Chapter I
Introduction

The various attempts to study the relationship between the role of translation and the literary activities in Tamil language converged gradually into the study of comparative analysis of the texts in terms of their ‘giving’ and ‘receiving’ strategies. This reduction of translation activities into a mere study of textual analysis among two or more languages and their mutual influences with one another simply minimise any possible attempts to understand the dynamic nature of the word translation into simply a comparison between the texts, in terms of ‘source’ and ‘reception’. Further, this reduction becomes a critical engagement of ‘fixing’ the text by setting the ‘source’ to it. This understanding of textual activities in terms of ‘the source’ and translation model initiates historical inquiry regarding the translated texts and by doing so the detailed description of nature and the activities of translation activities down the ages are described. However, the reduction of understanding the act of translation as simply the act of the studying the translated texts or the textual translation process by the Tamil academia, although mapping out the association between the Tamil literary history and the translation largely, are unable to capture the subtle meaning/s of translation employed in the process of constituting a single linear history of Tamil literature. In other words, the studies so far aimed to look at the relationship between the literary activities in Tamil language and the concept of translation largely failed to study the role subtly played by translations in the process of constructing a linear history of Tamil literature. Therefore, the affiliation between the Tamil literary history and the notion of translation appears to be the study of textual activities and thus unable to decipher the
dynamic role played by the translations in the very conceptual constructions such as Tamil literature, literary tradition and single linear past. Contrarily, this study sets its aim to discuss the role of translation, beyond the ‘confined’ understanding of the term and tries to explore various ways of employing the term and the politics behind them while attempting to constitute a linear history of Tamil literature.

The prime focus of this research is however to explain ‘a thick’ relationship between the concept of translation and the literary historiography in Tamil language, particularly intends to study how Tamil literary historiography employs the concept of translation effectively as one of the tools to constitute the linear chronological account of the texts produced in Tamil language over the ages in detail. However, the ample references in literature and inscriptions are clearly describing the fact that the Tamils’ consciousness regarding the act of translation and their interaction with other languages were quite old and in fact had started as early as the beginning of the literary activities in Tamil language. Contrary to this long history of the translation activities in Tamil, the attempts for writing the history of Tamil literature in a linear chronological way are indeed initiated only in the recent past. The various studies on the history of Tamil literature evidently expose the fact that the linear chronological order was only started in the mid-19th century and further developed into the present state during the early decades of the 20th century. Though the Tamil language has been remarkably marked for its continuous literary practices, the chronological centred approach to Tamil literary past was relatively new experience to the native Tamil scholars. The chronological mode of approaching the past was introduced to the Tamils by the contact of the European’s and their literary activities in Tamil, particularly the translation activities of the European Christian missionaries. Their engagement
introduced to maintain the author's name of the text, date of the composition, fixing the text as a complete entity and other related things evidently translate the traditional practices into modern text. Robert Caldwell, a Scottish missionary, is regarded as the first scholar and the historian who drafted a linear chronological order of more than a century old literature in Tamil. His magnum opus *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South-Indian Family of Languages* was first published in 1856 discusses the uninterrupted literary activities of Tamil language over the ages under seven subheadings.

Nonetheless, although the structured narratives of the linear history of Tamil literature had begun only in the mid-19th century, the critical studies and the scholarly engagements on the issues of Tamil literary historiography are invariably locate the beginning years of the 18th century, nearly a hundred and fifty years prior to the publication of Caldwell's work, as the inception of the chronological historical consciousness among the Tamils. Therefore, this study mainly centres on the multiple issues related to the act of translation and their interactions with the attempts for constituting the linear chronological structure of the history of Tamil literature, principally happened during time period of 18th century to the present in general. And at the same time, it does not only restrict to the aforementioned time limit very strictly. Since the prime focus of this research is to explain the intimate connection between the concept of translation, and since from the 18th century the historical consciousness among the Tamils are apparently visible, the major part of the research is temporally restricted to this time limit and at the same time the discussion also travels beyond this limit whenever it become necessary to support and substantiate the central argument of this research.
The attempts for the chronological history of Tamil literature are not the mere act of linearly ordering the literature in Tamil language produced over the ages. Rather, principally by these acts the concept of Tamil literature as a unified whole that includes all the literature composed in Tamil across any discriminations in terms of religion, region and caste has actually been constituted and developed further as it could be understood in the present age. The study on Tamil literary historiography is therefore not only concentrating on how the single linear chronological order of Tamil literature appears, but also engaging into the discussion of how the various attempts for the linear chronological order indeed constitute 'a single unified tradition of Tamil literature'. In other words, the various attempts for constituting the linear chronological order of Tamil literature are not merely ordering the texts in Tamil language produced over the ages chronologically; rather, by doing so they constitute the notion of Tamil literary culture as a single unified whole and has been existed as a single order since from the beginning. Thus the very concept of Tamil literature as a single tradition is actually a by-product of the various attempts for writing the history of Tamil literature. However, the concept of ‘Tamil literature’ that was produced as an offshoot of the Tamil literary historiography is in fact the modern, not only in the sense that the category was principally constituted in the modern times but also by the nature and the logic of the term to be understood in present age. Nonetheless, the employment of the concept of translation has indeed played a considerable role in imagining and defining the meaning of ‘Tamil literature’ and further the history of Tamil literature has only been constituted upon this modern notion of Tamil literature.

Nonetheless, the vast amount of literature regarding the issues on Tamil literary historiography is produced over the past two centuries. They rightly point out the impact of
the western influences on the very inception and the developments of writing the history of Tamil literature. However, the focused studies on the act of writing literary history in Tamil or in other words, studies on Tamil literary historiography are very limited in numbers. A huge amount of literature discussing the Tamil literary history indeed maintain a thick silence while they address the issues regarding the politics of the very act of writing literary history. They on the other hand principally engage dialogues with various textual and extra-textual elements so as to setting up a concrete temporal accuracy to the texts and thus constituting an uninterrupted chronological order of the texts in Tamil language produced over the ages. Therefore, the prime concern of these works is largely looking at the various possibilities of locating or attributing an indisputably concrete temporal constrains to the texts. The time constrain of texts is thus a site of politics, politics of particular interest.

The literary historiography in Tamil therefore is not only the act of mere historicizing the literature and by doing so a linear chronology is constituted, but also be employed as a tool through which the politics of the historicizing could be traced down. In other words, the enquiry into the process of literary historiography is not only explaining the order of literature as produced by the act of historicizing, but also offering subtle hints that narrates the politics of historicizing literature and as a result an order of the literature is produced in a particular fashion and also exposing the covert intentions for the preference of that particular order.

However, these views on the history of Tamil literature are not only explaining the impact of the western influences in the formation of Tamil literary history but also subtly portraying the inception of some of the ‘new’ concepts like Tamil literature, linear chronological tradition and so on that are chiefly constituted as the by-product of the process of the historiography. In other words, the western influences on Tamil literature is not only
arranging the literature of Tamil language that are existed during that time into chronological order, but also constituting the concept of ‘Tamil literature’ itself by the very process of the historiography. This understanding of the history of Tamil literature is quite evidently explaining the very act of literary historiography is a product of colonial modern phenomenon. The reference of ‘modern’ here is purposefully used not as a sign-point that specifies a particular temporal limits alone, but also indicating the subtle ‘newness’ in understanding the very ideas such as history, literature and the new modes of perceiving these ideas by centring the extant written sources and also by writing new materials in colonial times. The literary historiography in Tamil therefore is not only the act of mere historicizing the literary activities and by doing so a linear chronology is constituted, but also be employed as a tool through which the politics of the historicizing could be traced down. In other words, the enquiry into the process of literary historiography is not only explaining the order of literature as produced by the act of historicizing, but also offering subtle hints that narrates the politics of historicizing literature and as a result an order of the literature is produced in a particular order.

Now, the inception of writing history of Tamil literature is invariably connected with the printed form of textual activities becomes the commonly accepted phenomenon among the scholars and historians of Tamil studies. The entire activities related to history of Tamil literature are primarily initiated during the 19th century and all these activities are closely centre on the printed texts and the colonial pedagogical system. This intimacy between ‘modern’ systems such as colonial education, print technology and so on and translation is largely inseparable. And these modern systems indeed introduced the linear historical
sensibility among Tamils. However, the central concern about the study is invariably related to the advent of print technology in Tamil and also the colonial formal education.

**Review of Literature**

The scholarly studies that discuss the inception of the chronological consciousness among the Tamil are invariably locating the act of translation as actually setting the foundation stone for the history of Tamil literature. The focused studies on the origin, development and the problems of imagining and thus constituting the history of Tamil literature are comparatively less in number and still expect much more scholarly attention towards them. However, among the studies that critically engages with the issues and problems related to Tamil literary historiography, Karthigesu Sivathamby’s *Literary History in Tamil: A Historiographical analysis* published in 1986 and Kamil V. Zvelebil’s *Companion Studies to The History of Tamil Literature* appeared in 1992 are two major full-length, well received and oft-quoted works that extensively address the multiple issues and problems related to the literary historiography in Tamil. Further, with some other scattered articles, *The Smile of Murugan: on Tamil Literature of South India*, a book by Zvelebil containing the series of articles is also one of the notable works that critically engages with the issues of Tamil literary historiography.

Sivathamby’s *Literary History in Tamil: A Historiographical analysis* discusses the difference between the terms ‘literary history’ and ‘the history of Tamil literature’ and also the absence of this understanding among Tamil scholars and historians. Further he points out the problems in locating the texts in Tamil into a linear historical structure. His detailed descriptions regarding the various attempts to write a linear Tamil literary past and their
methodological pitfalls explains the subtle politics around the very act of understanding Tamil literary history.

Besides Sivathamby, Kamil V Zvelebil’s *Companion Studies to the History of Tamil Literature* is one of the very few notable works in the history of Tamil literary historiography that diligently deals with the various events and information that have been used to write the linear mode of Tamil literary history so far. The detailed accounts of the early attempts to understand the past and also the broad existing literary surveys of the missionaries invariably locate the arguments in the ‘early’ modern period (the early decades of 18th century). And by doing so, it portrays the various modes of writing Tamil literary history/ies and their attempts into a chronological order.

Before the text discusses about the ‘substance’ of it, it critically discusses the word ‘Tamil’ and its historical importance. He locates the existence of the word from the earliest extant text in Tamil, Tolkāppiyam. The extensive study of the term ‘Tamil’ is discussed starting from its etymology to the current usage. Following this, an attempt is made to refer the bibliographies and catalogues of Tamil materials prepared by the missionaries. The early attempts of collecting the Tamil manuscripts and making notes about those manuscripts by the Jesuit missionaries that are found as early as the 16th century have been discussed using various sources of that age in detail. The important point portrayed would be the discussion of Jesuit attempts to catalogue the available manuscripts of Tamil and their wish to translate some of Tamil works into European language. By his careful analysis, the author throws light upon the early translations of Tamil text into European language. More importantly, the selections by the Europeans to translate offer a valuable insight to understand their ‘entire’ translation enterprise during the 17th and the 18th centuries.
The exclusive chapter titled ‘The Periodization of the development of Tamil literature’ discusses the various debates concerned with the categorizing of existing Tamil materials. He also takes into consideration that the discussions among Tamil literary historians to arrange the text into certain ‘pre-fixed’ demarcation. This argument is followed by the chapter titled ‘Pre-history and Proto-history of Tamil Literate Civilization, Oral and Written traditions – The Case of Tamil; The Problem of Transmission.’ is an elaborate account of the myths, old sayings and other disciplinary references about the past in Tamil literary sphere and its discourse. The transition between the oral to written mode in Tamil literary activities has verily been discussed by using the ‘internal’ evidences drawing from the literary texts in Tamil. Further, the following chapter, ‘Problem of Integrity, Authenticity, Attribution and Authorship: Interpolations, Additions, Revision, Forgeries; Lost Literature,’ discusses all these mentioned categories in detail with lots of literary and non-literary evidences. Including all the previous ones, this chapter has a large list of books that were lost in Tamil language due to various reasons down the ages. The ‘Names’ and the ‘Notes’ about these ‘lost’ books draw insightful arguments that helps one to understand the ‘methods’ of literary historiographies and its politics practiced in Tamil language during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Further, the problems in dating texts in Tamil have been discussed in detail. Interestingly, the availability of various manuscripts of the same texts makes it difficult to categorize them chronologically, so the author suggests creating two types of chronology namely absolute and relative chronology. In the chapter titled ‘The Dichotomy of Norm (ilakkanam) and Application (ilakkiyam), The Dichotomy of Marga and Desi; The Dichotomy of Centamil and Koṭuntamil; The Dichotomy of Taṇiand Toṭar, The Concept of Muttamil’, various textual issues have been discussed.
At last, the argument centres on the rediscovery of ancient Tamil literature in the late 19th century. During the early 19th century, Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai was considered to be one among the great Tamil scholars who has read almost all Tamil texts, but he was not aware of the presence of the Cañkam literature. His disciple, U.Ve.SwaminathaAiyar, was the person who introduced the Cañkam literature to the Tamil world, thus leading to the rediscovery the Cañkam literature helping the scholars to understand the ancient-ness and classical-ness of Tamil language.

Zvelebil’s work extensively discussed the literary activities during the pre-modern times. Following him, Thomas Trautmann’s study on Ellis’s letters offers another perspective. The insightful work in the ‘Languages and Nations series’, titled ‘Language and Nations: The Dravidian Proof in Colonial Madras’ by Thomas Trautmann explicates the encounter between the then existing knowledge of language in the Indian tradition(s) of thought with that of the colonial/European model of comparative philology. The Dravidian proof had a unique existence in this subcontinent as a distinct linguistic family and cultural tradition that struck even Trautmann as odd after his extensive works on ‘Ariyans’ and Sanskrit traditions. As he explains in his preface, the Dravidian proof which was explicated and systematically (in the European model of comparative philology) explained by Ellis, surveyed the cultural and political nationalism of a unique Dravidian kind ever since the mid-nineteenth century. The genealogy of the distinct Dravidian root/route and the discursive production of its proof in the European model under Ellis’ efforts served at least two important purposes. Primarily for Trautmann’s analysis of ‘Languages and Nations’ project: these cluster of works in Ellis’ work and his company of scholars established a different linguistic identity for the Dravidian family of languages and thereby to their geographical
areas. An equally important discovery in this line is the existence of a notion to relate both languages and nations together as it can be seen in the extensive production of a large body of grammar and linguistic/aesthetic discourses down from Panini and Tolkāppiyar. This book explains the works of Ellis and other scholars of that time with archaeological support and historical insight.

The chapter titled, “Explosion in the Grammar Factory” illustrates how grammar analysis became an eminent mode of understanding the languages and nations in the late 18th and the 19th centuries during the European colonial expansion. The root of this linguistic knowledge is traced to the western/Greco-roman astronomical knowledge as expounded by Ptolemy and his kind. Following this, the chapter named “Panini and Tolkāppiyar” skilfully places the linguistic and grammatical knowledge/discourses of Tolkāppiyar and Panini in comparison to the western knowledge of languages and nations. An elaborate discussion of the structural and linguistic characteristics of Panini and Tolkāppiyar’s works is also given. There was, in essence, a project of comparative grammatology at work between these two scholars of “Ancient India”. Trautmann locates that Tolkāppiyam must have been an inspired work (negatively at least) of Panini who tried to make a “scientific” analysis of Sanskrit language, especially its verbal roots and phonological and morphological structure. Tamil/Dravidian languages needed a distinct explanation as Panini’s model was unfitting for Tamil or this family of languages. Tolkāppiyar also explained the Phonology, morphology and poetic subjects of Tamil. There was, in Ellis’ view, a linguistic notion of nation that existed between these traditions which got renewed interest and much attention in the nineteenth century comparative philology.
Following chapter, “Ellis and his Circle”, takes the arguments further towards understanding the Dravidian proof. It is believed that there was no major work in the field of oriental comparative philology for 70 years between Jones’ discovery of the Indo-European languages and the comparative grammar of the Dravidian languages or south Indian languages by Cardwell. But the works of Trautmann, the governor of Madras and the head of the board of ‘St. George College’ single-handedly contributed enormously during this ‘gap’. Moreover the ‘Madras circle’ comprised of Ellis, Pattabhirama Shastri, Shankaraiyyah and Campbell. These three besides serving the East India Company as revenue officers, were scholars in Sanskrit and Telugu. Campbell’s dictionary of Telugu and his comparisons, Sankaraiyyah’s knowledge in Telugu and the Dravidian linguistics and Pattabhirama’s root words dictionary of Telugu, Sanskrit grammar in Telugu prose and a Telugu grammar text in Telugu verse were remarkable in the development of the Dravidian proof project. All the three, of course with Ellis, were associated with the St. George College that aspired to be the patron of learning and literature in South India.

Ellis first had four projects in mind as expressed in his letters to Erskin: a history of Tamil-spoken countries about Tamil language; its ancient and modern dialects; versification and rhythmic measures; the work on prosody of Tamil and a history of Tamil literature. He later expanded his analysis of Tamil language and its literature to form a larger framework of the Dravidian language family’s comparative study as the fifth one, mainly focusing on the alphabetic writing of Indian languages (particularly that of South Indian languages like Telugu and Sinhalese) to illustrate the derivation of Dravidian languages from Tamil; on the high and low dialect of Tamil, on Telugu, Malayalam, and Kannada and other minor languages like Tuluvu and Kudahu. His published, unpublished manuscripts and archives
contain mainly his introduction to Campbell’s dictionary of Telugu grammar, his dissertations on Telugu and Malayalam, manuscripts on Tamil literature, English translation of his Tamil writing focused on the less popular and unpublished unedited Tirukkural translation and the incomplete Nālatiyār translation. This reveals his conception of the Dravidian languages as an indigenous family. Though much of his envisaged works could not be completed due to his sudden death, the accomplished ones and his work plans form the core in systematically establishing that central project of a Dravidian Linguistic identity.

The college of St. George’s relationship with the new knowledge about South India is analysed and its contribution to the Dravidian proof is illustrated in this chapter named “the College”. It is the brain child of Ellis. Before its inception, the civil servants knew only Persian and Hindustani in Madras and even in Calcutta province. The first dictionary of Bengali language was composed in 1778 by Halhed only after the government started facing the trouble of administering the natives in villages, and knowing the fact that the learning of the native language is necessary. Halhed historicized the Pandit’s claim that Sanskrit is an eternal language. He wrote that all the Indian languages could be traced to have derived their words from Sanskrit nouns, verbs and particles. Those of such are ruled out as later imports from foreign dialects. At that time was started the college of St. Williams in which the newly-arriving servants had to learn classical languages and other six dialects including Tamil, Telugu and Kannada. It remained the centre of language scholarship for a while until the same was started in England itself to offer courses for the first 2 years of the 3 years duration. Similar college was started in Madras and Bombay (1812 and 1804). Ellis started the college in Madras and he followed the model of Calcutta in his language and nation analysis project, yet differed in the view that all that is true and valid in the North cannot be applied to the
South. This allegiance to Calcutta school and the difference to its inadequacies are the reasons to form the Madras School of Orientalism that produced Dravidian proof. In this regard, Ellis gave a report to the government for teaching languages to the British servants so as to enable their familiarity with South India. The committee’s report emphasized the need for teaching Tamil, Beschi’s grammar books on high Tamil (Tomoul) and his dictionary of the four kinds of high Tamil: Peyar, Porul, Tokai and Toțai (both in Latin). The next recommendation was to introduce Telugu teaching through the dictionaries available at the time. Yet, it was accomplished only with the compilation of Campbell’s Telugu dictionary in 1816. Kannada and Malayalam were remarked as low dialects from Tamil and no proper dictionaries were available at that time for them in European languages. Sanskrit was told not to be of much of use in learning Tamil or the other South Indian languages. These remarks are significant in the formation of Ellis’ concept of a Dravidian proof.

Further, the St. George College was the effect of Ellis’s idea of the Dravidian languages. Its governance exhibits a structural extension of the Dravidian language family as materialized in teaching and grants. Dravidian languages were realized to be indigenous to the South, distinct from those came through conquest (Sanskrit also). It also promoted the learning of Sanskrit since it alone, among the “classical languages,” was thought to be of any direct relevance for learning Dravidian languages. It replaced the Mughal administrative language policy to give due importance to the South Indian languages, thereby distancing Persian and Hindustani.

New headmasters were appointed from the learned natives, grumblingly sanctioned high native-worthy salary, for Tamil (Chidambara Vadiyar), Telugu (Pattabhirama Shastri) and in half position for English (Narayana and later Shankaraïyyah in full position). The
teachers were classified as learned, learning the courses and volunteers placed under the masters with the hope of filling future vacancies. The head masters had close association with the English board of superintendents, with Ellis and Campbell in particular. Thus Pattabhirama and Shankariyyah collaborated with the former and Narayana with the latter for their Dravidian language dictionaries in Tamil and Telugu.

A list of books printed and ‘being printed’ in the college press was given in the board’s report after Ellis’s death. Evidently, Ellis had envisaged ambitious projects through the press. But only 4 books had been printed (Beschi’s low Tamil grammar, Uttiragandam by Chidambara Vadiyar, Campbell’s Telugu dictionary and a Telugu story book) until Ellis’s death. Expansions were made on the board’s recommendations, and other books like Catur'akarāti, Curukkavijakkam of Chidambara Vadiyar, Telugu and English books were printed, at least partially fulfilling his grand hopes for the press.

When the royal patronage had virtually worn down, Ellis and the college had looked forward to bring about a revival of letters in the South. It was not by restoring the older pattern of royal patronage, but by getting the copyrights of the writers. It was Venkayya who was the first to encounter such newly invented system of scholarly productions under the changed circumstances of colonial rule. His laboriously compiled Telugu grammar was taken for being printed in the college for a sum of a pension throughout his life after long negotiations against his seeking of a generous grant of land. However, this grammar book was not of any direct use to the college since it was in Telugu and Sanskrit. It was used in Campbell’s Telugu dictionary. Importantly, his introduction was to contribute to the core of the Dravidian proof. This hub of textual productions and swift face of actions at the linguistic scholarship levels is of special interest to the student of Tamil literary historiography as this
period set in motion a large body of works and discourses surrounding the comparative virtue of Tamil. It also led to the urge to prove the “classical-ness” of Tamil in par with Sanskrit and further collection, printing and learning of ancient texts which had so far remained invisible and insignificant.

Nonetheless, “the Dravidian Proof” explains the proof of Dravidian distinctness found in the accomplished works of Ellis and his circle. The roots and classification of verbs and nouns form the much part of discussions in these works of Dravidian proof. The legacy of these works in creating a distinct Dravidian linguistic identity, nationalism in the political and cultural premises is elaborately explained which are of not much use and focus to the present proposal. In the concluding part, Trautmann explains that often the (anti)oriental and modern European thoughts have conceded to the view that the ancient scholarship is dead and irrelevant except for historical studies. But, the works of Tholkappiyar or Panini and other linguists and aestheticians have still been contributing to the modern notions as found in the Dravidian proof. Here, the matter of particular interest is the historical and linguistic contextualization. Trautmann explores textual production and the much vibrant literary and cultural activities with the help of printing, new ideas of text and history, and influence/intervention of the Christian/European notions of language and nation.

Not only the European Christians, but also the printing activities of Muslim’s in Tamil speaking region influenced the textual activities of Tamil literary culture. J.B.P. More, in his *Muslim Identity, Print Culture and the Dravidian Factor in Tamil Nadu*, mentions that understanding the Tamil Muslim realities and society is the aim of this book. He is trying to determine the identity of Tamil Muslims, living among the Hindu society, to trace the historical origin of Tamil Muslims through their own literature. He clearly mentions that, in
order to understand a group of people, one has to analyse the literature of that group and that is the reason why, in this book, the author has collected as many books he can get hold of and with the information collected he is trying to determine the identity of Tamil Muslims. He is trying to point out the lack of understanding about Tamil Muslims by scholars like Louis Dumont, Intiaz Ahmad and Francis Robinson. They all tried to read the Muslims of India as a whole and gave generalized views about them, but More says that the Tamil Muslims must be seen in a different angle. He mentions that, 'while assessing the identity of the Muslims of Tamil Nadu, it is important not to be committed to any idea or ideology'.

In the first chapter, the author is trying to trace out the historical origin of the Tamil Muslims. Even before the inception of Islam, the Arab traders were in contact with south India. Because of their contact with south India Islam started to spread to south India before it can enter the northern part. He gives much historical evidence in order to show that there was Muslim presence in the Tamil country as early as the 13th century. Then the author moves on to analyse the different groups of Muslims in Tamil Nadu. He is trying to trace the historical origin of the terms like 'Ravuttar', 'Tulukkar' and 'Sonagar'. Though there are different groups among the Muslims, the author concludes the first chapter by saying that, there is no hierarchy among the Tamil Muslims.

While analysing the literature written by the Tamil Muslims, he divides them into two groups, the works written before 1835 and the works written after 1835. The reason for choosing the year 1835 as the break was that it is the year in which the printing restrictions were loosened by the British and the indigenous people were allowed to print. He divides the bulk of Tamil Muslim Literature into six different groups, they are, 1. Histories of prophets and other major personalities, 2. Poems and works in praise of the prophet and other
famous personalities, 3. Islamic doctrines, prayers, laws, ethics, theology, rituals, marriage and other aspects of Muslim culture, 4. Translation of Quran and Hadith into Tamil, 5. Mystical works and other religious works, and 6. Stories, novels, dramas, and books on Maxims. While mentioning about the books that were written in the Arabic script, the author says that they were written by the people those who don’t have adequate knowledge both in Arabic and Tamil.

In the fourth chapter the author gives a brief history of the print technology. The print technology was invented by the Chinese and it was later borrowed by the Europeans. Though the Arabs were in contact with the Chinese well before the Europeans, they didn’t borrow printing technology from the Chinese; instead the Europeans were the pioneers to introduce it to the Arabs. In the Indian context Tamil was the first language to be used for printing and the Portuguese travellers installed the first printing press in Goa, India. In the next chapter the author is trying to analyse the reasons why the Arabs were hesitant or late in adopting the print technology. Though the oral tradition of the Arabs can be a strong reason, the author says that it may not be the only reason and based on the evidences available today it is impossible to decide why the Arabs were hesitant to adopt the print technology. In the Indian context the print technology was introduced by the Christians and therefore the Hindus and Muslims didn’t felt it necessary and were hesitant to use the print technology until very lately. Only after 1835, the Indians took to printing. Though there was attempt to translate and publish the Quran and Hadith in Tamil, a complete translation of Quran into Tamil in the Tamil script came only in the year 1948-1950. The author attributes this delay in translation to the unwillingness of the Ulema and Alims.
In the next chapter the author moves on to discuss about the society and identity of the Muslims and particularly the Tamil Muslims. He begins with the various debates and controversies that raged throughout the Muslim world. At pan-Indian level there was this debate about the Ahmediyya movement and the Nechari (Naturist) movement. At the pan-Islamic level there was the Wahabi movement and the Khilafat movement. Finally he talks about the local debates that took place around Tamil Nadu. In the Tamil context there were some reformist tendencies which might have been influenced by the modern education and also by the influence of the Dravidian movement. One major figure among these reformist tendencies remains Dawood Shah who was described as 'Muslim Periyar'. He published a journal named 'Dar-ul-Islam' through which he spread his radical thoughts and criticisms against the orthodox Muslims. He also criticised Arabic-Tamil saying that it is a display of the incomplete knowledge of the Ulemas and Alims. Incomplete knowledge both in Arabic and Tamil led them to use a mixture of both of them.

The author goes on to talk about the influence of the Dravidian movement among the Tamil Muslims. As Periyar advocated Islam to be an escape from the caste atrocities of Hinduism many Dravidians converted into Islam and the Muslims also started to support the Dravidian movement. Both Muslims and the Dravidian were in good relationship until the demand for separate Islamic nation arose. At this stage the Dravidians also raised their claim of separate 'Dravidashtan' for the Dravidians. The Muslims were left to lurk in the dark, whether to support their fellow religionists or the neighbouring Dravidians. At the outset, either 'Dravidashtan' or 'Pakisthan' were not of much direct help for the Tamil Muslims, so they maintained an ambiguous position. After the independence, when the claim for separate 'Dravidashtan' was withdrawn, the Tamil Muslims started supporting the DMK which was
the powerful organisation after the independence. Amidst all these activities the author focuses on the role played by the Print technology. Both the Dravidian and the Muslims used print technology in the form of newspapers, journals and periodicals. According to the author, the Muslims were never hesitant to use the print technology and it was never an obstacle for the Tamil Muslims.

The author concludes the book by mentioning that in order to trace the evolution and conditioning of the Tamil Muslims, it is necessary to analyse their writings and literature. Through such kind of analysis the author finds out that 'Islam' is the underlying basic principle under which they were conditioned and evolved. From the early 20th century onwards the identity of the Tamil Muslims gathered strength. They undertook many reform activities and the Dravidian movement helped them in their reform activities. The print technology obviously brought about a lot of changes in the society, but that cannot be given the sole responsibility for changes that took place among the Tamil Muslims.

Some other noteworthy scholarly attempts tried to historicize the print culture in Tamil society. Of those, Stuart Blackburn's Print, Folklore and Nationalism in Colonial South India is one of the notable studies which argues that the beginning of print technology and its role in early times is not marked for its novelty of new knowledge, but by the enormous production of old and popular materials in Tamil society. In order to strengthen his argument, he writes the history of print in Tamil, starting from 1557 to till date. Apart from his contribution, another remarkable scholar who produced considerable knowledge in this domain is Thomas R. Trumann. His studies on the Madras school of Orientalism recount their various literary activities and political motives in Fort St. George at Madras in 19th
century. Furthermore, some other historians have also produced considerable knowledge in the print culture of Tamil.

**Significance of the Study**

Foregrounding what has been discussed so far, this study aims to argue that the concept of ‘Tamil literature’ is in fact a product of modernization. By emphasizing the genesis of the concept ‘Tamil literature’ as modern, the study discusses that during the pre-modern age there could be many literary texts in Tamil language practiced in multiple ways. But these texts and their multiple textual practices were not understood as a unified Tamil literary culture as it is being understood at present. The present meaning of Tamil literature has indeed begun with the attempts of imagining and thus writing a linear chronological order of the literary texts in Tamil. In other words, the attempts of understanding the multiply practiced Tamil literary activities into a single linear past have given birth to the concept of Tamil literature. In addition, the modern concept of Tamil literature is actually a conceptual ‘being’ and has been constituted by the influences of the European textual practices in Tamil language. However the modernization critically engages with multiply practiced traditional literary canons and as a result drastic changes in understanding the literary activities in Tamil are actually initiated, the traditionally practiced Vaithika monopoly over the Tamil language has subtly retained even in the modern structure of the history of Tamil literature. To put in precisely, when the entire traditional structures have been reordered by the influence of modern thoughts, the meaning of Tamil as commonly understood in present is emerged and during the process of transforming traditionally practiced multiple meanings of Tamil into a
single unified modern, the Vaithika\(^1\) religious supremacy on Tamil has purposefully retrieved without much damage as it was practiced even in the modern structure. Nonetheless, the concept of translation plays a major role in the politics of consciously retrieving the Vaithika monopoly in the modern chronological history of Tamil literature. Hence, setting this understanding as a background, this study formulates its query as: how and what are all the ways by which the notion of translation has effectively been used as a tool to construct the structure of existing literary history with all its pre-modern legacy of the Vaitika religious supremacy? In other words, how the notion of translation is used as a tool to retrieve the Vaitika-Tamil bond while writing the history of Tamil literature?

When the research sets its focus on the role of translation practiced while writing a single linear chronological Tamil literary past; more particularly when the research intends to study how Tamil literary historiography effectively employs the concept of translation as one of the tools to constitute a single linear Tamil literary past, the focal limit of this study invariably falls into two major categories: the Tamil literary historiography and the concept of translation. Further, the core argument of this study is actually emerging from the interrelation between these two categories, arguably how the notion of translation is employed while structuring a single linear history of Tamil literature. Therefore the main concern of the study primarily includes the notions of history, the nature as well as the politics of literary historiography in Tamil and also the multiple meanings of the concept of translation. To put it differently, the continuation of the Vaitika-Tamil identity in modern historiography is made possible by various strategies mainly employed whilst the transformation of pre-modern canons into the linear-chronological mode of modern origin.

\(^1\) The word refers to vedic religion, which includes saiva and vaishnava sects.
Translation is one of the prime strategies; by employing it the present history of Tamil literature has actually been constituted. The pre-modern legacy of the Vaitika-Tamil bond is being continued with all its old legacies in the modern order. In this context, this research aims to study how effectively the notion of ‘Translation’ has been used and the various ways of employing this notion so as to retain subtly the identity of the Vaitika-Tamil in the ‘modern’ literary historiography.

The detailed study on the role of translations and their politics in the attempts for constituting a linear Tamil literary past invariably lead the discussion to the origin of historical consciousness among the Tamils. However the origin of the linear chronological sense could be traced back to the European textual practices in Tamil, mainly in the form of translations. Therefore the European textual practices in Tamil, principally translations initiate the modernization in Tamil. Moreover, the general understanding about the Western modernity is related to the interrelations of the following events: the asceticism of the Protestant sects against the hierarchal Roman Catholic, the decline of feudalism, Renaissance thoughts and the spread of the scientific temper, the widespread of the public education and the effects of printing press in circulating the scientific thoughts among the people. However, when it comes to modernization in Tamil all the aforesaid events undoubtedly play the leading part, but not as they were subtly connected with each other in the western sense. In Tamil context, even though the beginning of the formal education is associated to the arrival of Protestant religion, the printing and its potential of socialization is not related to the fall of feudal-Casteism. In turn, the formal education and the printing activities are closely linked up with the traditionally practiced monopoly of certain sections of the society. Therefore the modernization in Tamil is also closely related to the traditionally
observed system of hierarchies. Nonetheless, although the study principally discusses the
modern structure of Tamil literature is constituted by the attempts of writing a linear history
of Tamil literature, the influence of modern thoughts and their importance could gradually
be incorporated into the multiply practiced traditional canons even before the attempts of
imagining a linear chronological Tamil literary past are initiated. Thus the study discusses
the central concern of it in the following chapters.

The first chapter is titled as ‘Introduction’. As the title explains, it introduces the
purpose, nature and development of the study in detail. This chapter principally locates the
meaning and the understanding of translation activities among the multiply practiced literary
activities in Tamil over the ages. By studying so, this chapter explains how not only the
translated texts as the product but also the very concept of translation in the conceptual level
played a subtle role to define the present structure of the history of Tamil literature. Further,
it presents a detailed review of literature which discusses the works so far produced in this
same line of thoughts. Following this, this chapter explains the significance of the study and
also the trajectory of the study in the chapter division.

In the second chapter, “Religion, Tamil Literary Practices and Modernisation: The
influence of the European Textual Practices on Tamil Literary Activities”, the researcher
have discussed multiple ways of practicing literary activities in pre-modern age and it
explains the distinctiveness of the European’s textual activities in Tamil language. Further,
this chapter portrayed the trajectory of changes marked by the confluence of the multiple
literary practices of pre-modern modes and the modern mode introduced by the Europeans
during the 19th century. It however served as introductory remarks to the following chapter.
The latter half of the chapter discusses the concept of modernity and the modernisation processes in Tamil literary activities.

Setting the attempts of writing a linear history of Tamil literature as a benchmark, the following two chapters draw their limitations. The scholars and historians are commonly acknowledging that Robert Caldwell’s *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South-Indian Family of Language*, published in 1856 is the first written evidence that attempts to describe a single linear Tamil literary past in detail. Therefore following two chapters set the attempt of Robert Caldwell as their limitations: the first sets the year 1856 as a lower limit whereas the following chapter begins from the particular point of time. Of these two, the first chapter titled, “The Harbinger of Modernity: The Transaction between European and Tamil Textual Practices” attempts to argue that the European textual practices in Tamil language, primarily translations, have largely influenced multiple ways of practicing literary activities of Tamil language over the ages. As a result, it is explained that how traditionally practiced meaning of the terms such as Tamil, literature and history of literature has drastically changed. Further, the researcher has explained how the print as a new material of textual practices, formal education to the common mass, translations of scientific treatise and prose form as the centre of literary activities are some of the central transformations which translate the age old religion-centric literary activities of Tamil into the modern understanding of Tamil literature. It further discusses the origin and development of modern thoughts into Tamil literary sphere. It locates the European, particularly Portuguese missionaries’ endeavours to translate the Christian prayers into Tamil and also their work book/s to learn Tamil language as the beginning of modern thoughts into Tamil literary sphere. Moreover, the translations activities initiated by missionaries were related to printing form. Therefore,
the genesis of modernization in Tamil is indeed associated with the printed form, translations and the interaction between the European and Tamil cultures. Further, this chapter critically analyses the trajectory of western textual influences on the traditionally practiced literary activities in Tamil. By doing so, it explains not only the names of the texts translated from the European languages into Tamil and the other way round, but also explores how the very understanding of translation in Tamil itself has largely changed by the influences of the western thoughts. Moreover, this chapter also discusses how the translations from the European languages influence the literary forms in Tamil and as a result the prose form gradually becomes the centre of Tamil literary practices.

The fourth chapter titled, 'The Politics of Employing the Concept of Translation in the Act of Constituting a Single Linear Chronological History of Tamil Literature' discusses the role of translation in constituting a linear chronological history of Tamil literature. This chapter attempts to argue the very idea of linear history and the understanding the translation activities in terms of 'source' and 'target' texts were only started with the advent of the European textual activities in Tamil. Therefore, the central argument of this chapter centres on the interrelationship between the origin of present meaning of translation, gradual domination of the western textual practices over traditionally practiced literary activities in Tamil and the emergence of chronological consciousness among Tamils. Further, this chapter explores multiple ways of employing the concept of translation, by doing so how the particular meaning of Tamil literary past is constituted. In other words, by employing the concept of translation in multiple ways, the literary historiography in Tamil subtly retains the traditionally practiced the Vaithika religious supremacy into the modern order and also justified the Vaithika supremacy as the natural one. In precise, this chapter argues that the
multiple ways of employing the concept of translation subtly helped literary historiographical attempts in Tamil to retain certain preconceived or traditionally practiced meaning into the modern structure without much changes. Further, the intention and the politics behind the act of retaining the Vaithika religious supremacy into the modern order is discussed in detail.

The last chapter is conclusion that sums up the entire events discussed in the above four chapters in a precise mode. By relating various events related to modernity and the act of translation, this chapter explains the role of translation in the process of modernisation. However, this chapter evidently argues that the translation of European texts into Tamil and vice-versa introduced modern thoughts to Tamil literary practices. And the notion of translation and its various meaning constituted the present structure of the history of Tamil literature. At last, this chapter along with providing a detailed summary of the discussion, explains the limitation of the study and thus providing the scope for further studies.