

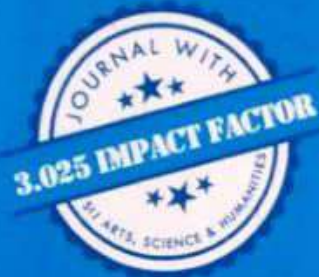
ISSN 2321-788X



# Shanlax International Journal of Arts, Science and Humanities

A Peer-Reviewed - Refereed Scholarly Quarterly  
Journal with Impact Factor

VOLUME 6 | SPECIAL ISSUE 1 | OCTOBER, 2018



## *Nilam*

A BI-ANNUAL RESEARCH JOURNAL ON HISTORY AND CULTURE

*Published by*

**PANDIA NADU CULTURAL FOUNDATION**

**(Reg. No: 12/2015)**

3/26, Nellaiyappapuram 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Thirunagar, Madurai – 625 006

Email: [pdcf15mdu@gmail.com](mailto:pdcf15mdu@gmail.com)

**ISSN** INTERNATIONAL  
STANDARD  
SERIAL  
NUMBER  
INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

Scanned with  
CamScanner

**PKP**  
PUBLIC  
KNOWLEDGE  
PROJECT



**OJS**  
OPEN JOURNAL SYSTEMS



**SHANLAX**  
INTERNATIONAL JOURNALS

[editorial@shanlaxjournals.in](mailto:editorial@shanlaxjournals.in) | [www.shanlaxjournals.in](http://www.shanlaxjournals.in)



OPEN  ACCESS JOURNALS

Google  
Scholar

IMPACT FACTOR: 3.025

**GENERAL IMPACT FACTOR**



**SHANLAX**  
INTERNATIONAL JOURNALS

editors@shanlaxjournals.in | www.shanlaxjournals.in

SHANLAX INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ARTS, SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES

#61,66 VP Complex, TPK Main Road, Vasantha Nagar (Adjacent to KVB)

Madurai - 625 003, Tamilnadu, India

Office: +91 452 4208765 | Mobile: +91 90 4330 3383

Email: editors@shanlaxjournals.in | Web: www.shanlaxjournals.in



Scanned with  
CamScanner



## Poligari Resistance and Converted to Zamindar in Madras, 1795-1802

**Dr.M.Lakshmanamoorthy**

*Assistant Professor of History  
Saraswathi Narayanan College  
Perungudi, Madurai*

**Dr.S.Kasthuri**

*Assistant Professor of Political Science  
PG Department of History  
Jayaraj Annapakiyam College for Women  
Periyakulam, Theni*

OPEN ACCESS

Volume : 6

Issue : 1

Month : October

Year : 2018

ISSN : 2321-788X

Impact factor: 3.025

Citation :

Lakshmanamoorthy,  
M. &. and S. Kasthuri.  
"Poligari Resistance and  
Converted to Zamindar  
in Madras, 1795-1802."  
*Shanlax International  
Journal of Arts, Science  
and Humanities*, vol. 6,  
no. S1, 2018, pp. 101-107.

DOI :

[https://doi.org/10.5281/  
zenodo.1738616](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1738616)

The victory of the British in the acquisitions and consolidation of their power in Madras strengthened their political power. However, they anticipated some disturbances from the local powers in the time to come. While the Company was seeking the establishment of its direct rule over the country it found itself confronted with a formidable challenge. The rigorous measures adopted by the Company to enforce its authority emitted the poligars. Poligar war refers to the wars fought between the poligars of former Madurai kingdom in Tamilnadu and the English East India Company forces between March 1799 to May 1802. The British finally won after carrying out long and difficult protracted jungle campaigns against the poligar armies and finally defeated them. Many lives were lost on both sides. The victory over poligars made large parts of territories of Madras coming under British control enabling them to get a strong hold in India. Accordingly the British suppressed them and transformed them into zamindars and land lords. This marked the eclipse of the poligar system.

### Poligars War

The poligars of several territories with held the payment of tribute to the Company. The Collectors assumed power over the defaulted palayams to recover the balance of rent. The arrears of the revenue were collected with the help of Company's sepoy and hence, confusion and chaos prevailed in the whole of Dindigul province. The Raja of Travancore claimed Cumbum and Gudalur. Poligar Copia Nayak of Sandiyoore plundered the Company's territories and compelled the people to desist payment<sup>1</sup> According to the order of the Board of Revenue, the Collector proceeded to Sandiyoore accompanied by a detachment in June 1795. The palayam was sequestered and the poligar fled to hill. As the poligar of Devadanapatti had assisted Sandiyoore poligar in his rebellious activities, the Collector considered him as an enemy of the Company. The poligar of Bodinayakkanur prevented the entry of the Collector when he moved towards the gates of the fort to assess the palayam by employing his armed peons. However, the Company's sepoys acted swiftly



and opened fire as a defensive measure. The poligar of Vadagarai sent four hundred armed men to assist Bodinayakkanur polygar to wage a war against the British.<sup>2</sup> The Board directed the Collector to apprehend him and enquire into his conduct. It authorized the Collector to apply for military force, if necessary.

There was a boundary dispute between the poligars of Ayakudi and Virupakshi near Dindigul. There was lawlessness during the period. As the situation turned uncontrollable the Collector published a notification in 1795 directing the poligars of Dindigul to disband all their armed followers with an assurance to redress their grievances. If they failed to obey the orders of the Collector, it was considered disobedience to the Company and the latter in such an event was empowered to take military action for their refractory conduct.<sup>3</sup> Thus even after six years of the British assumption the whole country was constantly in disorders. The poligars withheld payment of their dues.

### Struggle between Company and Poligars

Between 1799 and 1802 formed one of anti-British outbreaks in the region of Madurai, the growing unrest in Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli culminated in the poligari uprising of 1799. The stormy political atmosphere and the in efficiency of Nawab's administration contributed to the growth of the influence of the poligars. Nawab granted lands and other concessions to the poligars in return for their assistance. The inhabitants paid taxes to the poligars for protection, usually in proportion to the increase of their duties and of their resources.<sup>4</sup> The existence of military establishments under the control of the poligars and the propensity that they had displayed in employing them for coercion of the inhabitants and in mutual rivalries presented difficulties to the central authority. The poligars found themselves subjected to frequent humiliation. The poligars, imbued by tradition and a spirit of liberation had left no stone unturned in curbing the British influence. The degradation suffered at the hands of the British and coercion by the Nawab would have awakened the poligars to the new danger threatening them. These drove them to a state of conflict and led to form confederacies against the invading British forces. As the Company appeared much responsible for this situation the poligars cherished a feeling of bitterness against the Company authority.<sup>5</sup>

### Kattabomman's Conflict with Company

Guided by Veerapandiya Kattabomman of Panjalamkurichi organised the poligars of Tirunelveli against the British. In May 1799 Lord Wellesley issued from Madras for the advance of forces from Tiruchirappalli, Tanjore and Madurai to Tirunelveli. The troops of the servile Rajah of Travancore joined the enemy. Major Bannerman, armed with extensive powers for effectively dealing with the poligars, assumed the command of the expedition. Advancing through Ramanathapuram, the army encamped at Tirunelveli. In April 1799 Kattabomman refused the payment of tribute and he made an incursion into the Company's territory of Ramanathapuram.<sup>6</sup> Alarmed at these proceedings, Stephen Rumbold Lushington, Collector of Tirunelveli, summoned the poligar to his presence; but the latter flatly refused. The associates of Kattabomman too withheld payments to the Company, made incursions to Ramanathapuram and captured the circar villages.<sup>7</sup> These hostile activities invited prompt response. Major Bannerman commenced his military operation with the suppression of the rebels of Ramnad. Bannerman, stuck up the heads of the executed insurgents in the villages of Ramnad, as he felt it necessary to terrorize their compatriots.

After this victory, Bannerman turned against the rebel poligars of Tirunelveli on 1 September 1799, he issued an ultimatum to Kattabomman directing him to attend on him at Palayamkottai on the 4th. On receipt of the summons, Veerapandyan professed submission and pleaded that as the date specified was unlucky, he could not obey the order. As the reply was evasive, Bannerman led his forces to Panjalamkurichi. Meanwhile, he received reinforcements from Kayattar and Kovilpatti. All the forces were assembled at Panjalamkurichi which was an irregular parallelogram, two sides of which were about 500 feet long and other two sides 300 feet. The wall was constructed entirely of mud and hence it was not so easy for demolition with the cannons. The fort had small square bastions and short curtains.<sup>8</sup> The approach of the British troops was so



and opened fire as a defensive measure. The poligar of Vadagarai sent four hundred armed men to assist Bodinayakkanur polygar to wage a war against the British.<sup>2</sup> The Board directed the Collector to apprehend him and enquire into his conduct. It authorized the Collector to apply for military force, if necessary.

There was a boundary dispute between the poligars of Ayakudi and Virupakshi near Dindigul. There was lawlessness during the period. As the situation turned uncontrollable the Collector published a notification in 1795 directing the poligars of Dindigul to disband all their armed followers with an assurance to redress their grievances. If they failed to obey the orders of the Collector, it was considered disobedience to the Company and the latter in such an event was empowered to take military action for their refractory conduct.<sup>3</sup> Thus even after six years of the British assumption the whole country was constantly in disorders. The poligars withheld payment of their dues.

### Struggle between Company and Poligars

Between 1799 and 1802 formed one of anti-British outbreaks in the region of Madurai, the growing unrest in Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli culminated in the poligari uprising of 1799. The stormy political atmosphere and the in efficiency of Nawab's administration contributed to the growth of the influence of the poligars. Nawab granted lands and other concessions to the poligars in return for their assistance. The inhabitants paid taxes to the poligars for protection, usually in proportion to the increase of their duties and of their resources.<sup>4</sup> The existence of military establishments under the control of the poligars and the propensity that they had displayed in employing them for coercion of the inhabitants and in mutual rivalries presented difficulties to the central authority. The poligars found themselves subjected to frequent humiliation. The poligars, imbued by tradition and a spirit of liberation had left no stone unturned in curbing the British influence. The degradation suffered at the hands of the British and coercion by the Nawab would have awakened the poligars to the new danger threatening them. These drove them to a state of conflict and led to form confederacies against the invading British forces. As the Company appeared much responsible for this situation the poligars cherished a feeling of bitterness against the Company authority.<sup>5</sup>

### Kattabomman's Conflict with Company

Guided by Veerapandiya Kattabomman of Panjalamkurichi organised the poligars of Tirunelveli against the British. In May 1799 Lord Wellesley issued from Madras for the advance of forces from Tiruchirappalli, Tanjore and Madurai to Tirunelveli. The troops of the servile Rajah of Travancore joined the enemy. Major Bannerman, armed with extensive powers for effectively dealing with the poligars, assumed the command of the expedition. Advancing through Ramanathapuram, the army encamped at Tirunelveli. In April 1799 Kattabomman refused the payment of tribute and he made an incursion into the Company's territory of Ramanathapuram.<sup>6</sup> Alarmed at these proceedings, Stephen Rumbold Lushington, Collector of Tirunelveli, summoned the poligar to his presence; but the latter flatly refused. The associates of Kattabomman too withheld payments to the Company, made incursions to Ramanathapuram and captured the circar villages.<sup>7</sup> These hostile activities invited prompt response. Major Bannerman commenced his military operation with the suppression of the rebels of Ramnad. Bannerman, stuck up the heads of the executed insurgents in the villages of Ramnad, as he felt it necessary to terrorize their compatriots.

After this victory, Bannerman turned against the rebel poligars of Tirunelveli on 1 September 1799, he issued an ultimatum to Kattabomman directing him to attend on him at Palayamkottai on the 4th. On receipt of the summons, Veerapandyan professed submission and pleaded that as the date specified was unlucky, he could not obey the order. As the reply was evasive, Bannerman led his forces to Panjalamkurichi. Meanwhile, he received reinforcements from Kayattar and Kovilpatti. All the forces were assembled at Panjalamkurichi which was an irregular parallelogram, two sides of which were about 500 feet long and other two sides 300 feet. The wall was constructed entirely of mud and hence it was not so easy for demolition with the cannons. The fort had small square bastions and short curtains.<sup>8</sup> The approach of the British troops was so



unexpectedly sudden that the poligar found it impossible to assemble all his troops for the defence of the fort. Upon the arrival of the forces, they cut off the communications of the fort.<sup>9</sup> A large body of peons rallied from the villages for the defence of the threatened citadel; but were repulsed and driven back with heavy loss. Ramalinga Mudaliar, whom Bannerman deputed to the fort with a message asking for surrender which Kattabomman rejected-gathered the secrets about the vulnerable points in the defences. On the basis of this report, which clearly suggested that Kattabomman anticipated no hostile move, Bannerman decided the strategy of operations. He allotted flank companies with a six pounder to blow open the south gate and posted the field pieces to cover the storming party and combined detachment of the Company, Ettayapuram and Travancore to attack the north face of the fort.<sup>10</sup> As the signal came, the six pounder began to break the gate. The troops seemed to advance with other and resolution. But the rebels retaliated with determination and threw the attacking columns into disorder. A second attempt was made, but again was repulsed. The rebels under the leadership of Oomathurai, the brother of Kattabomman, put up a stout resistance and frustrated the repeated efforts of Bannerman. In a bid to retrieve the termished prestige, the Company ordered for the arrival of more troops from Palayamkottai. As the broken wall appeared vulnerable, the garrison evacuated and the parties took their course towards Kadalkudi. In a clash at Kolarpatti, the fugitives suffered heavy assaults and Sivasubramania Pillai was taken prisoner. The Company forces followed up their victory with the reduction of Nagalapuram and other strongholds of the defiant chiefs to submission. The troops employed by Vijay Raghunatha Tondaiman, Rajah of Pudukkottai, captured Kattabomman from the jungles of Kalapore and handed him over to the Company.<sup>11</sup> Upon the fall of the poligar into the hands of the Company his followers fled to Sivaganga and from there to the hills of Dindigul for taking service with Gopala Nayak and other rebel leaders.

However, as the fort appeared indefensible and as the siege continued, the rebels evacuated their stronghold. On 7 September morning the vakeels of Kattabomman waited upon Bannerman with a proposition that he might be permitted to proceed to Fort St. George with his retinue. The purpose of this proposal was not known; perhaps he to surrender directly to Edward Clive. After much discussion on the subject, Bannerman communicated his resolution that if the poligar surrendered himself, he would permit him to proceed to Madras. But Kattabomman declared that it was no assurance against arrest and imprisonment. Hence he broke off the conference and directed his course to Kadalkudi.<sup>12</sup> In a battle at Kolarpetti, the Company with the help of the troops of Ettayapuram destroyed many of the rebels. On 9 September the forces occupied Nagalapuram, as the result of which the rebel poligars surrendered one after the other. The forces marched to Kayattar through Koilpatti, with a view to overwarming the other poligars. Several poligars surrendered and pledged their loyalty to the Company. Nevertheless, these operations helped the restoration of the order. On 13 September Bannerman executed two of the rebel leaders, Soundara Pandyan at Gopalapuram and Thanapathi Pillai at Nagalapuram. Kattabomman who escaped to the jungles of Kalapore was also caught. On 16 October, Veerapandyan was tried before an assembly of poligars, summoned at Kayattar. In an assertive tone and with a contempt for death he admitted the charges levelled against him. He declared that he sent his armed men against Sivagiri and that he engaged the British troops in battle at Panjalamkurichi. There upon Bannerman announced death penalty for Veerapandyan. On 17 October, Kattabomman was hanged to death at a conspicuous spot near the old fort of Kayattar.<sup>13</sup> These measures of the Company produced the most extensive changes in the affairs of the country. Considering the frequent but futile attempts made so long to reduce the poligars to submission and to subdue their spirit of independence, they appeared a success.<sup>14</sup> The southern poligars were a race of rude warriors, habituated to arms and independence. But they found that their chieftains were either executed or condemned to imprisonment. The people were disarmed and their frets were razed to the ground. As a result it appeared that the Company established its firm control over the land.



### Re-organisation of Resistance and Struggle

After the suppression of the eastern poligars of Tirunelveli the British administration took a series of measures, calculated to curb the influence of all the auxiliary powers. The relatives of Kattabomman including Oomathurai were imprisoned at Palayamkottai. The chieftains of Nagalapuram, Ezhayirampannai, Kolarpatti and Kulattoor were also placed in confinement at different places. The poligar of Kadalgudi was at large. The punishment of the rebel poligars was matched by the favours extended to the allied chieftains of Arangulam or Sivajnanapuram belonging to Panjalamkurichi was given as reward to the chief of Ettayapuram in consideration of the valuable services he had rendered. Maniachi and Mailmandai poligars, the other allies of the Company, also received strips of territory from Panjalamkurichi and Kulattoor.<sup>15</sup> Governor Clive presented a horse and ornamental attire to the Tondaiman of Pudukkottai in appreciation of the assistance he extended. Determined to punish the rebel poligars and to deter other chieftains from organising resistance, the Company decided to assume the direct administration of the districts of Kattabomman and his allies. Accordingly Panjalamkurichi, Yezhayirampannai, Nagalapuram, Kolarpatti, Kadalgudi and Kulattoor were sequestered. The Company also assumed the military and watching duties so long performed by the poligars in different areas and the collection of deshakaval together with other established fees.<sup>16</sup> The British administration without taking any effective steps against these evils for affording protection to the inhabitants deprived them of their right of self-defence. Such a crude policy evolved without due consideration of conditions of the country and enforced with vindictiveness against a high spirited people reacted violently. No wonder the short duration of calm was over taken by a violent storm and Oomathurai, a deaf and dumb man, emerged as the leader of the great struggle against the Company.

In 1800 South India witnessed anti-British activity on an unprecedented scale. Greatly concerned at the extension of imperialism, liquidation of states and exploitation inherent in the alien administration, several leaders of prominence, particularly Marudu Pandyan of Sivaganga, Gopala Nayak of Dindigul, Kerala Varma of Malabar and Krishnappa Nayak and Dhoondaji Waug of Mysore through correspondence as well as missions organised themselves into a confederacy. They held a conspiracy at Virupakshi in Dindigul and rose in arms with an abortive assault on Coimbatore on 3 June 1800. The insurrection spread and outbreaks occurred in Ramanathapuram and Madurai. Before long the broken ranks of the poligars joined and swelled the rebel ranks. The rebellion became general and it spread to Tirunelveli with the escape of Oomathurai.<sup>17</sup> The escape of the rebel prisoners from Palayamkottai on 2 February 1801 marked the renewal of the conflict. The relatives of Kattabomman, seventeen in number, condemned for perpetual imprisonment, were confined in a small enclosure of the fort of Palayamkottai and kept in iron, rigidly guarded. The prisoners were in captivity for about fifteen months, in course of which three of them died. During this period, the rest of them escaped. Among them were Sevatiah and Oomathurai the brothers of Kattabomman.<sup>18</sup> Oomathurai entered into a secret correspondence with the rebels of Panjalamkurichi.

### Suppression of the Poligars

After the suppression of the uprising, Colonel Agnew issued a proclamation which prohibited keeping weapons as an offence. It again stated that a cash award was to be given to those who surrendered their weapons like pikes, gingal, pistol and matchlock to the Government. To prevent the poligar insurrection to future, the Government ordered to bring out all the concealed weapons and arms of the poligars and demolish all the forts.<sup>19</sup> The proclamation of Agnew was published in all parts of Madurai District. Consequently inhabitants surrendered all their offensive weapons to the Government. In this way they disarmed the inhabitants and ensured peace and harmony. It also strengthened the administration by preventing the problem of concealment of weapons in case of an armed rebellion.<sup>20</sup> The suppression of the poligar rebellion and South India Rebellion resulted in the liquidation of the influence of the chieftains.

The auxiliary powers were prevented from offering any further serious resistance in defence of their order. The sovereign rights of the Nawab came in the way so long to the implementation of the reforms.



but this obstacle too was overcome. The Carnatic Treaty signed on 31 July 1801 ended the Nawab's rule and started the Company administration. Enabled by these changes in its favour, the Company carried into effect the much contemplated political settlement of the poligar country.<sup>21</sup> Though the English suppressed it by a policy of blood and iron, they did not content themselves with mere suppression. On the other hand, after the conclusion of the Carnatic Treaty of 1801, they proceeded to rectify defects in the administration which contributed to the outbreaks. Edward Clive, Governor of Madras issued a proclamation outlining the different features of the reforms. It granted a general amnesty to all the surviving chieftains, who extended their support to the rebellion and promised to honour the rights of property life, usages and customs of the inhabitants.<sup>22</sup> He announced his intention of reorganising the administration of the country on a permanent basis; giving due respect to the traditions of the inhabitants. The Governor declared his decision that a permanent assessment of revenue would be instituted on principles of zamindari tenure so as to give hereditary rights to the poligars. He explained that the permanent assessment would secure to the chieftains possession of their land under the operation of limited and definite laws, which would restrain the servants of the Company from unnecessary interference.<sup>23</sup> By this proclamation, Lord Clive sought to conciliate the poligars and the people. Thus the decision to do away with the poligari system was coupled with an attempt to conciliate the wounded feelings of the poligars.

The struggle was attended with bitter ferocity and immense slaughter. The rebels paid more dearly than the English did, as they were neither disciplined nor adequately armed. Though the rebels had a well concerted plan of action, it did not work up to expectations. In the beginning the rebellion broke out in Tirunelveli, Madurai and Tanjore. Hence the Company found it as an impossible task to crush the rebellion. The proclamations of the rebels indicate that they believed in a mass movement against the Company. They appealed to all major castes—the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaisyas, the Sudras and the Muslims to unite together and free country from European rule. After the suppression of the poligar rebellion, the Company took effective measures for the consolidation of its authority. Edward Clive, the Governor of Madras, confiscated the palayams of the rebels and established his direct administration. He deprived the poligars of their police and military functions and forced them to destroy all their posts and forts. In consequence they were made mere zamindars. The inhabitants were on pain of death forced to surrender their fire arms, with no compensation; being made and prevented from manufacturing deadly weapons. By these radical measures, the English abolished the poligari system. After a long period of existence it faced with a violent end.<sup>24</sup> After their victory over the peninsular confederacy, organised by the rebels the Company proceeded with the consolidation of their authority over the Madras districts. With this end in view, they reformed the land revenue administration, reorganised the judicial system and promoted communications. The construction of roads through the woods and provision for quick communication of intelligence were calculated to deny to the rebels the advantages that they derived from jungle warfare and to strengthen the Company's influence. After the restoration of order, the Company sought to reorganise and improve the administration.

### **Poligari converted Zamindaries**

The end of the suppression of the rebellion the savage and violent character of the poligari system was given up and the peaceful and beneficial condition of the zamindaries under the new revenue settlement on the basis of zamindari system came into being. That manner the struggle between the poligars and the ruling powers came to an end.<sup>25</sup> The poligars had special influence and authority in their palayams. The Company found it convenient to entrust the collection of revenue to them. They realised that the deprivation of their power and interest led to severe and unpleasant consequences. The Government proceeded to implement some measures to reform the existing trends in collecting the revenue. The poligars had an upper hand in the southern, western and northern parts of Madras. The poligars belonged in the Madras territories in the southern region of poligars were concentrated in Tirunelveli, Ramanathapuram, Dindigul, Tiruchirappalli and Madurai.



Edward Clive, who issued a proclamation in 1801 announced the decision of the Company to abolish the poligari system and to introduce the zamindari system in its place. The proclamation was applicable to the poligars of Tirunelveli, Madurai, Sivaganga and Dindigul declaring its intention to disarm the country and abolish the military service. It also announced its intention to establish a permanent assessment in respect of their palayams upon the principle of zamindari tenure.<sup>26</sup> The palayams of Ramagiri, Ramanathapuram and Saptore were restored to the former ruling families on the basis of zamindari tenure. Panjalankurichi and other palayams remained under the direct control of the Company administration. As Panjalankurichi appeared as a blot on the military prestige of the English, its name was expunged from all public records. The fort was for the second time demolished and the entire site was ploughed as to leave no vestige of it.<sup>27</sup> During this period, the Company sequestered the palayams of Dhili, Mangalam, Periapatti, Jallipiti, Tondamttur and Somanduri are, at all in Dindigul and Coimbatore region. The loyal poligars too were promised augmented security, favour and wealth. The Tondaiman of Pudukkottai was granted possession of Kilanelli from Tanjore.<sup>28</sup> This proclamation was followed by the assessment of land in the palayams and the amount fixed by the government was considered as the permanent peshch payable to the government.

The detailed investigations were instituted into the economic resources of the various palayams during 1801 and 1802. The implementation of the zamindari system was completed and the poligars were transformed into a class of zamindars in May 1802. In their changed character, the chieftains were required to disband their armed establishments and to pay enhanced amount to the government under a permanent assessment. The magistrates were placed in charge of the kaval system. However, the chieftains were permitted to retain a fixed number of peons carrying pikes so as to enable them to maintain those ceremonies of State, to which they had been accustomed for long.<sup>29</sup> The jungles in the poligar territories were cleared in order to deny advantages to the lingering rebel bands to regroup and resume the fighting. For the easy movement of troops, woods were cleared and roads were opened. Military roads were constructed to the strategic areas and postal communication was established by employing messengers all along the way from Palayamkottai to Sankaranainarkoil and from Kalaiyarkoil to Tirupatore and Piranmalai. It was felt that bush fighting brought the irregular native troops on an equal footing with the best European forces. More troops were stationed in the centres of disaffection so as to overawe the inhabitants. These military measures were calculated to promote the consolidation of the Company administration.<sup>30</sup> The poligar system that flourished for two and half centuries came to a violent end in the midst of the suppression of their struggle for survival and implementation of the zamindari settlement.

The poligars went down fighting against alien imperialism. Ultimately a combination of adverse developments rendered their fall inevitable. The Company's ascendancy eclipsed the European and Mysore powers and the poligars could gain no assistance from any quarter. The British finally won after a long expensive campaign that took more than a year. The poligar forces based at Panjalankurichi Fort was ploughed up and sowed with salt and castor oil so that it should never again be inhabited. The Company forces quickly overpowered the remaining insurgents. The suppression of the poligar uprising resulted in the liquidation of the influence of the chieftains. Under terms of the Carnatic treaty of 1801, the Company assumed direct control over Madras. The Company mobilised its strength to suppress all rebellious activities and a large number of them were subjected to capital punishment. It led to the establishment of internal order and peace. The English East India Company assumed full sovereignty over the territories in 1800-1802. The position of the Company was solid and there was a conducive atmosphere for a settlement. They moved towards the introduction of permanent settlement which converted the poligars into zamindars and entered into an agreement with them which led to the stabilisation of the government. In consequence the Company itself was powerful and was striding forward to becoming the sovereign power. They contemplated to replace the existing method of revenue assessment and collection with the new one which was experimented in Bengal. As there existed different modes of revenue assessments, it decided to introduce the Bengal pattern of permanent settlement on zamindari tenure. In this process, the governmental lands were parcelled out and sold to the highest bidders.



## References

- Board of Revenue, 2 July 1801, proceedings, R.C., Vol.289, p.7707.
- Board of Revenue, 24 Sept.1799, letter to Madras Council, R.C., Vol.235, pp.8069-8070.
- Board of Revenue, 4 Jan.1802, letter to Madras Council, M.C.R., Vol.1139, pp.61-62.
- Board of Revenue., 23 Dec 1794, Vol.1204, p.7.
- Fifth Report from the Select Committee on East India Affairs, 1812, Vol.III, p.12.
- Ibid. 28 May 1795, pp.237-238.
- Ibid., 1 Dec.1801, M.C., Vol.289, p.7663.
- Ibid., 10 Nov.1801, M.D.T.E., Vol.32, pp.454-456.
- Ibid., 17 Dec.1802, M.D.T.E., Vol.31, p.272.
- Ibid., 2 Jan.1802, letter to Madras Council, M.C.R., Vol.1184, pp.1-2.
- Ibid., 24 Aug.1802, R.C., Vol.118, p.2887.
- Ibid., 24 July 1801, R.C., Vol.110, pp.1379-1380.
- Ibid., 6 May 1800, Military Consultations, (here in after referred to as M.C.), Vol.268, pp.2690-2691
- Ibid., 8 Nov. 1799, R.C., Vol.98, pp.2706-2709.
- Ibid., 8 Nov.1799, R.C., Vol.98, p.2771.
- Ibid., 9 May 1803, Revenue Despatche to England, (hereinafter referred to as R.D.T.E.), Vol.7, p.528.
- Ibid., 9 Nov.1800, R.C., Vol.9, p.2941.
- Ibid., 9 Nov.1800, R.C., Vol.98, p.2941.
- Ibid., Aug.1799, R.C., Vol.96, pp.1569-1570.
- James Welsh, Military Reminiscences, Vol.1, London, 1830, pp.61-62.
- Madras Council, 10 Feb.1801, M.C., Vol.279, p.732.
- Madras Council, 28 Nov.1800, Revenue Consultations, (hereinafter referred to as R.C.), Vol.106, p.3199.
- Madras Council, 3 Aug.1801, S.D.T.E., Vol.2, p.92.
- Madras Council, 31 Aug.1801, R.D.T.E., Vol.2, p.247.
- Madras Council, 5 July 1803, P.C., Vol.10, pp.833-834.
- Madras Council, 5 Sept.1799, R.C., Vol.98, pp.2710-2711.
- Madras Council, 8 Nov.1799, R.C., Vol.98A, p.2713.
- Radhakrishna Aiyar, S., A General History of the Pudukkottai State, Vol.II, Pudukkottai, 1916, p.315-316.
- Rajayyan, K., op.cit., p.103.
- Rajayyan, K., Rise and Fall of the Poligars of Tamilnadu, Madras, 1974, pp.99-100.