also not well organised.
 - ✓ Divide and Rule policy of the English, split the unity of the Indians.
- V.D. Savarkar calls the Vellore revolt of 1806 as the prelude to the first War of Indian Independence in 1857.

The Revolt of 1857

The early uprisings did not succeed in threatening the British in India. It took the Revolt of 1857 to bring home to the Company and the British thought that their rule was not accepted to a large section of the population. The Revolt of 1857 was a product of the character and the policies of colonial rule. The cumulative effect of British

expansionist policies, economic exploitation and administrative innovations over the years had adversely affected the positions of all rulers of Indian states.

Causes of the Revolt

- ✓ The most important cause of revolt 1857 was a popular discontent of the British policy of economically exploiting India. This hurt all sections of society. The peasants suffered due to high revenue demands and the strict revenue collection policy.
- ✓ Policies of doctrine of lapse, subsidiary alliance and policy of Effective Control created discontentment among people. Annexation of Oudh proved that even the grovelling loyalty can't satisfy British greed for territories.
- ✓ The conversion activities of Christian missionaries were looked upon with suspicion and fear. The priests and the maulavis showed their discontent against the British rule.
- ✓ Abolition of practices like sati, female infanticide, support to widow remarriage and female education were seen by many as interference in their Indian culture by the Europeans.
- ✓ The Indian sepoys were looked upon as inferior beings and treated with contempt by their British officers. They were paid much less than the British soldiers. All avenues of the promotion were closed to them as all the higher army posts were reserved for the British.

Immediate cause

The immediate cause was the introduction of new Enfield Rifles in the army. The top of the cartridge of this rifle was to be removed by the mouth before loading it in the rifle. The cartridges were greased by the fat of pig and the cow. The Indian sepoys believed that the British were deliberately attempting to spoil the religion of both the Hindus and the Muslims because while the Hindus revered the cow, the Muslims hated the pig. The soldiers, therefore, determined to refuse their service and, ultimately revolted. Thus, the primary and the immediate cause of the revolt was the use of the greased cartridges.

The Outbreak of the Revolt

On 29 March 1857 at Barrackpur (near Kolkata) MangalPandey, a young Sepoy from Bengal Regiment, refused to use the greased cartridge, and shot down his sergeant. He was arrested, tried and executed. When this news spread many sepoys revolted.

Course of the Revolt

On 10 May 1857, the Sepoys of the third cavalry at Meerut openly revolted by swarming the prisons and releasing their comrades. They were immediately joined by the men of the 11th and 20th Native Infantries, and they murdered some English

officers and then marched to Delhi. The arrival of Meerut sepoys at Delhi on 11th May and declared of Bahadur Shah II as the Emperor of India. Delhi became the centre of the Great Revolt and Bahadur Shah, its symbol.

The revolt spread quickly. There were mutinies at Lucknow, Kanpur, Jhansi, Bareilly, Bihar, Faizabad, and many other places in north India. Many of them found that it was a good opportunity to burn the papers of their landlords. Many others whose titles and pensions were abolished by the British who participated in it, in order to take revenge. The Muslim leaders and Maulvis sought the opportunity of establishing the Muslim rule in India after turning out the British.

Suppression of the Revolt

Lord Canning, the governor-general took immediate steps to suppress the revolt. He collected the forces of Madras, Bombay, Sri Lanka and Burma. On his own initiative, he called the British army which was deputed to China by Britain to Calcutta. He ordered the loyal Sikh army to proceed to Delhi immediately. The British regained their lost positions very soon.

Delhi was recaptured by General John Nicholson on 20 September, 1857 and deportation of Bahadur Shah II to Rangoon where he died in 1862. Military operations with the recovery of Kanpur were closely associated with the recovery of Lucknow. Sir Colin Campbell occupied Kanpur. Nana Saheb was defeated at Kanpur and escaped to Nepal. His close associate Tantia Tope escaped to central India, was captured and put to death while asleep. The Rani of Jhansi had died in the battle-field. Kunwar Singh, Khan Bahadur Khan were all dead, while the Begum of Awadh was compelled to hide in Nepal. The revolt was finally suppressed. By the end of 1859, British authority over India was fully re-established.

Places of Revolt	Indian Leaders	British Officials who suppressed the revolt
Delhi	Bahadur Shah II	John Nicholson
Luck now	Begum HazaratMahal	Henry Lawrence
Kanpur	Nana Saheb	Sir Colin Campbell
Jhansi & Gwalior	Lakshmi Bai, Tantia tope	General Hugh Rose
Bareilly	Khan Bahadur Khan	Sir Colin Campbell
Bihar	Kunwar Singh	William Taylor

The Causes for the Failure of the Revolt

Various causes were responsible for the failure of the revolt.

- ✓ Lack of organisation, discipline, common plan of action, centralised leadership, modern weapons and techniques.
- ✓ The rebel leaders were no match to the British Generals. Rani Lakshmi Bai, Tantia Tope and Nana Saheb were courageous but they were not good generals.

- ✓ Non-participation of Bengal, Bombay, Madras, western Punjab and Rajputana.
- ✓ The modern educated Indians did not support the Revolts as they believed that only British rule could reform Indian society and modernize it.
- ✓ The British managed to get the loyalty of the Sikhs, Afghans and the Gurkha regiments. The Gurkhas actually helped the British in suppressing the revolt.
- ✓ The British had better weapons, better generals, and good organisation.

Consequences of the Revolt

- ✓ The Revolt of 1857 marked a turning point in the history of India. It led to changes in the system of administration and the policy of the Government.
- ✓ The administration of India was transferred from the East India Company to the British Crown through the 'Queen's Proclamation' in 1858.
- ✓ The governor general was given the title of viceroy.
- ✓ The Board of Directors and the Board of Control were replaced by the Council of 15 members headed by the Secretary of State to supervise Indian affairs.
- ✓ The Indian Army was thoroughly reorganised. More Britishers were employed in the army.
- ✓ The British military policy came to be dominated by the idea of 'divide and counterpoise'.

Infact, the Revolt of 1857 played an important role in bringing the Indian people together and imparting them the consciousness of belonging to one country. The Revolt paved the way for the rise of the modern national movement. It was at the beginning of the twentieth century that the 1857 Revolt came to be interpreted as a "planned war of national independence", by V.D. Savarkar in his book, First War of Indian Independence.

Unit - 6

Early Revolts against British Rule in Tamil Nadu

Learning Objectives

To acquaint ourselves with

- Palayakkarar system and the revolts of Palayakkarars against the British
- Velunachiyar, Puli Thevar, Kattabomman and Marudhu Brothers in the anti-British uprisings
- Vellore Revolt as a response to British pacification of south India

Introduction

After defeating the French and their Indian allies in the three Carnatic Wars, the East India Company began to consolidate and extend its power and influence. However, local kings and feudal chieftains resisted this. The first resistance to East India Company's territorial aggrandisement was from Puli Thevar of Nerkattumseval in the Tirunelveli region. This was followed by other chieftains in the Tamil country such as Velunachiyar, Veerapandiya Kattabomman, the Marudhu brothers, and Dheeran Chinnamalai. Known as the Palayakkarars Wars, the culmination of which was Vellore Revolt of 1806, this early resistance to British rule in Tamil Nadu is dealt with in this lesson.

Resistance of Regional Powers against the British

(a) Palayams and Palayakkarars

The word "palayam" means a domain, a military camp, or a little kingdom. Palayakkarars (Poligar is how the British referred to them) in Tamil refers to the holder of a little kingdom as a feudatory to a greater sovereign. Under this system, palayam was given for valuable military services rendered by any individual. This type of Palayakkarars system was in practice during the rule of Pratapa Rudra of Warangal in the Kakatiya kingdom. The system was put in place in Tamil Nadu by Viswanatha Nayaka, when he became the Nayak ruler of Madurai in 1529, with the support of his minister Ariyanathar.

Traditionally there were supposed to be 72 Palayakkarars. The Palayakkarars were free to collect revenue, administer the territory, settle disputes and maintain law and order. Their police duties were known as Padikaval or Arasu Kaval. On many occasions the Palayakkarars helped the Nayak rulers to restore the kingdom to them. The personal relationship and an understanding between the King and the Palayakkarars made the system to last for about two hundred years from the Nayaks of Madurai, until the takeover of these territories by the British.

Eastern and Western Palayams Among the 72 Palayakkarars, created by the Nayak rulers, there were two blocs, namely the prominent eastern and the western Palayams. The eastern Palayams were Sattur, Nagalapuram, Ettayapuram, and Panchalamkurichi and the prominent

western palayams were Uthumalai, Thalavankottai, Naduvakurichi, Singampatti, Seithur. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Palayakkars dominated the politics of Tamil country. They functioned as independent, sovereign authorities within their respective Palayams.

Revenue Collection Authority to the Company Rule

The Nawab of Arcot had borrowed money from the East India Company to meet the expenses he had incurred during the Carnatic Wars. When his debts exceeded his capacity to pay, the power of collecting the land revenue dues from southern Palayakkars was given to the East India Company. Claiming that their lands had been handed down to them over sixty generations, many Palayakkars refused to pay taxes to the Company officials. The Company branded the defiant Palayakkars as rebels and accused them of trying to disturb the peace and tranquillity of the country. This led to conflict between the East India Company and the Palaykkars which are described below.

Palayakkars' Revolt 1755-1801

(a) Revolt of Puli Thevar 1755-1767

In March 1755 Mahfuzkhan (brother of the Nawab of Arcot) was sent with a contingent of the Company army under Colonel Heron to Tirunelveli. Madurai easily fell into their hands. Thereafter Colonel Heron was urged to deal with Puli Thevar as he continued to defy the authority of the Company. Puli Thevar wielded much influence over the western palayakkars. For want of cannon and of supplies and pay to soldiers, Colonel Heron abandoned the plan and retired to Madurai. Heron was recalled and dismissed from service.

Confederacy and Alliance with Enemies of the British

Three Pathan officers, Nawab Chanda Sahib's agents, named Mianah, Mudimiah and Nabikhan Kattak commanded the Madurai and Tirunelveli regions. They supported the Tamil palayakkars against Arcot Nawab Mohamed Ali. Puli Thevar had established close relationships with them. Puli Thevar also formed a confederacy of the Palayakkars to fight the British. With the exception of the Palayakkars of Sivagiri, all other Maravar Palayams supported him. Ettayapuram and Panchalamkurichi also did not join this confederacy. Further, the English succeeded in getting the support of the rajas of Ramanathapuram and Pudukottai. Puli Thevar tried to get the support of Hyder Ali of Mysore and the French. Hyder Ali could not help Puli Thevar as he was already locked in a serious conflict with the Marathas.

Kalakadu Battle

The Nawab sent an additional contingent of sepoy to Mahfuzkhan and the reinforced army proceeded to Tirunelveli. Besides the 1000 sepoy of the Company, Mahfuzkhan received 600 more sent by the Nawab. He also had the support of cavalry and foot soldiers from the Carnatic. Before Mahfuzkhan could station his troops near Kalakadu, 2000 soldiers from Travancore joined the forces of Puli Thevar. In the battle at Kalakadu,

Mahfuzkhan's troops were routed.

Yusuf Khan and Puli Thevar

The organized resistance of the palayakkarars under Puli Thevar gave an opportunity to the English to interfere directly in the affairs of Tirunelveli. Aided by the Raja of Travancore, from 1756 to 1763, the palayakkarars of Tirunelveli led by Puli Thevar were in a constant state of rebellion against the Nawab's authority. Yusuf Khan (also known as Khan Sahib or, before his conversion to Islam, Marudhanayagam) who had been sent by the Company was not prepared to attack Puli Thevar unless the big guns and ammunition from Tiruchirappalli arrived. As the English were at war with the French, as well as with Hyder Ali and Marathas, the artillery arrived only in September 1760. Yusuf Khan began to batter the Nerkattumseval fort and this attack continued for about two months. On 16 May 1761 Puli Thevar's three major forts (Nerkattumseval, Vasudevanallur and Panayur) came under the control of Yusuf Khan.

In the meantime, after taking Pondicherry the English had eliminated the French from the picture. As a result of this the unity of palayakkarars began to break up as French support was not forthcoming.

Travancore, Seithur, Uthumalai and Surandai switched their loyalty to the opposite camp. Yusuf Khan who was negotiating with the palayakkarars, without informing the Company administration, was charged with treachery and hanged in 1764.

Fall of Puli Thevar

After the death of Khan Sahib, Puli Thevar returned from exile and recaptured Nerkattumseval in 1764. However, he was defeated by Captain Campbell in 1767. Puli Thevar escaped and died in exile.

Ondiveeran

Ondiveeran led one of the army units of Puli Thevar. Fighting by the side of Puli Thevar, he caused much damage to the Company's army. According to oral tradition, in one battle, Ondiveeran's hand was chopped off and Puli Thevar was saddened. But Ondiveeran said it was a reward for his penetration into enemy's fort causing many heads to roll.

(b) Velunachiyar (1730-1796)

Born in 1730 to the Raja Sellamuthu Sethupathy of Ramanathapuram, Velunachiyar was the only daughter of this royal family. The king had no male heir. The royal family brought up the princess Velunachiyar, training her in martial arts like valari, stick fighting and to wield weapons. She was also adept in horse riding and archery, apart from her proficiency in English, French and Urdu.

At the age of 16, Velunachiyar was married to Muthu Vadugar, the Raja of Sivagangai, and had a daughter by name Vellachinachiar. In 1772, the Nawab of Arcot and the Company troops under the command of Lt. Col. Bon Jour stormed the Kalaiyar Kovil Palace. In the ensuing battle Muthu Vadugar was killed. Velunachiyar escaped with her daughter and lived under the protection of Gopala Nayakar at Virupachi near Dindigul for eight years.

During her period in hiding, Velunachiyar organised an army and succeeded in securing an alliance with not only Gopala Nayakar but Hyder Ali as well. Dalavay (military chief) Thandavarayanar wrote a letter to Sultan Hyder Ali on behalf of Velunachiyar asking for 5000 infantry and 5000 cavalry to defeat the English. Velunachiyar explained in detail in Urdu all the problems she had with East India Company. She conveyed her strong determination to fight the English. Impressed by her courage, Hyder Ali ordered his Commandant Syed in Dindigul fort to provide the required military assistance.

Gopala Nayak, the Palayakkarar of Virupachi

Gopala Nayak spearheaded the famous Dindigul League, which was formed with Lakshmi Nayak of Manaparai and Poojai Nayak of Devadanapatti. He drew inspiration from Tipu Sultan who sent a deputation to show his camaraderie. He led the resistance against the British from Coimbatore and later joined Oomaidurai, Kattabomman's brother. He put up a fierce fight at Aanamalai hills where the local peasants gave him full support. But Gopala Nayak was overpowered by the British forces in 1801.

Velunachiyar employed agents for gathering intelligence to find where the British had stored their ammunition. With military assistance from Gopala Nayakar and Hyder Ali she recaptured Sivagangai. She was crowned as Queen with the help of Marudhu brothers. She was the first female ruler or queen to resist the British colonial power in India.

Kuyili, a faithful friend of Velunachiyar, is said to have led the unit of women soldiers named after Udaiyaal. Udaiyaal was a shepherd girl who was killed for not divulging information on Kuyili. Kuyili is said to have walked into the British arsenal (1780) after setting herself on fire, thus destroying all the ammunition.

(c) Rebellion of Veerapandya Kattabomman 1790-1799

Veerapandya Kattabomman became the Palayakkarar of Panchalamkurichi at the age of thirty on the death of his father, Jagavira Pandya Kattabomman. The Company's administrators, James London and Colin Jackson, had considered him a man of peaceful disposition. However, soon several events led to conflicts between Veerapandya Kattabomman and the East India Company. The Nawab, under the provisions of a treaty signed in 1781, had assigned the revenue of the Carnatic to the Company to be entirely under their management and control during the war with Mysore Sultan. One-sixth

of the revenue was to be allowed to meet the expenses of Nawab and his family. The Company had thus gained the right to collect taxes from Panchalamkurichi. The Company appointed its Collectors to collect taxes from all the palayams. The Collectors humiliated the palayakkarars and adopted force to collect the taxes. This was the bone of contention between the English and Kattabomman.

Confrontation with Jackson

The land revenue arrear from Kattabomman was 3310 pagodas in 1798. Collector Jackson, an arrogant English officer, wanted to send an army to collect the revenue dues but the Madras Government did not give him permission. On 18 August 1798, he ordered Kattabomman to meet him in Ramanathapuram. But Kattabomman's attempts to meet him in between proved futile, as Jackson refused to give him audience both in Courtallam and Srivilliputhur. At last, an interview was granted and Kattabomman met Jackson in Ramanathapuram on 19 September 1798. It is said that Kattabomman had to stand for three hours before the haughty Collector Jackson. Sensing danger, Kattabomman tried to escape, along with his minister Sivasubramanianar. Oomaithurai suddenly entered the fort with his men and helped the escape of Kattabomman. At the gate of the Ramanathapuram fort there was a clash, in which some people including Lieutenant Clarke were killed. Sivasubramanianar was taken prisoner.

Appearance before Madras Council

On his return to Panchalamkurichi, Kattabomman represented to the Madras Council about how he was ill-treated by the collector Jackson. The Council asked Kattabomman to appear before a committee with William Brown, William Oram and John Casamajor as members. Meanwhile, Governor Edward Clive, ordered the release of Sivasubramanianar and the suspension of the Collector Jackson. Kattabomman appeared before the Committee that sat on 15 December 1798 and reported on what transpired in Ramanathapuram. The Committee found Kattabomman was not guilty. Jackson was dismissed from service and a new Collector S.R. Lushington appointed. Kattabomman cleared almost all the revenue arrears leaving only a balance of 1080 pagodas.

Kattabomman and the Confederacy of Palayakkarars

In the meantime, Marudhu Pandiyar of Sivagangai formed the South Indian Confederacy of rebels against the British, with the neighbouring palayakkarars like Gopala Nayak of Dindigul and Yadul Nayak of Aanamalai. Marudhu Pandiyar acted as its leader. The Tiruchirappalli Proclamation had been made. Kattabomman was interested in this confederacy. Collector Lushington prevented Kattabomman from meeting the Marudhu Brothers. But Marudhu Brothers and Kattabomman jointly decided on a confrontation with the English. Kattabomman tried to influence Sivagiri Palayakkarars, who refused to join. Kattabomman advanced towards Sivagiri. But the Palayakkarars of Sivagiri was a tributary to the Company. So the Company considered the expedition of Kattabomman as a challenge to their authority. The Company ordered the army to march on to Tirunelveli.

The Siege of Panchalamkurichi

In May 1799, Lord Wellesley issued orders from Madras for the advance of forces from Tiruchirappalli, Thanjavur and Madurai to Tirunelveli. Major Bannerman commanded the troops. The Travancore troops too joined the British. On 1 September 1799, an ultimatum was served on Kattabomman to surrender. Kattabomman's "evasive reply" prompted Bannerman to attack his fort. Bannerman moved his entire army to Panchalamkurichi on 5 September. They cut off all the communications to the fort. Bannerman deputed Ramalinganar to convey a message asking Kattabomman to surrender. Kattabomman refused. Ramalinganar gathered all the secrets of the Fort, and on the basis of his report, Bannerman decided the strategy of the operation. In a clash at Kallarpatti, Sivasubramanianar was taken prisoner.

Execution of Kattabomman

Kattabomman escaped to Pudukottai. The British put a prize on his head. Betrayed by the rajas of Ettayapuram and Pudukottai Kattabomman was finally captured. Sivasubramanianar was executed at Nagalapuram on the 13 September. Bannerman made a mockery of a trial for Kattabomman in front of the palayakkarars on 16 October. During the trial Kattabomman bravely admitted all the charges levelled against him. Kattabomman was hanged from a tamarind tree in the old fort of Kayathar, close to Tirunelveli, in front of the fellow Palayakkars. Thus ended the life of the celebrated Palayakkarars of Panchalamkurichi. Many folk ballads on Kattabomman helped keep his memory alive among the people.

(d) The Marudhu Brothers

Periya Marudhu or Vella Marudhu (1748-1801) and his younger brother Chinna Marudhu (1753-1801) were able generals of Muthu Vadugar of Sivagangai. After Muthu Vadugar's death in the Kalaiyar Kovil battle Marudhu brothers assisted in restoring the throne to Velunachiyar. In the last years of the eighteenth century Marudhu Brothers organised resistance against the British. After the death of Kattabomman, they worked along with his brother Oomathurai. They plundered the granaries of the Nawab and caused damage and destruction to Company troops.

Rebellion of Marudhu Brothers (1800-1801)

Despite the suppression of Kattabomman's revolt in 1799, rebellion broke out again in 1800. In the British records it is referred to as the Second Palayakkarar War. It was directed by a confederacy consisting of Marudhu Pandyan of Sivagangai, Gopala Nayak of Dindugal, Kerala Verma of Malabar and Krishnaappa Nayak and Dhoondaji of Mysore. In April 1800 they met at Virupachi and decided to organise an uprising against the Company. The uprising, which broke out in Coimbatore in June 1800, soon spread to Ramanathapuram and Madurai. The Company got wind of it and declared war on

Krishnappa Nayak of Mysore, Kerala Varma of Malabar and others. The Palayakars of Coimbatore, Sathyamangalam and Tarapuram were caught and hanged.

In February 1801 the two brothers of Kattabomman, Oomathurai and Sevathaiah, escaped from the Palayamkottai prison to Kamudhi, from where Chinna Marudhu took them to Siruvayal his capital. The fort at Panchalamkurichi was reconstructed in record time. The British troops under Colin Macaulay retook the fort in April and the Marudhu brothers sought shelter in Sivagangai. The English demanded that the Marudhu Pandiyar hand over the fugitives (Oomathurai and Sevathaiah). But they refused. Colonel Agnew and Colonel Innes marched on Sivagangai. In June 1801 Marudhu Pandiyar issued a proclamation of Independence which is called Tiruchirappalli Proclamation.

Proclamation of 1801

The Proclamation of 1801 was an early call to the Indians to unite against the British, cutting across region, caste, creed and religion. The proclamation was pasted on the walls of the Nawab's palace in Tiruchirappalli fort and on the walls of the Srirangam temple. Many palayakars of Tamil country rallied together to fight against the English. Chinna Marudhu collected nearly 20,000 men to challenge the English army. British reinforcements were rushed from Bengal, Ceylon and Malaya. The rajas of Pudukkottai, Ettayapuram and Thanjavur stood by the British. Divide and rule policy followed by the English split the forces of the palayakars soon.

Fall of Sivagangai

In May 1801, the English attacked the rebels in Thanjavur and Tiruchirappalli. The rebels went to Piranmalai and Kalayarkoil. They were again defeated by the forces of the English. In the end the superior military strength and the able commanders of the English Company prevailed. The rebellion failed and Sivagangai was annexed in 1801. The Marudhu brothers were executed in the Fort of Tirupathur near Ramanathapuram on 24 October 1801. Oomathurai and Sevathaiah were captured and beheaded at Panchalamkurichi on 16 November 1801. Seventy-three rebels were exiled to Penang in Malaya. Though the palayakars fell to the English, their exploits and sacrifices inspired later generations. Thus the rebellion of Marudhu brothers, which is called South Indian Rebellion, is a landmark event in the history of Tamil Nadu.

Carnatic Treaty, 1801

The suppression of the Palayakars' rebellions of 1799 and 1800-1801 resulted in the liquidation of all the local chieftains of Tamil Nadu. Under the terms of the Carnatic Treaty of 31 July 1801, the British assumed direct control over Tamilagam and the Palayakar system came to an end with the demolition of all forts and disbandment of their army.

(e) Dheeran Chinnamalai (1756-1805)

Born as Theerthagiri in 1756 in the Mandradiarroyal family of Palayakottai, Dheeran was well trained in silambu, archery, horse riding and modern warfare. He was involved in resolving family and land disputes in the Kongu region. As this region was under the control of the Mysore Sultan, tax was collected by Tipu's Diwan Mohammed Ali. Once, when the Diwan was returning to Mysore with the tax money, Theerthagiri blocked his way and confiscated all the tax money. He let Mohammed Ali go by instructing him to tell his Sultan that "Chinnamalai", who is between Sivamalai and Chennimalai, was the one who took away taxes. Thus he gained the name "Dheeran Chinnamalai". The offended Diwan sent a contingent to attack Chinnamalai and both the forces met and fought at the Noyyal riverbed. Chinnamalai emerged victorious.

Trained by the French, Dheeran mobilised the Kongu youth in thousands and fought the British together with Tipu. After Tipu's death Dheeran Chinnamalai built a fort and fought the British without leaving the place. Hence the place is called Odanilai. He launched guerrilla attacks and evaded capture. Finally the English captured him and his brothers and kept them in prison in Sankagiri. When they were asked to accept the rule of the British, they refused. So they were hanged at the top of the Sankagiri Fort on 31 July 1805.

Vellore Revolt 1806

Before reducing all palayakkarars of south Tamilnadu into submission the East India Company had acquired the revenue districts of Salem, Dindigul at the conclusion of the war with Tipu in 1792. Coimbatore was annexed at the end of the Anglo-Mysore War in 1799. In the same year the Raja of Thanjavur whose status had been reduced to that of a vassal in 1798 gave up his sovereign rights over that region to the English. After the suppression of resistance of Kattabomman (1799) and Marudhu Brothers (1801), the British charged the Nawab of Arcot with disloyalty and forced a treaty on him. According to this Treaty of 1801, the Nawab was to cede the districts of North Arcot, South Arcot, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai and Tirunelveli to the Company and transfer all the administrative powers to it.

(a) Grievances of Indian Soldiers

But the resistance did not die down. The dispossessed little kings and feudal chieftains continued to deliberate on the future course of action against the Company Government. The outcome was the Vellore Revolt of 1806. The objective conditions for a last ditch fight existed on the eve of the revolt. The sepoys in the British Indian army nursed a strong sense of resentment over low salary and poor prospects of promotion. The English army officers' scant respect for the social and religious sentiments of the Indian sepoys also angered them. The state of peasantry from which class the sepoys had been recruited also bothered them much. With new experiments in land tenures causing unsettled conditions and famine breaking out in 1805 many of these sepoys' families were in dire economic straits. The most opportune situation came with the sons and the family members of Tipu being interned in Vellore Fort. The trigger for the revolt came in the form of a new military regulation notified by the Commander-in-Chief Sir John Cradock.

According to the new regulations, the Indian soldiers were asked not to wear caste marks or earrings when in uniform. They were to be cleanly shaven on the chin and maintain uniformity about how their moustache looked. The new turban added fuel to fire. The most objectionable addition was the leather cockade made of animal skin. The sepoys gave enough forewarning by refusing to wear the new turban. Yet the Company administration did not take heed.

(b) Outbreak of the Revolt

On 10 July 1806, in the early hours, guns were booming and the Indian sepoys of the 1st and 23rd regiments raised their standard of revolt. Colonel Fancourt, who commanded the garrison, was the first victim. Colonel McKerran of the 23rd regiment was killed next. Major Armstrong who was passing the Fort heard the sound of firing. When he stopped to enquire he was showered with bullets. About a dozen other officers were killed within an hour or so. Among them Lt. Ellyand Lt. Popham belonged to His Majesty's battalion.

Gillespie's Brutality

Major Cootes, who was outside the Fort, informed Colonel Gillespie, the cavalry commandant in Arcot. Gillespie reached the fort along with a squadron of cavalry under the command of Captain Young at 9.00 am. In the meantime, the rebels proclaimed Fateh Hyder, Tipu's eldest son, as their new ruler and hoisted the tiger flag of Mysore sultans in the Fort. But the uprising was swiftly crushed by Col. Gillespie, who threw to winds all war ethics. In the course of suppression, according to an eyewitness account, eight hundred soldiers were found dead in the fort alone. Six hundred soldiers were kept in confinement in Tiruchirappalli and Vellore awaiting Inquiry.

(c) Consequences of Revolt

Six of the rebels convicted by the Court of Enquiry were blown from the guns; five were shot dead; eight hanged. Tipu's sons were ordered to be sent to Calcutta. The officers and men engaged in the suppression of the revolt were rewarded with prize money and promotion. Col. Gillespie was given 7,000 pagodas. However, the commander-in-chief Sir John Cradock, the Adjutant General Agnew and Governor William Bentinck were held responsible for the revolt, removed from their office, and recalled to England. The military regulations were treated as withdrawn.

(d) Estimate of Revolt

The Vellore Revolt failed because there was no immediate help from outside. Recent studies show that the organising part of the revolt was done perfectly by Subedars Sheik Adam and Sheik Hamid and Jamedar Sheik Hussain of the 2nd battalion of 23rd regiment and two Subedars and the Jamedar Sheik Kasim of the 1st battalion of the 1st regiment. Vellore Revolt had all the forebodings of the Great Rebellion of 1857. The only difference was that there was no civil rebellion following the mutiny. The

1806 revolt was not confined to VelloreFort. It had its echoes in Bellary, Walajabad,Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Nandydurg, andSankaridurg.



Unit - 9

Freedom Struggle in Tamil Nadu

Learning Objectives

To acquaint ourselves with:

- Anti-colonial struggles in Tamil Nadu
- Contribution of Christian missionaries to the development of education and amelioration of the depressed classes
- Challenge of the Justices to the Congress in Tamil Nadu
- Militant mass movement of the Congress in Tamil Nadu

Introduction

Tamil Nadu showed the lead in resisting colonial rule. As early as the late eighteenth century the Palayakarars, resisted the English attempts to establish their political hegemony in Tamil Nadu. Even after the defeat of the Palayakarars, an uprising was organised by Indian sepoys and officers in Vellore Fort in 1806 that had its echoes in several cantonments in south India. Thanks to the introduction of Western education and eventual emergence of educated Indian middle class, the struggle against the British took the constitutional path. The freedom struggle in Tamil Nadu was unique, because from the beginning it was not only a struggle for independence from the English rule but also a struggle for independence from social disability imposed by the obnoxious caste system. In this lesson we shall study the role played by nationalists wedded to diverse ideologies in Tamil Nadu.

Early Nationalist Stirrings in Tamil Nadu

By the middle of the nineteenth century a group of educated middle class emerged in Madras and began to show interest in public affairs. As in other parts of India, they formed political associations, such as the Madras Native Association and the Madras Mahajana Sabha to articulate their grievances.

(a) Madras Native Association

The Madras Native Association (MNA) was the earliest organisation to be founded in south India to articulate larger public rather than sectarian interests. It was started by Gazulu Lakshminarasu, Srinivasanar and their associates in 1852. It consisted primarily of merchants. The objective was to promote the interests of its members and their focus was on reduction in taxation. It also protested against the support of the government to Christian missionary activities. It drew the attention of the government to the condition and needs of the people. One of the important contributions of the MNA was its agitation against torture of the peasants by revenue officials. These efforts led to the establishment of the Torture Commission and the eventual abolition of

the Torture Act, which justified the collection of land revenue through torture. However, by 1862, the Madras Native Association had ceased to exist.

(b) Beginnings of the Nationalist Press: The Hindu and Swadesamitran

The appointment of T. Muthuswami as the first Indian Judge of the Madras High Court in 1877 created a furore in Madras Presidency. The entire press in Madras criticized the appointment of an Indian as a Judge. The press opposed his appointment and the educated youth realized that the press was entirely owned by Europeans. The need for a newspaper to express the Indian perspective was keenly felt. G. Subramaniam, M. Veeraraghavachari and four other friends together started a newspaper The Hindu in 1878. It soon became the vehicle of nationalist propaganda. G. Subramaniam also started a Tamil nationalist periodical Swadesamitran in 1891 which became a daily in 1899. The founding of The Hindu and Swadesamitran provided encouragement to the starting of other native newspapers such as Indian Patriot, South Indian Mail, Madras Standard, Desabhimani, Vijaya, Suryodayam and India.

(c) Madras Mahajana Sabha

Madras Mahajana Sabha (MMS) was the earliest organisation in south India with clear nationalist objectives. It was the training ground for the first generation of nationalist leaders. On 16 May 1884 MMS was started by M. Veeraraghavachari, P. Anandacharlu, P. Rangaiah and few others. P. Rangaiah became its first president. P. Anandacharlu played an active role as its secretary. The members met periodically, debated public issues in closed meetings, conducted hall meetings and communicated their views to the government. The objective of MMS was to create a consensus among people of different parts of the Presidency on various issues of public interest and to present it to the government. Its demands included conduct of simultaneous civil service examinations in England and India, abolition of the Council of India in London, reduction of taxes and reduction of civil and military expenditure. Many of its demands were adopted later by the Indian National Congress founded in 1885.

(d) Moderate Phase

Provincial associations such as the Madras Mahajana Sabha led to the formation of an all-India organisation, the Indian National Congress. Leaders from different parts of India attended several meetings before the formation of the Congress. One such meeting was held in December 1884 in Theosophical Society. It was attended by Dadabhai Naoroji, K.T. Telang, Surendranath Banerjee and other prominent leaders apart from G. Subramaniam, Rangaiah and Anandacharlu from Madras.

Prominent Nationalists of Tamil Nadu in the Moderate phase

The early nationalists believed in constitutional methods. Their activities consisted of conducting hall meetings and deliberating the problems of the country in English. These views were communicated to the government in a

language couched in a liberal discourse in the form of petitions, prayers, memoranda, and as evidence in various government commissions of enquiry. When, at the time of Partition of Bengal, Tilak and other leaders adopted popular methods such as mass public meetings, and used vernacular languages to address the larger public, the early nationalists came to be known as moderates. The distinguished Tamil Moderates from Madras: V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, P.S. Sivasamy, V. Krishnasamy, T.R. Venkatramanar, G.A. Natesan, T.M. Madhava Rao, and S. Subramaniam. The primary contribution of moderates lies in exposing the liberal claims of the British: they exposed how the British exploited India and their hypocrisy in following democratic principles in England and imposing an unrepresentative government in the colonies.

The first session of the Indian National Congress was held in 1885 at Bombay. Out of a total of 72 delegates 22 members were from Madras. G. Subramaniam through his writings advanced the cause of nationalism. He ranks with Naoroji and Gokhale for his contribution to the understanding of the economic exploitation of India by the British.

The second session of the Indian National Congress was held in Calcutta in 1886, with Dadabhai Naoroji in the Chair. The third session was held at Makkis Garden, now known as the Thousand lights, in Madras in 1887 with Badruddin Tyabji as president. Out of the 607 all India delegates of 362 were from Madras Presidency.

Tamil Nadu was then part of the Madras Presidency which included large parts of the present-day states of Andhra Pradesh (Coastal districts and Rayalaseema), Karnataka (Bengaluru, Bellary, South Canara), Kerala (Malabar) and even Odisha (Ganjam).

Swadeshi Movement

The partition of Bengal (1905) led to the Swadeshi Movement and changed the course of the struggle for freedom. In various parts of India, especially Bengal, Punjab and Maharashtra popular leaders emerged. They implemented the programme of the Calcutta Congress which called upon the nation to promote Swadeshi enterprise, boycott foreign goods and promote national education. The Swadeshi movement made a deep impact in Tamil Nadu. The Congress carried on a vigorous campaign for boycott of foreign goods.

(a) Response in Tamilnadu

V.O. Chidambaram, V. Chakkaraiyar, Subramania Bharati and Surendranath Arya were some of the prominent leaders in Tamilnadu. Public meetings attended by thousands of people were organised in various parts of Tamilnadu. Tamil was used on the public platform for the first time to mobilise the people. Subramania Bharati's patriotic songs were especially important in stirring patriotic emotions. Many journals were started to propagate Swadeshi ideals. Swadesamitran and

India were prominent journals. The extremist leader Bipin Chandra Pal toured Madras and delivered lectures which inspired the youth. Students and youth participated widely in the Swadeshi Movement.

Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company

One of the most enterprising acts in pursuance of swadeshi was the launching of the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company at Thoothukudi by V.O. Chidambaram. He purchased two ships Gallia and Lavo and plied them between Thoothukudi and Colombo. However, due to cutthroat competition from the European company and the blatantly partisan role played by the government, V.O.C's efforts ended in failure.

Tirunelveli Uprising

V.O.C joined with Subramania Siva in organising the mill workers in Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli. In 1908, he led a strike in the European-owned Coral Mills. It coincided with the release of Bipin Chandra Pal. V.O.C and Subramania Siva, who organised a public meeting to celebrate the release of Bipin, were arrested. The two leaders were charged with sedition and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment. Initially V.O.C. was given a draconian sentence of two life imprisonments. The news of the arrest sparked riots in Tirunelveli leading to the burning down of the police station, court building and municipal office. It led to the death of four people in police firing. V.O.C. was treated harshly in prison and was made to pull the heavy oil press. Others to be arrested included G. Subramaniam and Ethiraj Surendranath Arya. To avoid imprisonment Subramania Bharati moved to Pondicherry which was under French rule. Bharati's example was followed by many other nationalists such as Aurobindo Ghosh and V. V. Subramanianar. The brutal crackdown on Swadeshi leaders virtually brought the Swadeshi Movement to a close in Tamil Nadu.

(b) Revolutionary Activities in Tamil Nadu

As elsewhere the Swadeshi movement inspired the youth. Left leaderless, they turned to the revolutionary path. Pondicherry provided a safe haven for the revolutionaries. Many of these revolutionaries in Tamil Nadu were introduced and trained in revolutionary activities at India House in London and in Paris. M.P.T. Acharya, V.V. Subramanianar and T.S.S. Rajan were prominent among them. Revolutionary literature was distributed by them in Madras through Pondicherry. Radical papers such as India, Vijaya and Suryodayam came out of Pondicherry. Such revolutionary papers and Bharati's poems were banned as seditious literature. These activities in Pondicherry intensified with the arrival of Aurobindo Ghosh and V.V. Subramanianar in 1910. These activities continued till the outbreak of the First World War.

Ashe Murder

In 1904 Nilakanta Brahmachari and others started Bharata Matha Society, a secret society. The objective was to kill British officials and thereby kindle patriotic fervour among the people. Vanchinathan of Senkottai, was influenced by this organisation. On 17 June 1911 he shot dead Robert W.D'E. Ashe, Collector of Tirunelveli in Maniyachi Junction. After this he shot himself. Divorced from the people these young revolutionaries, despite their patriotism, failed to inspire and mobilize the people.

(c) Annie Besant and the Home Rule Movement

While the extremists and revolutionaries were suppressed with an iron hand, the moderates hoped for some constitutional reforms. However, they were disappointed with the Minto-Morley reforms as it did not provide for responsible government. Despite this the Congress extended support to the British war effort in the hope of getting more reforms.

Thus when the national movement was in its ebb, Annie Besant, an Irish lady and leader of the Theosophical Society, proposed the Home Rule Movement on the model of Irish Home Rule League. She started Home Rule League in 1916 and carried forward the demand for home rule all over India. G.S. Arundale, B.P. Wadia and C.P. Ramaswamy assisted her in this campaign. They demanded home rule with only a nominal allegiance to British Crown. She started the newspapers New India and Commonwealth to carry forward her agenda. She remarked, "Better bullock carts and freedom than a train deluxe with subjection". Under the Press Act of 1910 Annie Besant was asked to pay hefty amount as security. She wrote two books, How India wrought for Freedom and India: A Nation and a pamphlet on self-government.

Students joined the movement in large numbers who were trained in Home Rule classes. They were formed into boy scouts and volunteer troops. Annie Besant and her coworkers were interned and prohibited from making public speeches or involve in any political activity. Annie Besant was elected the President of the Congress session of 1917. Members of the Home Rule Movement such as B.P. Wadia played a key role in organising the working classes by forming trade unions. Not only did they succeed in improving their working conditions, they made them part of the struggle for freedom. However, with the rise of Gandhi as a national leader Annie Besant and the Home Rule Leagues were eclipsed.

Non-Brahmin Movement and the Challenge to Congress

In the meanwhile, there was rapid growth in education in the Madras Presidency. There was an increase in the number of educated non-Brahmins. Intense political and social activity discussed above politicised the educated non-Brahmins. They raised the issue of caste discrimination and unequal opportunities in government employment and representation in elected bodies, which were dominated by Brahmins. Further, the Congress was also overwhelmingly composed of Brahmins.

(a) The South Indian Liberal Federation

The non-Brahmins organised themselves into political organisations to protect their interests. In 1912 the Madras Dravidian Association was founded. C. Natesanar played an active role as its secretary. In June 1916 he established the Dravidian Association Hostel for non-Brahmin students. He also played a key role in bridging the differences between two leading non-Brahmin leaders of the time, Dr. T.M. Nair and P. Thyagarayar. Both of them were earlier part of the Congress and were disillusioned by how non-Brahmins were sidelined in the organisation. On 20 November 1916 a meeting of about thirty non-Brahmins was held under the leadership of P. Thyagarayar, Dr. T.M. Nair and C. Natesanar at Victoria Public Hall in Chennai. The South Indian Liberal Federation (SILF) was founded to promote the interests of the non-Brahmins. They also launched three newspapers: Justice in English, Dravidian in Tamil and Andhra Prakasika in Telugu. Soon the SILF began to be popularly known as Justice Party after its English daily. The Justice Party also held several conferences throughout the Presidency to set up branches.

Demand for Reservation

The Non-Brahmin Manifesto was released outlining its objectives viz., reservation of jobs for non-Brahmins in government service, and seats in representative bodies. It opposed the Home Rule Movement as a movement of Brahmins and feared that Home Rule might give them more power. It also criticised the Congress as a party of the Brahmins. Montagu's announcement of political reforms in the Parliament in 1917 intensified political discussions in Tamil Nadu. The Justice Party demanded communal representation (i.e. representation for various communities in society). The Madras Government was also supportive of the Justice Party as the latter believed that English rule was conducive for the development of the non-Brahmins. The Act of 1919 provided reservation of seats to non-Brahmins, a move criticised by the Congress but welcomed by the Justice Party.

Justice Ministry

The Congress boycotted the elections of 1920. The Justice Party won 63 of 98 elected seats in the Legislative Council. A. Subburayalu of the Justice Party became the first chief minister. After the 1923 elections, Raja of Panagal of the Justice Party formed the ministry. The Justice Party introduced various measures for the benefit of non-Brahmins. They were reservation of appointments in local bodies and education institutions, establishment of Staff Selection Board which later became the Public Service Commission, enactment of Hindu Religious Endowment Act and Madras State Aid to Industries Act, abolition of devadasi system, allotment of poramboke lands (waste government lands) to the poor for housing and extension of primary education to the depressed classes through fee concessions, scholarships and mid-day meals.

(b) Government's Repressive Measures: Rowlatt Act

Given the important contribution of India (especially the soldiers who fought in far-off lands in the cause of Empire) in World

War I Indians expected more reforms from Britain. However, a draconian Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act, popularly known as the Rowlatt Act, after the name of Sir Sidney Rowlatt, who headed the committee that recommended it was passed in 1919. Under the Act anyone could be imprisoned on charges of terrorism without due judicial process. Indians were aghast at this. Gandhi gave voice to the anger of the people and adopted the Satyagraha method that he had used in South Africa.

Rowlatt Satyagraha

On 18 March 1919 Gandhi addressed a meeting on Marina Beach. On 6 April 1919 hartal was organised to protest against the "Black Act". Protest demonstrations were held at several parts of Tamil Nadu. Processions from many areas of the city converged in the Marina beach where there was a large gathering. They devoted the whole day to fasting and prayer in the Marina beach. Madras Satyagraha Sabha was formed. Rajaji, Kasturirangar, S. Satyamurthy and George Joseph addressed the meeting. A separate meeting of workers was addressed by V. Kalyanasundaram (Thiru. V. Ka) B.P. Wadia and V.O.C. An important aspect of the movement was that the working classes, students and women took part in large numbers.

George Joseph

George Joseph, a barrister and eloquent speaker, played a leading role in organising and publicising the cause of Home Rule League in Madurai. Though born in Chengannur (Alappuzha district, Kerala State), he chose to settle down in Madurai and practice as a people's lawyer. In the course of his long public life, he led the Vaikom Satyagraha in Kerala, as he viewed it as an issue of civil rights for all citizens of India. He championed the cause of the "Criminal Tribes" of Tamil Nadu. He was fondly called "Rosaappu Durai" by the people of Madurai for the services he rendered to the affected communities. He helped the Harvey Mill workers of Madurai to set up Madurai Labour Union (1918). The Union's initial struggles resulted in higher wages and reduced work hours for the mill workers.

(c) Khilafat Movement

Following the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre General Dyer who was responsible for it was not only acquitted of all charges but rewarded.

After the First World War the Caliph of Turkey was humiliated and deprived of all powers. To restore the Caliph the Khilafat Movement was started. Muslims who had largely kept from the nationalist movement now joined it in huge numbers. In Tamil Nadu Khilafat Day was observed on 17 April 1920, with a meeting presided over by Maulana Shaukat Ali. Another such conference was held at Erode. Vaniyambadi was as the epicenter of Khilafat agitation.

Non-Cooperation Movement

Tamil Nadu was active during the Non-cooperation Movement. C. Rajaji and E.V. Ramaswamy (EVR, later known as Periyar) provided the leadership. Rajaji worked closely with Yakub Hasan, founder of the Madras branch of the Muslim League. As a result, the Hindus and the Muslims cooperated closely during the course of the movement in Tamil Nadu. A Congress volunteer corps was set up to distribute pamphlets, carry flags during processions and to maintain order in the meetings. They also played an important part in picketing of liquor shops.

(a) No Tax Campaigns and Temperance Movement

As part of the non-cooperation movement, in many places, cultivators refused to pay taxes. A no-tax campaign took place in Thanjavur. Councils, schools and courts were boycotted. Foreign goods were boycotted. There were a number of workers' strikes all over the region, many of them led by nationalist leaders. One of the important aspects of the movement in Tamil Nadu was the temperance movement or movement against liquor. Toddy shops were picketed. Demonstrations and hartals were organised in all parts of the Presidency. There were also agitations by communities against the Criminal Tribes Act. In November 1921 it was decided to organise civil disobedience. Rajaji, Subramania Sastri and EVR were arrested. The visit of Prince of Wales on 13 January 1922 was boycotted. In the police repression two were killed and many injured. The Non-Cooperation Movement was withdrawn in 1922 after the Chauri Chaura incident in which 22 policemen were killed.

(b) E.V.R. and the Constructive Programme

E.V.R. played an important role in Tamil Nadu during this period. He campaigned vigorously for the promotion and sale of khadi. In his opposition to consumption of liquor he cut down an entire coconut grove owned by him. He also played a key role in the satyagraha for temple entry in Vaikom, then under Travancore. It was a time when the depressed classes were not even permitted to walk on the streets around the temple or come within a certain distance of the upper castes. After the major leaders of Kerala were arrested, EVR went to Vaikom and galvanised the movement. He was arrested and sentenced to one-month imprisonment. He refused to leave Vaikom even after his release. He was arrested again for making inspiring speeches and was sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment. When he returned to Erode after his release he was arrested for his speeches to promote khadi. In June 1925, the ban on the roads around the temple in Vaikom was lifted. For his contribution against caste discrimination and temple entry agitation in Vaikom, Periyar was hailed as 'Vaikom Hero'.

Cheranmadevi Gurukulam Controversy

However, by this time E.V.R. had become increasingly dissatisfied with the Congress. He felt it was promoting the interests of the Brahmins alone. The

Cheranmadevi Gurukulam controversy and opposition to communal representation within the Congress led E.V.R. to leave the Congress.

To further the cause of national education, a gurukulam was established in Cheranmadevi by V.V. Subramanianar. It received funds from the Congress. However, students were discriminated on the basis of caste. Brahmin and Non-Brahmin students were made to dine separately and the food served too was different. The issue was brought to the notice of E.V.R. who questioned the practice and severely criticised it along with another leader, Dr P. Varadarajulu.

In the Kanchipuram Conference of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee held on 21 November 1925, he raised the issue of representation for non-Brahmins in the legislature. His efforts to achieve this since 1920 had met with failure. When the resolution was defeated, he left the Conference along with other non-Brahmin leaders who met separately. Soon E.V.R. left the Congress and started the Self Respect Movement.

(c) Swarajists-Justicites Rivalry

Following the withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Congress was divided between 'no-changers' who wanted to continue the boycott of the councils and 'pro-changers' who wanted to contest the elections for the councils. Rajaji along with other staunch Gandhian followers opposed the council entry. Along with Kasturirangar and M.A. Ansari, Rajaji advocated the boycott of the councils. Opposition to this led to the formation of the Swaraj Party within the Congress by Chittaranjan Das and Motilal Nehru. In Tamil Nadu the Swarajists were led by S. Srinivasanar and S. Satyamurti.

(d) Subbarayan Ministry

In the elections held in 1926, the Swarajists won the majority of the elected seats. However, it did not accept office in accordance with the Congress policy. Instead they supported an independent, P. Subbarayan to form the ministry. The Swarajists did not contest the 1930 elections leading to an easy victory for the Justice Party. The Justice Party remained in office till 1937.

Agitation for Removal of Neill Statue (1927)

James Neill of the Madras Fusiliers (infantry men with firearms) was brutal in wreaking vengeance at Kanpur ('the Cawnpur massacre', as it was called) in which many English women and children were killed in the Great Rebellion of 1857. Neill was later killed by an Indian sepoy. A statue was erected for him at Mount Road, Madras. Nationalists saw this as an insult to Indian sentiments, and organised a series of demonstrations in Madras. Protesters came from all over the Madras Presidency and were led by S. N. Somayajulu of

Tirunelveli. Many were arrested and sentenced to prison. Gandhi, who visited Madras during the same time, gave his support to the agitation. The statue was finally moved to Madras Museum when Congress Ministry, led by C. Rajaji, formed the government in 1937.

(e) Simon Commission Boycott

In 1927 a statutory commission was constituted under Sir John Simon to review the Act of 1919 and to suggest reforms. However, to the great disappointment of Indians, it was an all-white commission with not a single Indian member. So the Congress boycotted the Simon Commission. In Madras, the Simon Boycott Propaganda Committee was set up with S. Satyamurti as the president. There was a widespread campaign among the students, shopkeepers, lawyers and commuters in train to boycott. The arrival of Simon Commission in Madras on 18 February 1929 was greeted with demonstrations and hartals. Black flags were waved against the Commission. The police used force to suppress the protest.

Civil Disobedience Movement

(a) Towards Poorna Swaraj

In the 1920s, Congress with Gandhi in leadership, was transforming into a broad-based movement in Tamil Nadu. The Madras session of the Indian National Congress in 1927 declared complete independence as its goal. It appointed a committee under Motilal Nehru to frame the constitutional reforms in opposition to the Simon Commission. In the 1929 Lahore session of the Congress, Poorna Swaraj (complete independence) was adopted as the goal and on 26 January 1930 the national flag was hoisted by Jawaharlal Nehru on the banks of river Ravi as the declaration of independence.

(b) Salt March to Vedaranyam

When the Viceroy did not accept the demands put forward by Gandhi, he launched the Civil Disobedience Movement by setting out on a Salt Satyagraha with a march to Dandi on 12 March 1930. The Civil Disobedience Movement was a mass movement with the participation of students, shopkeepers, workers, women, etc. Demonstrations, hartals, staging of swadeshi dramas and songs were the order of the day in both rural and urban areas. Tamil Nadu was in the forefront of the Civil Disobedience Movement. In the city of Madras, shops were picketed and foreign goods boycotted. Rajaji organised and led a salt satyagraha march to Vedaranyam. The march started from Tiruchirappalli on 13 April 1930 and reached Vedaranyam in Thanjavur district on 28 April. A special song was composed for the march by Namakkal V. Ramalinganar with the lines, "A War is ahead sans sword, sans bloodshed... Join this march." Despite a brutal crackdown by the police, the marching satyagrahis were provided a warm reception along the route. On reaching Vedaranyam 12 volunteers under the leadership of Rajaji broke the salt law by picking up salt. Rajaji was arrested. T.S.S. Rajan, Rukmani

Lakshmipathi, Sardar Vedarathnam, C. Swaminathar and K. Santhanam were among the prominent leaders who participated in the Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha.

(c) Widespread Agitations in Tamil Districts

The satyagrahis under the leadership of T. Prakasam and K. Nageswara Rao set up a camp at Udayavanam near Madras. However, the police arrested them. It led to a hartal in Madras. The clashes with the police in Tiruvallikeni which lasted for three hours on 27 April 1930 left three dead. Volunteers who attempted to offer salt Satyagraha in Rameswaram were arrested. Similar attempts at Uvari, Anjengo, Veppalodai, Thoothukudi and Tharuvaikulam were stopped. Mill workers struck work across the province. Women participated enthusiastically. Rukmani Lakshmipathi was the first woman to pay penalty for violation of salt laws. Police used brutal force to suppress the movement. Bhashyam, popularly known as Arya, hoisted the national flag atop Fort St. George on 26 January 1932. Satyamurti actively picketed shops selling foreign clothes, organised processions and distributed pamphlets. N.M.R. Subbaraman and K. Kamaraj also played an important role.

Martyrdom of Tirupur Kumaran

On 11 January 1932 a procession carrying national flags and singing patriotic songs was brutally beaten by the police in Tirupur. O.K.S.R. Kumaraswamy, popularly Tirupur Kumaran, fell dead holding the national flag aloft. He is hailed as Kodikatha Kumaran. Thus, civil disobedience movement was one of the largest mass movements in Tamil Nadu with participation of people from all sections of the society.

(d) First Congress Ministry

The Government of India Act of 1935 introduced Provincial Autonomy. The Council of Ministers, responsible to the legislature, administered the provincial subjects. However, the Governor was empowered to disregard the advice of the elected government. In the 1937 election the Congress emerged victorious. The Justice Party was trounced. Congress victory in the elections clearly indicated its popularity with the people.

Rajaji formed the first Congress Ministry. He introduced prohibition on an experimental basis in Salem. To compensate for the loss of revenue he introduced a sales tax. On the social question, he opened temples to the 'untouchables'. Efforts of T. Prakasam led to the appointment of a committee to enquire into the condition of the tenants in the Zamindari areas. However, excepting debt conciliation boards to reduce rural indebtedness, no other measure was adopted.

When the British involved India in the Second World War without consulting the elected Congress ministries, the latter resigned.

A temple entry programme with "harijans" in Madurai

Meenakshiammantemple was organised (9 July 1939) by Vaidyanathar, L.N. Gopalsamy, President and Secretary of Madurai Harijana Sevak Sangh respectively. The Temple Entry Authorisation and Indemnity Act, 1939 for the removal of the civil and social disabilities against the "depressed classes" was passed.

(e) Anti-Hindi Agitation

One of the controversial measures of Rajaji was the introduction of Hindi as a compulsory subject in schools. This was considered to be a form of Aryan and North Indian imposition detrimental to Tamil language and culture, and therefore caused much public resentment. E.V.R. led a massive campaign against it. He organised an anti-Hindi Conference at Salem. It formulated a definite programme of action. The Scheduled Castes Federation and the Muslim League extended its support to the anti-Hindi agitation. Natarajan and Thalamuthu, two of the enthusiastic agitators died in prison. A rally was organised from Tiruchirappalli to Madras. More than 1200 protestors including E.V.R. were arrested. After the resignation of the Congress Ministry, the Governor of Madras who took over the reins of administration removed Hindi as a compulsory subject.

Quit India Struggle

Failure of the Cripps Mission, war time shortages and price rise created much discontent among the people. On 8 August 1942 the Quit India resolution was passed and Gandhi gave the slogan 'Do or Die'. The entire Congress leadership was arrested overnight. K. Kamaraj while returning from Bombay noticed that at every railway station the police waited with a list of local leaders and arrested them as they got down. Kamaraj gave the police the slip and got down at Arakkonam itself. He then worked underground and organised people during the Quit India Movement. Rajaji and Satyamurti were arrested together when they went about distributing pamphlets. The movement was widespread in Tamil Nadu and K. Kamaraj there were many instances of violence such as setting fire to post offices, cutting of telegraph lines and disrupting railway traffic.

Undying Mass Movement

All sections of the society participated in the movement. There were a large number of workers strike such as strikes in Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, Madras Port Trust, Madras Corporation and the Electric Tramway. Telegraph and telephone lines were cut and public building burnt at Vellore and Panapakkam. Students of various colleges took active part in the protests. The airport in Sulur was attacked and trains derailed in Coimbatore. Congress volunteers clashed with the military in Madurai. There were police firings at Rajapalayam, Karaikudi and Devakottai. Many young men and women also joined the INA. The Quit India Movement was suppressed with brutal force.

The Royal Indian Navy Mutiny, thenegotiations initiated by the newly formedLabour Party Government in Englandresulting in India's independence but sadlywith partition of the country into India andPakistan has formed part of the Lesson inUnit VIII.



11th term 2

18. Early Resistance to British Rule

Introduction

The conquest of territories and the expansionist policy of the British East India Company led to a series of rebellions of deposed kings, or their descendants, uprooted zamindars, and palayakarars. Historians describe this as primary resistance. Independent of such revolts were the uprisings of the dispossessed peasants and tribals. The rapid changes introduced by the British in the agrarian relations, land revenue system, and judicial administration, elaborated in the previous lesson, greatly disrupted the agrarian economy, resulting in widespread misery among various sections of the society. Therefore, when the aggrieved erstwhile ruling class raised a standard of revolt, the support of the mass of peasants and artisans was not lacking. In this lesson we discuss the happenings of that time in south India as well as the great rebellion of 1857.

Mysore Sultans and their Resistance Rise of Haider Ali

Mysore was a small feudatory kingdom under the Vijayanagar Empire. After Vijayanagar fell in 1565, the ruling dynasty of Wodeyars asserted their independence and the Raja Wodeyar ascended the throne in 1578. The capital moved from Mysore to Srirangapatnam in 1610. Wodeyar dynasty continued to reign until 1760, when the real power changed hands to Haider Ali who was appointed Dalwai or prime minister.

Haider's father Fateh Muhammad was the Faujdar (garrison commander) of Kolar. After his death Haider's soldierly qualities helped him to rise through the military ranks. By 1755 he had secured a powerful position, commanding 100 horsemen and 2000 infantry men. Haider suppressed an army mutiny in Mysore and restored the places of the Mysore kingdom occupied by Marathas. He received the title of "Fateh Haider Bahadur" or "the brave and victorious Lion". In 1760 Haider allied himself with the French at Pondicherry against the English, but his position at home was endangered by the plot engineered by the Marathas. As Haider successfully handled the situation and thereafter he became not only Dalawai but the de facto ruler of Mysore. In 1770 the Mysore king Nanjaraja was poisoned to death and Haider's hand was suspected. Thereafter Wodeyar kings functioned only as nominal rulers. The real royal authority vested in Haider.

Haider Ali and the British

After obtaining Diwani right (right to collect taxes on behalf of the Mughal emperor from Bengal, Bihar and Orissa), the Company had to safeguard itsAs the Company was not strong enough, it avoided interfering in the internal affairs of the Indian states. Warren Hastings maintained buffer states to live within a "Ring Fence". The Company was, however, drawn towards the affairs of the Carnatic, due to the

successive struggles for its Nawabship. The English traders saw in this a great opportunity to directly interfere in Indian politics. However, there were threats from two strong powers represented by Haider Ali and the Nizam of Hyderabad.

First Mysore War (1767-69)

In the third Carnatic War Colonel Forde while conducting the forces from Bengal captured Masulipatnam in 1759. This led to a treaty with Salabat Jung, who ceded the Northern Sarkars to the British (districts of Ganjam, Vizagapatnam, Godavari, Krishna and Guntur). English acquisition of the Northern Sarkars was legalized by the Mughal emperor in 1765 by the treaty of Allahabad. In 1766, trouble arose when the English occupied those districts. Yet a treaty was signed with Nizam Ali who acquiesced in the session. In return the English promised to help out in case of any danger from the enemies. This promise meant English help to the Nizam against Haider Ali. Here lay the genesis of the later Subsidiary System. Despite the treaty, Nizam came to an understanding with Haider in 1767 and the British therefore declared a war against Haider. This is called First Anglo- Mysore War or First Mysore War.

An English army from Bombay captured Mangalore and other surrounding places on the West Coast. But Haider succeeded in recovering both. The English made an attempt to capture Bangalore but to no avail. In 1768 Haider pounced on Baramahal (Salem district) and marched on Karur and then Erode and took over both by defeating Captain Nixon. Meanwhile, his general Fazalullah Khan marched on Madurai and Tirunelveli. Haider advanced to Thanjavur and from there to Cuddalore. Though Haider did not want to stop his offensive against the English, the threat of Maratha invasion forced him to negotiate peace with the English. The terms of Treaty of Madras were as follows: the conquered territories to be restored to each, excepting Karur which was to be retained by Haider. Mutual assistance was to be rendered in wars of defence. This meant the English were under obligation to help Haider against the Marathas. But when assistance from English was not forthcoming, Haider turned against the English.

Haider and the Second Mysore War (1780)

After the American War of Independence, France had signed a treaty of friendship with America (1778) and so Britain declared war against France. In a similar context of Spain reaching an agreement with America, and thereby being dragged into the war against England (1779) England remained isolated. In India the coming together of the Nizam and the Marathas, supported by the French aggravated the situation further. Haider Ali wanted to turn England's difficulty to its advantage and marched on Karnataka.

Colonel Baillie, who was to join the force led by Hector Munro, was badly wounded in a sudden attack by Haider. This forced Munro to move Madras. Haider captured Arcot (1780). Now on request from Madras government Sir Eyre Coote, the victor of the Battle of Wandawashi, was sent from Calcutta to besiege Madras by sea.

Having scored a victory against Haider, Coote proceeded to Pondicherry. Haider in the meantime overran the kingdom of Thanjavur. Coote reached Porto Novo and won a decisive victory over Haider. Haider narrowly escaped capture. Colonel Braithwaite was thoroughly defeated near Kumbakonam by Haider's son Tipu and taken prisoner. In order to divert the attention of the Mysore Sultan, an expedition was undertaken by General Mathews to capture Mangalore. Expectedly Tipu abandoned Karnataka and moved to West Coast.

The death of Haider due to cancer in 1782, the signing of Treaty of Paris (1783) at the end of American War of Independence, and the protracted siege of Mangalore enabled the English to be aggressive against Tipu. Karur and Dindigul were captured by Colonel Lang, Colonel Fullerton seized Palghat and Coimbatore but this advance on Srirangapatnam was pre-empted by Tipu with his proposal for peace. The Treaty of Mangalore was signed in March 1784, according to which both parties agreed to give up their conquests and release the prisoners.

Third Mysore War (1790-92)

In the meantime Lord Cornwallis had become governor general. Cornwallis wanted to deal with Tipu in a revengeful manner. The two great southern powers, the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Maratha confederacy, supported the British as its allies. The Nizam of Hyderabad supplied resources and even troops for the British. The Marathas, who had signed the Treaty of Salbai with the English after the First Anglo-Maratha war in 1782, also joined the British. The British position was thus greatly strengthened.

Tipu sent an embassy to Constantinople and another in 1787 to Paris. These diplomatic efforts of Tipu were intended to strengthen him against the English. The French Monarch Louis XVI was hospitable, but could give only vague promises of support to the Sultan.

Tipu's attack on Travancore which was an ally of the British and his capture of Cranganore was treated as a declaration of war on the Company government. Hence the third Anglo-Mysore War broke out.

Colonel Hartley defeated Tipu's general Husain Ali at Calicut. In response Tipu captured Tiruvannamalai. His effort to get the support of French Pondicherry Governor did not materialise. Cornwallis himself marched from Vellore and reached Bangalore. On his way he encountered Tipu and defeated him near Srirangapatnam. But lack of provisions compelled Cornwallis to retreat. At this juncture the Marathas helped the British in supplying the required provisions. The reinforced army of the English marched on Srirangapatnam again and besieged it. Unable to withstand the onslaught of the British forces Tipu offered peace and accepted the terms imposed by Cornwallis.

According to the treaty of Srirangapatnam, the Tipu was to give up half of his dominions, pay three crores of rupees as indemnity, and pledge two of his sons as hostages. The allies were given equal shares of the indemnity and of the ceded

territories. The English got Malabar, Dindigul and Barmahal. Tipu lost Coorg (Kudagu), whose raja became a feudatory to the Company. Tipu's power was greatly reduced. And after their stay at Madras as hostages the boys returned to Srirangapatnam on 29 May 1794 when their father had paid all the dues to the English. Tipu could hardly forget his humiliation and the heavy territorial and monetary losses suffered.

The Mysore king Chamaraj IX died in 1796. Tipu resolved not to observe the formality of appointing a king. Synchronizing with this resolve came the announcement of the French colonial Governor of Mauritius General Malartic that, after obtaining French help, he would declare war on the English. In July 1798 Tipu's correspondence with the French Directory and later with Napoleon and his evasiveness in his correspondence with Wellesley led to his declaration of war against Tipu.

Fourth Mysore War (1799)

Tipu made all out efforts to strengthen his military and financial resources. In 1796 Tipu sent emissaries to Paris again. In 1797 he received a French emissary to confirm French support from Mauritius. A Jacobin club was started in Srirangapatnam and the flag of the French Republic was hoisted to mark the cordiality established between the French and the Sultan of Mysore.

Irrked by Tipu's alliance with the French Wellesley, now the new Governor General insisted on a standing army at Mysore under the Subsidiary System. Tipu turned down Wellesley's proposal and the British declared the fourth Anglo-Mysore war in 1799. General David Baird stormed Srirangapatnam. Tipu's offer of peace was rejected and in the eventual battle Tipu was wounded and soon after shot dead by a European Soldier.

The elimination of Tipu and the restoration of the old Wodeyar dynasty to the Mysore kingdom marked the real beginning of Company rule in south India. The sons of the slain Tipu were interned first at Vellore, and later, after the Vellore Revolt of 1806, shifted to Calcutta. Thus ended the valiant fight of Mysore Sultans against the British

Early Resistance of Southern Palayakkarars against the British Origin of Palayams and Palayakkarars

After the decline of Vijayanagara Empire, Nagama Nayak who arrived as a viceroy to Madurai and his son Viswanatha Nayak asserted themselves as independent rulers of Madurai and Tirunelveli. Under the able guidance of Prime Minister Ariyanayaga Mudaliyar, all the little kingdoms of the former Pandian Empire were classified and converted into 72 palayams. Viswanatha Nayak constructed a formidable fort around Madurai city, which consisted of seventy two bastions. Each of them was placed under a chief.

A Palayakkarar was bound to pay a fixed annual tribute or supply troops to the king and to keep order and peace over a particular area. In order to enable him to perform these duties and attend to other services, a certain number of villages were granted for revenue collection. In addition he was presented with several titles and privileges. Palayakkarars had judicial powers and dispensed justice over civil and criminal cases.

The origin of the Palayakkarar (poligari) system dates back to the 1530s. It is believed that this system was practiced earlier in Kakatiya kingdom of Warangal. The literal meaning of Palayakkarar is the holder of a camp as well as the holder of an estate on military tenure. Prior to the enforcement of this system Servaikarars and Talayaris collected fees for police work. After the creation of palayams, the Servaikarars turned Palayakkarars and subordinated Talayaris to their authority.

Based on the topographical distribution they are classified as western palayams and eastern palayams. The palayams held by Maravar chieftains were mostly in the western parts of Tirunelveli. The settlement of Telugu migrants in the black soil tracts, lying in the eastern part of Tirunelveli, left those parts under Nayak Palayakkarars.

Revolt of Palyakkarars

The Nawab of Arcot, who had borrowed heavily by pledging the villages in several parts of Tamilnadu, entrusted the task of collecting land revenue arrears to the Company administration. Yusuf Khan, remembered as Khan Sahib, had been employed as commander of the Company's Indian troops. He was entrusted not only with the command of the forces, but also with the collection of revenue. At the request of the Nawab, a force of 500 Europeans and 200 sepoys was (1755), ordered to proceed into the "countries of Madurai and Tirunelveli" to assist him. The encroachment of East Indian Company administration into palayakkarar's authority aroused stiff resistance.

Mafuzkhan (Arcot Nawab's elder brother) was appointed by the Nawab as his representative in those territories.

Mafuskhan along with Colonel Heron proceeded towards Tirunelveli. They easily took Madurai. An expedition was sent to reduce Kattabomman, the palayakkarar of Panchalamkurichi but had to be recalled. While returning Colonel Heron was urged to storm the fort of Nel-Kattum-Seval. Its palayakkarar Puli Thevar wielded enormous influence over the western palayakkarars. For want of cannon and of supplies and pay to soldiers, the attack of Colonel Heron had to be abandoned and the force retired to Madurai.

Three Pathan officers, Nawab Chanda Sahib's agents, named Mianah, Mudimiah and Nabikhan Kattak, commanded the Madurai and Tirunelveli regions. They supported Tamil palayakkarars against Arcot Nawab Mohamed Ali. Puli Thevar had established close relationships with them. The palayakkarars of Uthumalai, Surandai, Thalaivankottai, Naduvakurichi, Singampatti, Urkad, Seithur, Kollamkondan and

Wadakarai joined Puli Thevar's confederacy. With the promise of restoring Kalakkadu, Puli Thevar had already won over the ruler of Travancore to his confederacy.

Nawab, on his side, sent an additional contingent of sepoys to Mahfuzkhan and the reinforced army proceeded to Tirunelveli. Besides the 1000 sepoys of the Company, Mahfuzkhan received 600 more sent by the Nawab. He also had the support of cavalry and foot soldiers from the Carnatic. Before Mahfuzkhan could station his troops near Kalakadu, 2000 soldiers from Travancore joined the forces of Puli Thevar. In the battle of Kalakadu, Mahfuzkhan's troops were trounced.

The organized resistance of the palayakkarars under Puli Thevar gave an opportunity to the British to interfere directly in the affairs of Tirunelveli.

Yusuf Khan was born as Maruthanayakam Pillai. Originally he belonged to Ramanathapuram district. When in Pondicherry he embraced Islam. He joined the company of sepoys under Clive in 1752 and participated in the siege of Tiruchirappalli during 1752-54. From 1756 to 1761 he was in charge of the districts of Madurai and Tirunelveli as Governor under the Madras Government which had been controlling them though they belonged to the Nawab of Arcot. He defeated Haider Ali and captured Solavandan. At the time Lally's siege of Madras (1758-59), he rendered splendid service to the English. As one in charge of administration of Madurai and Tirunelveli regions he encouraged the weaving industry of Madurai. He gave a fixed amount for the conduct of worship in the temples of Madurai and retrieved the temple lands. Yusuf Khan rebelled because the English ordered him to serve the Nawab of Arcot.

1756 to 1763, aided frequently by Travancore, the palayakkarars of Tirunelveli led by Puli Thevar were in a constant state of rebellion against the authority of the Nawab. Yusuf Khan who had been sent by the Company would not venture to attack Puli Thevar unless the big guns and ammunition from Tiruchirappalli arrived. As the English were involved in a war with the French, as well as with Haider Ali and Marathas, big guns arrived only in September 1760. Yusuf Khan began to batter the Nerkattumseval fort and this attack continued for about two months. On 16 May 1761 Puli Thevar's three major forts namely Nerkattumseval, Vasudevanallur and Panayur came under the control of Yusuf Khan. After taking Pondicherry the English commanded respect, as they had eliminated the French from the picture.

Consequently the unity of palayakkarars began to break up as French support was not forthcoming. Travancore, Seithur, Uthumalai and Surandai switched their loyalty. Yusuf Khan, who was negotiating with the palayakkarars without informing the Company administration, was charged with treachery and hanged in 1764.

Puli Thevar, who had taken asylum elsewhere after the forts were taken over by Yusuf Khan, returned and began to organize against the British. Captain Campbell, who was sent this time by the British, laid siege and captured Nerkattumseval in 1767. Nothing is definitely known about the last days of Puli Thevar.

Velu Nachiyar

The Sethupathys ruled the area that covered Ramanathapuram, Sivagangai, Virudhunagar, and Pudukkottai districts of the present day. Velu Nachiyar was the daughter of Chellamuthu Sethupathy, the raja of Ramanathapuram. She married Muthu Vadugar Periyaudayar, the Raja of Sivagangai, and had a daughter named Vellachi Nachiar. When her husband was killed by the Nawab's forces, Velu Nachiyar escaped with her daughter and lived under the protection of Haider Ali at Virupachi near Dindigul for eight years. During this period she organized an army and succeeded in securing an alliance with Gopala Nayaker and Haider Ali. In 1780 Rani Velu Nachiyar fought the British with military assistance from Gopala Nayaker and Haider Ali and won the battle.

Velu Nachiyar employed her intelligence gathering agents to discover where the British stored their ammunition. One of her followers Kuyili, doused herself in oil, set herself alight, and walked into the storehouse. She also employed another agent, her adopted daughter Udaiyaal, to detonate a British arsenal, blowing herself up along with the barracks. Velu Nachiyar formed a woman's army.

The Nawab of Arcot placed many obstacles to the advancement of the Rani's troops. However she overcame all the hurdles and entered Sivagangai. The Nawab of Arcot was defeated and taken captive. Velu Nachiyar recaptured Sivagangai and was again crowned queen with the help of Marudu brothers.

After ascending the throne Velu Nachiar appointed Chinna Marudu as her adviser and Periya Marudu as commander. In 1783 the English forces invaded Sivaganagai again. This time the Marudu Pandiyan saved the place by some diplomatic moves. In 1790, Vellachi Nachiyar, daughter of Velu Nachiyar who was married to Vengan Periya Udaya Thevar who became the king of Sivagangai state due to compromise formula of the Englishmen, died under mysterious circumstances. Velu Nachiyar became sick and died in three years later in 1796.

Veera Pandiya Kattabomman

While Velu Nachiyar was fighting the British and engaging their complete attention on Ramanathapuram and Sivagangai, Veera Pandiya Kattabomman's resistance against the British was on progress. Kattabomma Nayak was the playakkarar of Panchalamkurichi. Kattabomman Nayak was a family title. The chieftain of the Colonel Heron's time was Jagaveera Kattabomman Nayak, the grandfather of Veera Pandiya Kattabomman. This Veera Pandiya Kattabomman, born in 1761, became the palayakkarar on the death of his father, Jagaveera Pandiya Kattabomman. The collection of tribute continued to be a problem as there was a constant tussle between the Company and the southern palayakkarars. In September 1798 as the tribute from Panchalamkuriuchi fell into arrears, Collector Jackson wrote to Veera Pandiyan in his characteristic arrogance.

The country experienced a severe drought, in consequence of which the palayakkarars found it difficult to collect taxes. Collector Jackson wanted to send an expedition to punish Veera Pandiyan but the Madras administration did not agree. The Company had already withdrawn its forces from Tirunelveli to be employed in the war against Tipu Sultan of Mysore, and did not desire to risk a conflict in the far south at this juncture. It directed the collector to summon the Palayakkarar at Ramanathapuram and hold a discussion. Accordingly, on the 18 August 1798 Jackson despatched an order directing Veera Pandiyan to meet him at Ramanathapuram within two weeks. After sending the summons, the collector started on a tour of Tirunelveli. When Jackson halted at Chokkampatti, Sivagiri, Sattur and Srivilliputhur to receive tribute from the Palayakkarars, Veera Pandiyan sought an interview but was told that he could meet the collector only at Ramanathapuram.

Pagoda was the dominant currency in use at the time of arrival of European traders. It was a gold coin of Vijayanagar descent. It was called varagan in Tamil. During the reign of Tipu Sultan, one pagoda was the equivalent of three and half rupees in Mysore. "Shaking the pagoda tree" was a phrase used in England to describe the opportunities for making quick fortunes in India.

Despite this humiliation, Kattabomman followed the Englishman for twenty three days over 400 miles through the latter's route and reached Ramanathapuram on 19 September. An interview was granted the same day and the collector expressed his satisfaction that the Palayakkarar had behaved properly and thereby "saved himself from ruin". Upon a verification of accounts Jackson was convinced that Kattabomman had cleared most of the arrears, leaving only 1080 pagodas as balance to be settled.

Denied of courtesy, the palayakkarar and his minister Sivasubramania Pillai had to stand before the arrogant collector. Finally he directed them to stay inside the Ramanathapuram fort. Now a few sepoy appeared, apparently to arrest Kattabomman. But they escaped. At the gate of the fort a clash occurred, in which some including Lieutenant Clarke were killed. Siva subramania Pilai was taken prisoner but Kattabomman made his escape.

After his return to Panchalamkurichi, Kattabomman wrote to the Madras Council blaming the attitude of Jackson for the scuffle. In the meantime Governor Edward Clive had issued a proclamation, inviting the palayakkarar to submit to the authority of the Company. In the event of surrender he assured a fair investigation into the Ramanathapuram incident. If he refused, he threatened Kattabomman with dire consequences. In response Kattabomman appeared before the committee which acquitted him of the charges of rebellion and condemned the conduct of the collector. S.R. Lushington was appointed collector in the place of Jackson, who was eventually dismissed from service.

However, Kattabomman remained irreconciled. At this time Marudu Pandiyan of Sivaganga along with Gopala Nayak of Dindigul and Yadul Nayak of Anamalai, was

engaged in organising a Confederacy against the British. In view of the identity of interests Kattabomman and Marudu Pandiyan came closer.

Kattabomman also established contact with the Sivagiri palayakkarar. While Panchalamkurichi was situated in an open plain and appeared vulnerable, the strategic location of the fort of Sivagiri at the foot of the Western Ghats and the formidable barriers around it rendered it eminently suited both for offensive and defensive operations. Thus in a bold attempt to strengthen his position an armed column consisting of the followers of Veera Pandiyan, the son of the Palayakkarar of Sivagiri and other allied chiefs, led by Dalawai Kumaraswami Nayak, moved towards the west. As the Palayakkarar of Sivagiri was a tributary to the Company, the Madras Governor's Council considered this as a challenge to its own authority and ordered the march of the army.

In May 1799 Lord Wellesley issued orders for the advance of forces from Trichirapalli, Thanjavur and Madurai to Tirunelveli. The Travancore troops joined the British. Major Bannerman, armed with extensive powers, effectively commanded the expedition.

On 1 June 1799 Kattabomman, attended by 500 men, proceeded to Sivaganga. At Palayanur Kattabomman held deliberations with Marudu. Subsequently, joined by 500 armed men of Sivaganga, Kattabomman returned to Panjalamkurichi.

The Palayakkarars of Nagalapuram, Mannarkottai, Powalli, Kolarpatti and Chennulgudi had already formed themselves into a combination due to the efforts of Marudu brothers. They asserted their rights to collect taxes from certain villages in the Company's territory. Kattabomman proceeded to join this league to take up its leadership by virtue of the influence that he wielded and the resources he possessed. Determined to strengthen this league, he persuaded the chieftains of Satur, Yezhayirampennai, Kadalgudi and Kulathoor to join it.

On 1 September 1799 Major Bannerman served an ultimatum directing Kattabomman to see him at Palayamkottai. As Kattabomman dodged Bannerman decided on military action. The Company army reached Panchalamkurichi on 5 September.

Kattabomman's fort, 500 feet long and 300 feet broad, was constructed entirely of mud. The Company forces cut off the communications of the fort. Kattabomman's forces fought gallantly and successive attacks were repulsed. Colonel Welsh recorded in his memoirs the gallantry of Kattabomman's soldiers. The English ordered for the arrival of more troops. On 16 September reinforcements arrived from Palayamkottai. As the broken walls appeared vulnerable, the garrison evacuated and reached Kadalgudi. In a clash at Kalarpatti, Kattabomman's minister Sivasubramonia Pillai was taken prisoner. The British forces followed up their victory with the reduction of Nagalapuram and other strongholds of the defiant chiefs to submission. On the appearance of the army the western Palayakkarars too surrendered.

Vijaya Ragunatha Tondaiman, Raja of Pudukottai, captured Kattabomman from the jungles of Kalapore and handed him over to the enemy. Upon the fall of the Palayakkarar into the hands of the enemy, his followers fled to Sivaganga and from there to the hills of Dindigul for taking service with Marudu Pandiyan and Gopala Nayak.

Bannerman brought the prisoners to an assembly of the Palayakkarars and after a mockery of trial sentenced them to death. On 16 October Veera Pandiya Kattabomman was tried before an assembly of Palayakkarars at Kayatar. Unmindful of impending death Kattabomman admitted all the charges levelled against him. He declared that he did send his armed men against Sivagiri and that he did fight the British troops in the battle at Panchalamkurichi. On 17 October Kattabomman was hanged to death at a conspicuous spot near the old fort of Kayatar. Kattabomman's heroic exploits were the subject of many folk ballads which kept his memory alive among the people.

Marudu Brothers and the South Indian Rebellion of 1801

By the treaty of 1772 the Arcot Nawab had authorized the Company to collect the Stalam Kaval and Desakaval. This affected the Kaval chiefs in both the Palayakkarar and non-palaykkarar territories. The aggrieved kavalkarars and their chiefs had joined the palayakkarars in their fight against the Nawab and the Company. In Sivagangai, Vella Marudu and Chinna Marudu, who had taken over the administration from Periya Udaya Tevar, who died in battle against the Nawab's forces, expelled the forces of the Nawab and proclaimed Vellachi, daughter of Periya Udaya Tevar and Velu Nachiyar, as the queen of Sivagangai. The Marudus assumed the charge of the ministers. The temple of Kalayarkoil in the heart of the then Sivagangai forest became the rallying point of the rebels. When Umathurai reached Kamudhi after the execution of his brother Veera Pandiya Kattabomman, Chinna Marudu took him to Siruvayal, his capital.

Now, Nawab Mohammad Ali released Muthuramalinga Thevar from jail and enthroned him as the Setupati of Ramanathapuram. But the rebels proclaimed Muthu Karuppa Thevar as their ruler. They occupied the southern and northern regions of the kingdom. The soldiers made their entry into Maduraitoo. In July Umathurai led his followers to Palayanad in Madurai and captured it. In 1801 both the Sivagangai and Ramanathapuram forces joined together under the command of Shevatha Thambi, the son of Chinna Marudu, and marched along the coast towards Thanjavur. Thereupon the distressed peasants in Thanjavur also joined the force of Shevatha Thambi. Captain William Blackburne, the resident of Thanjavur collected a force and defeated Shevatha Thambi near Mangudi. Serfoji, the raja of Thanjavur stood firmly by the British. Yet the fighters could elude the pursuit of the British troops by rapid movements, while laying the entire region waste.

South Indian Rebellion 1801

The victory over Tipu and Kattabomman had released British forces from several fronts to target the fighting forces in Ramanathapuram and Sivagangai. Thondaiman of Pudukottai had already joined the side of the Company. The Company had also succeeded in winning the support of the descendent of the former ruler of Sivagangai named Padmattur Woya Thevar. Woya Thevar was recognised by the Company as the legitimate ruler of Sivagangai. This divisive strategy split the royalist group, eventually demoralizing the fighting forces against the British.

In May 1801 a strong detachment under the command of P.A. Agnew commenced its operations. Marching through Manamadurai and Partibanur the Company forces occupied the rebel strongholds of Paramakudi. In the clashes that followed both sides suffered heavy losses. But the fighters' stubborn resistance and the Marudu brothers' heroic battles made the task of the British formidable. In the end the superior military strength and the able commanders of the British army won the day. Following Umathurai's arrest Marudu brothers were captured from the Singampunary hills, and Shevathiah from Batlagundu and Doraiswamy, the son of Vellai Marudu from a village near Madurai. Chinna Marudu and his brother Vellai Marudu were executed at the fort of Tirupattur on 24 October 1801. Umathurai and Shevathiah, with several of their followers, were taken to Panchalamkurichi and beheaded on 16 November 1801. Seventy three rebels were banished to Penang in Malaya in April 1802.

Theeran Chinnamalai

The Kongu country comprising Salem, Coimbatore, Karur and Dindigul formed part of the Nayak kingdom of Madurai but had been annexed by the Wodayars of Mysore. After the fall of the Wodayars, these territories together with Mysore were controlled by the Mysore Sultans. As a result of the Third and Fourth Mysore wars the entire Kongu region passed into the hands of the English.

Theeran Chinnamalai was a palayakkarar of Kongu country who fought the British East India Company. He was trained by the French and Tipu. In his bid to launch an attack on the Company's fort in Coimbatore (1800), Chinnamalai tried taking the help of the Marudu brothers from Sivagangai. He also forged alliances with Gopal Nayak of Virupatchi; Appachi Gounder of Paramathi Velur; Joni Jon Kahan of Attur Salem; Kumaral Vellai of Perundurai and Varanavasi of Erode in fighting the Company.

Chinnamalai's plans did not succeed as the Company stopped the reinforcements from the Marudu brothers. Also, Chinnamalai changed his plan and attacked the fort a day earlier. This led to the Company army executing 49 people. However, Chinnamalai escaped. Between 1800 and July 31, 1805 when he was hanged, Chinnamalai continued to fight against the Company. Three of his battles are important: the 1801 battle on Cauvery banks, the 1802 battle in Odanilai and the 1804

battle in Arachalur. The last and the final one was in 1805. During the final battle, Chinnamalai was betrayed by his cook Chinnamalai and was hanged in Sivagiri fort.

Vellore Revolt (1806)

Vellore Revolt 1806 was the culmination of the attempts of the descendents of the dethroned kings and chieftains in south India to throw of the yoke of the British rule. After the suppression of revolt of Marudu brothers, they made Vellore the centre of their activity. The organizers of an Anti-British Confederacy continued their secret moves, as a result of which no fewer than 3,000 loyalists of Mysore sultans had settled either in the town of Vellore or in its vicinity. The garrison of Vellore itself consisted of many aggrieved persons, who had been reduced to dire straits as a sequel to loss of positions or whose properties had been confiscated or whose relatives were slain by the English. Thus the Vellore Fort became the meeting ground of the rebel forces of south India. The sepoys and the migrants to Vellore held frequent deliberations, attended by the representatives of the sons of Tipu.

Immediate Cause

In the meantime, the English enforced certain innovations in the administration of the sepoy establishments. They prohibited all markings on the forehead which were intended to denote caste and religious, and directed the sepoys to cut their moustaches to a set pattern. Added to these, Adjutant General Agnew designed and introduced under his direct supervision a new model turban for the sepoys.

The most obnoxious innovation in the new turban, from the Indian point of view, was the leather cockade. The cockade was made of animal skin. Pig skin was anathema to Muslims, while upper caste Hindus shunned anything to do with the cow's hide. To make matters worse the front part of the uniform had been converted into a cross.

The order regarding whiskers, caste marks and earrings, which infringed the religious customs of both Hindu and Muslim soldiers, was justified on the grounds that, although they had not been prohibited previously by any formal order, it had never been the practice in any well-regulated corps for the men to appear with them on parade.

The first incident occurred in May 1806. The men in the 2nd battalion of the 4th regiment at Vellore refused to wear the new turban. When the matter was reported to the Governor by Col. Fancourt, commandant of the garrison, he ordered a band of the 19th Dragoons (Cavalry) to escort the rebels, against whom charges had been framed, to the Presidency for a trial. The 2nd battalion of the 4th regiment was replaced by the 2nd battalion of the 23rd regiment of Wallajahbad. The Court Martial tried 21 privates (a soldier of lower military rank)- 10 Muslims and 11 Hindus-, for defiance. In pursuance of the Court Martial order two soldiers (a Muslim and a Hindu) were sentenced to receive 900 lashes each and to be discharged from service.

Despite signals of protest the Government decided to go ahead with the change, dismissing the grievance of Indian soldiers. Governor William Bentinck also believed that the 'disinclination to wear the turban was becoming more feeble.'

Though it was initially claimed that the officers on duty observed nothing unusual during the night of July 9, it was later known that the English officer on duty did not go on his rounds and asked one of the Indian officers to do the duty and Jameder Sheik Kasim, later one of the principal accused, had done it. The leaders of the regiment, who were scheduled to have a field day on the morning of 10 July, used it as a pretext to sleep in the Fort on the night of 9 July. The Muslim native adjutant contrived to post as many of his followers as possible as guards within the Fort.

Jamal-ud-din, one of the twelve princes of Tipu family, who was suspected to have played a key role in the revolt, kept telling them in secret parleys that the prince only required them to keep the fort for eight days before which time ten thousand would arrive to their support. He disclosed to them that letters had been written to dispossessed palayakkarars seeking their assistance. He also informed that there were several officers in the service of Purniah (Tipu's erstwhile minister) who were formerly in the Sultan's service and would undoubtedly join the standard.

Outbreak of Revolt

At 2:00 a.m. on 10 July, the sentry at the main guard informed Corporal Piercy saying that a shot or two had been fired somewhere near the English barracks. Before Piercy could respond, the sepoys made a near simultaneous attack on the British guards, the British barracks and the officers' quarters in the Fort. In the European quarters the shutters were kept open, as they were the only means of ventilation from the summer heat. The rebels could easily fire the gun 'through the barred windows on the Europeans, lying unprotected in their beds.' Fire was set to the European quarters. Detachments were posted to watch the dwellings of the European officers, ready to shoot anyone who came out. A part of the 1st regiment took possession of the magazines (place where gun powder and ball cartridges stored). A select band of 1st Regiment was making their rounds to massacre the European officers in their quarters.

Thirteen officers were killed, in addition to several European conductors of ordnance. In the barracks, 82 privates died, and 91 were wounded.

Major Armstrong of the 16th native infantry was passing outside the Fort when he heard the firing. He advanced to the glacis and asked what the firing meant. He was answered by a volley from the ramparts, killing him instantly. Major Coates, an officer of the English regiment who was on duty outside the Fort, on hearing of the revolt tried to enter the Fort. As he was unable to make it, he sent off an officer, Captain Stevenson of 23rd, to Arcot with a letter addressed to Colonel Gillespie, who commanded the cavalry cantonment there. The letter reached Arcot, some 25 km away, at 6 a.m. Colonel Gillespie set out immediately, taking with him a squadron of the 19th dragoons under Captain Young, supported by a strong troop of the 7th cavalry under Lieutenant

Woodhouse. He instructed Colonel Kennedy to follow him with the rest of the cavalry, leaving a detachment to protect the cantonment and to keep up the communication.

When Colonel Gillespie arrived at the Vellore Fort at 9 a.m., he thought it prudent to await the arrival of the guns, since there was continuous firing. Soon the cavalry under Kennedy came from Arcot. It was about 10 o'Clock. The gate was blown open with the galloper guns of the 19th dragoons under the direction of Lieutenant Blakiston. The troops entered the place, headed by a squadron of the cavalry under Captain Skelton.

The Gillespie's men were met by a severe crossfire. In the ensuing battle, Colonel Gillespie himself suffered bruises. The sepoys retreated. Hundreds escaped over the walls of the Fort, or threw down their arms and pleaded for mercy. Then the cavalry regiment assembled on the parade ground and resolved to pursue the fleeing soldiers, who were exiting towards the narrow passage of escape afforded by the sally port. A troop of dragoons and some native horsemen were sent round to intercept the fleeing soldiers. All the buildings in the Fort were searched, and mutineers found in them pitilessly slaughtered. Gillespie's men wanted to enter the building and take revenge on the princes, the instigators of the plot; but Lt. Colonel Marriott resisted the attempt of the dragoons to kill Tipu's sons.

Colonel Gillespie is said to have brought the Fort under the possession of the English in about 15 minutes. Col. Harcourt (Commanding Officer at Wallajahbad) was appointed to the temporary command of Vellore on July 11. Harcourt assumed command of the garrison on 13 July, 1806 and clamped martial law. It was believed that the prompt and decisive action of Gillespie put an end to 'the dangerous confederacy, and had the fort remained in the possession of the insurgents but a few days, they were certain of being joined by fifty thousand men from Mysore.'

But the obnoxious regulations to which the soldiers objected were withdrawn. The Mysore princes were ordered to be sent to Calcutta, as according the Commission of Inquiry, their complicity could not be established. They were removed from Vellore, on 20 August 1806. The higher tribunals of the Home Government held the chief authorities of Madras, namely the Governor, the Commander-in-Chief, and the Deputy Adjutant General, responsible for the bungling and ordered their recall.

Vellore had its echoes in Hyderabad, Wallajahbad, Bangalore, Nandydurg, Palayamkottai, Bellary and Sankaridurg. Vellore Revolt had all the forebodings of Great Rebellion of 1857, if the word cartridge is substituted by cockade and Bahadur Shah and Nana Sahib could be read for Mysore Princes.

Peasant and Tribal Revolts

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the land tenures and revenue settlements of the Company's government had fundamentally disrupted the Indian rural society and affected the peasantry in an unprecedented manner. In the

early days of revenue farming system, the peasantry was oppressed by the revenue contractors and company officials who imposed high revenue demands and collected them forcibly. Initially the peasants sent a petition to the Company's government asking for redress. But when their appeal for justice went unheeded, they organized themselves and resorted to direct action. They attacked the local cutchery (revenue collector's office), looted grain stores and refused to pay revenue.

A peasant movement of the 1840s and 1850s was the Malabar rebellion in present day Kerala. The Mappillas were the descendants of Arab traders who had settled in this region and had married the Malabar women. Gradually the Mappillais became dependent on agriculture and turned into a community of cultivating tenants, landless labourers, petty traders and fishermen. When the British took over Malabar in 1792, they sought to revamp the land relations by creating individual ownership in land. The traditional system provided for an equal sharing of the net produce of the land by the janmi (holder of janmam tenure), the kanamdhar (holder of kanam tenure), and the cultivator. The British system upset this arrangement by recognising the janmi as absolute owners of land, with right to evict tenants, which did not exist earlier. Apart from that, over-assessment, a huge burden of illegal cesses and a pro-landlord attitude of the judiciary and the police led the peasants to live in conditions of extreme poverty.

A series of incidents therefore occurred in Malabar throughout the nineteenth century. Three serious incidents occurred in Manjeri in August 1849, in Kulathur in August 1851 - both in south Malabar - and in Mattannur in the north in January 1852. British armed forces were deployed to suppress the revolt. The repressive measures restored peace for about twenty years, but then the Mappillas rose again in 1870 and the events followed a similar course.

Some of the rebellions in pre-1857 India were of the tribals whose autonomy and control over local resources were threatened by the establishment of British rule and the advent of its non-tribal agents. The tribal people, spread over a large part of India, rose up in hundreds of insurrections during the 19th century. These uprisings were marked by immense courage on their part and brutal suppression on the part of the rulers.

The Kol Uprising (1831-32)

Kols as tribals inhabited in Chotanagpur and Singbhum region of Bihar and Orissa. The immediate cause of their uprising was the action of the Raja of Chotanagpur in leasing several villages to the non-tribals. The Kols of Sonapur and Tamar took the initiative in organizing a revolt against the thikadars (tax collectors). The forms of rebellion consisted of attacks on the properties of the outsiders, but not their lives. Plunder and arson, were the chief modes of peasant protest. Sonapur pargana of Chotanagpur was raided, plundered and burnt down by a body of seven hundred insurgents on 20 December 1831. By 26 January 1832 the Kols had taken complete possession of the whole of Chotanagpur. The revolt against the British had ended up in a war against the Company government. Buddha Bhagat, the leader of Kol insurrection was killed in a pitched battle. A sum of one thousand rupees was distributed among officers and soldiers as their reward for delivering Bhagat's severed

head to the authorities. Bhindrai Manki who inspired the revolt surrendered on 19 March 1832 and with his surrender the revolt of Kols came to a tragic end.

Santhal Hool (rebellion), 1855-56

Santhal, also called Manji, lived scattered in various forest regions of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa. Driven from their homeland, they cleared the area around the Rajmahal Hills and called it Damin-i-koh (land of Santhals). They were gradually driven to a desperate situation as tribal lands were leased out to non-Santhal zamindars and moneylenders. To this was added the oppression of the local police and the European officials engaged in railroad construction. This penetration of dikus (outsiders) completely destroyed their familiar world, and forced them into action to take possession of their lost territory.

In July 1855, when their ultimatum to the zamindars and the government went unheeded, several thousand Santhals, armed with bows and arrows, started an open insurrection "against the unholy trinity of their oppressors-the zamindars, the mahajans and the government." At the battle of Maheshpur, many of the Manjis were dressed in red clothes. Later this garment became an assertion of authority. In the first week of the rising a party of ten men attacked and burnt down the village of Monkaparrah. The rebels included a number of women.

Initially their leader was Sido. After his arrest the revolt was led by Kanoo. At the later stage of the revolt, the peasants also joined. Several thousand peasants raided on Charles Maseyk's indigo factory and pillaged. This invited brutal counter-insurgency measures; the army was mobilized and Santhal villages were burnt one after another with vengeance. According to one calculation, out of thirty to fifty thousand rebels, fifteen to twenty thousand were killed before the insurrection was finally suppressed.

Munda Rebellion

The rebellion (ulgulan) of the Munda tribesmen led by Birsa Munda, occurred during 1899-1900. Mundas were a prominent tribe in the Bihar region. During the British rule their system of common land holdings was destroyed. Jagirdars, thikadars (revenue farmers) and moneylenders grabbed the land owned by them. Birsa, born in a poor share-cropper household in 1874, declared himself a divine messenger to drive away the British and establish Munda rule in the region. Under his influence the Mundas strongly opposed non-tribals occupying tribal lands. He urged the Munda cultivators not to pay rent to the zamindars.

Birsa Munda led a revolt in the Chotta Nagpur region. The indiscriminate slaughter of Munda women at Sail Rakab did not deter the followers of Birsa. The British authorities issued a warrant for Birsa's arrest and put up a reward for his capture. Birsa became a martyr in Ranchi jail (9 June 1900). His name continues to inspire the tribals of the region.

Great Rebellion 1857

Introduction

1857 has been a subject of much debate among historians, both British and Indian. British imperialist historians dismissed it a mutiny, an outbreak among soldiers. Indian historians who explored the role of the people in converting a military outbreak into a rebellion raised two questions to which the imperial historians have had no answer. If it was only a military outbreak how to explain the revolt of the people even before the sepoys at those stations mutinied? Why was it necessary to punish the people with fine and hanging for complicity in acts of rebellion? Col. Mallesan, the Adjutant General of the Bengal army in a pamphlet titled *The Making of the Bengal Army* remarked, 'a military mutiny...speedily changed its character and became a national insurrection'.

The historian Keene attributed the outbreak due to operation of variety of factors: to the grievances of princes, soldiers and the people, produced largely by the annexation and reforming zeal of Dalhousie. The greased cartridge affair merely ignited the combustible matter which had already accumulated. Edward John Thompson described the event 'as largely a real war of independence'. V.D. Savarkar, in his *The War of Indian Independence*, published in 1909, argued that what the British had till then described as merely mutiny was, in fact, a war of independence, much like the American War of Independence. Despite the fact that the English-educated middle class played no role in the rebellion, nationalist historians championed this argument as the First War of Indian Independence.

Causes of the Rebellion **Territorial Aggrandisement**

The annexation of Oudh and Jhansi by Dalhousie employing the Doctrine of Lapse and the humiliating treatment meted out to Nana Sahib, the last Peshwa's adopted son produced much dissatisfaction. In the wake of the Inam Commission (1852) appointed by Bombay government to enquire into the cases of "land held rent-free without authority," more than 21,000 estates were confiscated. The land settlement in the annexed territories, particularly in Oudh, adversely affected the interests of the talukdars, who turned against the British. Moreover, in Oudh, thousands of inhabitants who depended on the royal patronage and traders who were dealing in rich dresses and highly ornamented footwear and expensive jewellery lost their livelihood. Thus Dalhousie through his expansionist policy created hardship to a number of people.

Oppressive Land Revenue System

The rate of land revenue was heavy when compared with former settlements. Prior to the British, Indian rulers collected revenue only when land was cultivated. The British treated land revenue as a rent and not a tax. This meant that revenue was extracted whether the land was cultivated or not, and at the same rate. The prices of agricultural commodities continued to crash throughout the first half of nineteenth

century and in the absence of any remission or relief from the colonial state, small and marginal farmers as well as cultivating tenants were subject to untold misery.

Alienation of Muslim Aristocracy and Intelligentsia

Muslims depended largely on public service. Before the Company's rule, they had filled the most honourable posts in former governments. As commandants of cavalry some of them received high incomes. But under the Company's administration, they suffered. English language and western education pushed the Muslim intelligentsia into insignificance. The abolition of Persian language in the law courts and admission into public service by examination decreased the Muslim's chances of official employment.

Religious Sentiments

The Act of 1856 providing for enrolment of high caste men as sepoy in the Bengal army stipulated that future recruits give up martial careers or their caste scruples. This apart, acts such as the abolition of sati, legalization of remarriage of Hindu widows, prohibition of infanticide were viewed as interference in religious beliefs. In 1850, to the repugnance of orthodox Hindus, the Lex Loci Act was passed permitting converts to Christianity to retain their patrimony (right to inherit property from parents or ancestors).

Further the religious sentiments of the sepoy - Hindus and Muslims - were outraged when information spread that the fat of cows and pigs was used in the greased cartridges. The Indian sepoy were to bite them before loading the new Enfield rifle. This was viewed as a measure to convert people to Christianity.

In every sense, therefore, 1857 was a climatic year. The cartridge affair turned out to be a trigger factor for the rebellion. The dispossessed, discontented rajas, ranis, zamindars and tenants, artisans and workers, the Muslim intelligentsia, priests, and the Hindu pandits saw the eruption as an opportunity to redress their grievances.

Course of the Revolt

The rebellion first began as a mutiny in Barrackpore (near Calcutta). Mangal Pandey murdered his officer in January 1857 and a mutiny broke out there. In the following month, at Meerut, of the 90 sepoy who were to receive their cartridges only five obeyed orders. On 10 May three sepoy regiments revolted, killed their officers, and released those who had been imprisoned. The next day they reached Delhi, murdered Europeans, and seized that city. The rebels proclaimed Bahadur Shah II as emperor.

By June the revolt had spread to Rohilkhand, where the whole countryside was in rebellion. Khan Bahadur Khan proclaimed himself the viceroy of the Emperor of India. Nearly all of Bundelkhand and the entire Doab region were up in arms against the British. At Jhansi, Europeans were massacred and Laxmi Bai, aged 22, was

enthroned. In Kanpur Nana Sahib led the rebels. About 125 English women and their children along with English officers were killed and their bodies were thrown into a well. Termed as the Kanpur massacre, this incident angered the British and General Henry Havelock, who was sent to deal with the situation, defeated Nana Sahib the day after the massacre. Neill, who was left there, took terrible vengeance and those whom he regarded as guilty were executed. Towards the close of November Tantia Topi seized Kanpur but it was soon recovered by Campbell.

The Lucknow residency, defended by Henry Lawrence fell into the hands of rebels. Havelock marched towards Lucknow after defeating Nana Sahib, but he had to retire. By the close of July John Nicholson sent by John Lawrence to capture Delhi succeeded in capturing Delhi. The Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah II now became a prisoner and his two sons and grandson were shot dead after their surrender.

Resistance in Oudh was prolonged because of the involvement of talukdars as well as peasants in the revolt. Many of these taluqdars were loyal to the Nawab of Awadh, and they joined Begum Hazrat Mahal (the wife of the Nawab Wajid Ali Shah) in Lucknow to fight the British. Since a vast majority of the sepoys were from peasant families in the villages of Oudh, the grievances of the peasants had affected them. Oudh was the nursery of the Bengal Army for a long time. The sepoys from Oudh complained of low levels of pay and the difficulty of getting leave. They all rallied behind Begum Hazrat Mahal. Led by Raja Jailal Singh, they fought against the British forces seized control of Lucknow and she declared her son, Birjis Qadra, as the ruler (Wali) of Oudh. Neill who wreaked terrible vengeance in Kanpur was shot dead in the street fighting at Lucknow. Lucknow could be finally captured only in March 1858.

Neill's statue on the Mount Road, Madras angered the Indian nationalists. The Congress Ministry of Rajaji (1937-39) removed it and lodged it in the Madras Museum.

Hugh Rose besieged Jhansi and defeated Tantia Topi early in April. Yet Lakshmi Bai audaciously captured Gwalior forcing pro-British Scindia to flee. Rose with his army directly confronted Lakshmi Bai. In this battle Lakshmi Bai died fighting admirably. Rose described Lakshmi Bai as the best and bravest military leader of the rebels.

Gwalior was recaptured soon. In July 1858 Canning announced the suppression of the "Mutiny" and restoration of peace. Tantia Topi was captured and executed in April 1859.

Bahadur Shah II, captured in September 1857, was tried and declared guilty. He was exiled to Rangoon (Myanmar), where he died in November 1862 at the age of 87. With his death the Mughal dynasty came to an end.

Effects of the Great Rebellion Queen's Proclamation 1858

A Royal Durbar was held at Allahabad on November 1, 1858. The proclamation issued by Queen Victoria was read at the Durbar by Lord Canning, who was the last Governor General and the first Viceroy of India.

- Hereafter India would be governed by and in the name of the British Monarch through a Secretary of State. The Secretary of State was to be assisted by a Council of India consisting of fifteen members. As a result, the Court of Directors and the Board of Control of the East India Company were abolished and the Crown and Parliament became constitutionally responsible for the governance of India. The separate army of the East India Company was abolished and merged with that of Crown.
 - Proclamation endorsed the treaties made by the Company with Indian princes, promised to respect their rights, dignity and honour, and disavowed any ambition to extend the existing British possessions in India.
 - The new council of 1861 was to have Indian nomination, since the Parliament thought the Legislative Council of 1853 consisted of only Europeans who had never bothered to consult Indian opinion and that led to the crisis.
 - The Doctrine of Lapse and the policy of annexation to be given up. A general amnesty (pardon) to be granted to the rebels except those who directly involved in killing the British subjects.
 - The educational and public works programmes (roads, railways, telegraphs, and irrigation) were stimulated by the realization of their value for the movement of troops in times of emergency.
 - Hopes of a revival of the past diminished and the traditional structure of Indian society began to break down. A Westernized English-educated middle class soon emerged with a heightened sense of nationalism.
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