Chapter 1
Colonial Rule and Ramnad: From Little Kingdom to Zamindari

Contents

1. Political Negotiation of the Nawab of Carnatic with the Company

2. Treaties and Their Consequences in Ramnad Kingdom
   2.1. The Treaty of 1781
   2.2. Carnatic Treaty of 1792

3. The Company and the Ramnad Domain

4. Poligar Resistance against the Company Rule

5. The 1801 Revolt and its Impact in the Ramnad Kingdom

6. Ramnad and the Company Rule (1795 – 1803)

7. Ramnad: Little Kingdom to Zamindari

8. Administrative Structure of Ramnad Zamindari
   8.1. First Phase: 1803-1858
   8.2. Second Phase: 1858 - 1873
   8.3. Third Phase: 1873-1910

9. Land Revenue Administration in Ramnad Zamindari

10. Overview

The decline of the Vijayanagar Empire occurred after the Battle of Talikota (1565) in the second half of the sixteenth century and the weakness of central authority paved the way for the Madura Nayaks to become independent rulers. The death of Tirumalai Nayak (1659) led to political turmoil in the
Madura Kingdom in the second half of the seventeenth century. After him there was no powerful ruler to maintain peace, law and order in the Madura Kingdom and its tributary chieftains. Therefore frequent disputes emerged among the members of the royal family of Madura Nayaks. During the eighteenth century, war of succession between Bangaru Tirumalai Nayak and Minakshi resulted in the collapse of the administration and further confusion of the political situation. Ultimately, after the suicide of Minakshi (1736) the Nayak Kingdom of Madura totally vanished.

1. Political Negotiation of the Nawab of Carnatic with the Company

The royal disputes and the collapse of Madura Nayak Kingdom created the way for the entry of the Arcot Nawab into the Madura Kingdom which occurred in 1736 under Chanda Sahib, the Nawab of Carnatic (1736-1740). The southern districts like Trichinopoly, Madura, and Tinnevelly of Madras Presidency was under his control from 1736. After the death of Chanda Sahib, Muhamad Ali became the Nawab of Carnatic region in 1755 A.D. In 1765, Shah Alam of Delhi sultanate recognised Muhammed Ali as the Nawab of Carnatic and declared him as the sovereign power of Nawab with the title Wallajah-Ameer-ul-Hind.

---

1 Minakshi was the wife of Vijayaranga Chokkanatha Nayak (1706-1732) and Bangaru Nayak was the lineage of Kumara Muthu, younger brother of Tirumalai Nayak; Sathyanatha Aiyer, *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, 232.
2 *Some facts about Madura* (Chennai: Tamil Nadu Archives, 1909), 17.
In 1772 Carnatic Nawab Muhammad Ali captured Ramnad with the help of the Company. Nawab’s policy of expansion made his kingdom spread over Tanjore, Ramnad and Sivaganga. After the consolidation of power, his main motive was to control the whole Carnatic region. As a result, Muhammad Ali maintained relationship with the French, the Dutch and the Danish to reduce the influence of the British. But, in 1775 Muhammad Ali’s aspirations were checked due to the restoration of the Marathas in Tanjore and the outbreak of the second Anglo-Mysore War (1780-84). The Court of Directors condemned the Marathas’ conquest of Tanjore. These barriers were a turning point in the political turmoil of Carnatic region. The outbreak of rebellion in the Marava Kingdoms of Ramnad and Sivaganga also were the major reasons to restrain the power of the Nawab in the second half of the eighteenth century.4

The serious political turmoil during the second half of the eighteenth century changed the destiny of the southern Tamil country. During the fifth decade of the eighteenth century, the European powers of the English and the French entered the contest for political supremacy over the southern Tamil country (Carnatic wars). The French and the British tried to maintain their supremacy over India. Victory in the Battle of Plassey(1757) and the Battle of Buxar(1764) made the British power supreme in India. Hence they decided to widen their ascendancy in India. Therefore, they followed the divide-and-rule policy towards the local chieftains. In South India, the Company controlled

---

4 Rajayyan, Tamil Nadu: A Real History, (Trivandrum, 2005), 275-277.
Deccan and Carnatic regions by making the Subhedar and the Nawab puppet rulers.

2. Treaties and Their Consequences in Ramnad Kingdom

2.1. The Treaty of 1781

On 2nd December 1781, the Nawab, Muhammad Ali made an agreement with the Company; accordingly, he transferred the revenue administration of Carnatic provinces to the Company for five years. One-sixth, as share, was sent to the Nawab for his personal expenses from the total revenue collection. From 1781 onwards the Company began its intervention in the revenue administration of the southern Tamil country. Following the advent of the Company’s revenue administration over the Carnatic region, the Company appointed ‘Receivers’ of Assigned Revenues for collecting revenue. In the same year Muthuramalinga Setupathi I (1763-72, and 1782-95) was restored as ruler of Ramnad with the help of the Nawab. As a result of this support, the Nawab demanded Rs 1,75,000 from Muthuramalinga Setupathi I. Initially Setupathi agreed to pay the Nawab,

---

5 *Subhedar* denote, Governor of a province, a Viceroy under the Mughal Government. He was native officers under the Company’s army holding a rank equivalent to that of Captain under the European officers. H.H. Wilson, *A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms* (London: WM. H. Allen and Co, 1855), 491.
7 Burton Stein used the term of ‘southern Tamil country’ which includes Madura, Ramnad, Pudukkottai, Sivaganga, Tinnevelly and part of Travancore. Burton Stein, ‘Circulation and Historical Geography of Tamil Country,’ *The Journal of Asian Studies* 37, No. 1 (1977): 7-26.
9 During the present research period in the name of Muthuramalinga Setupath, there were three Setupathis ruled in Ramnad. Thus, researcher named as Muthuramalinga Setupathi I (1763-72 and 1782-95), Muthuramalinga Setupathi II (1862-73) and Muthuramalinga Setupathi III (1910-28) for the proper understanding.
but after he got ruling power, he made an alliance with the Sivaganga Kingdom. Both the Marava Kingdoms joined and together opposed the Nawab’s supremacy. When they gave up their unity they lost their own strength.\textsuperscript{11} After the death of Velu Nachiyar, Sivaganga was controlled by Vella Marudu and Chinna Marudu, shortly known as Marudu Brothers\textsuperscript{12} who belonged to the Agambadians caste. As the Ramnad Setupathis belonged to the Maravan caste, it led to disunity between Sivaganga and Ramnad Kingdoms. Therefore, Muthuramalinga Setupathi I frequently fought with Sivaganga, instead of making alliance with them to deal with the British intervention. In 1784, the Company began its administration over the of the Nawab territories including Ramnad and Sivaganga. This arrangement made it possible for the Nawab and the Company to control the Marava kingdoms without any strong opposition.\textsuperscript{13}

In 1785, the Nawab, Muhammad Ali again made a treaty with the Company; accordingly the Nawab handed over the revenue collection of the Madura Country for a short period to the Company. In 1786, the Company established the ‘Board of Assigned Revenues’\textsuperscript{14} for managing the revenue administration. In the meantime, Benjamin Torin was appointed Collector of

\textsuperscript{11} Muthuramalinga Setupathi I (1763-72 and 1782-95) wanted to marry Vellachi Nachiyar, daughter of Muthu Vaduganatha Tevar, she denied him and married Udaya Tevar. And Marudu Brothers belong to Agambadians were considered as below to Maravans, thus Ramnad Maravan ruler could accept them as equal among them. It was the reasons considered as the disunity among these Marava Kingdoms; S. Kadhirvel, \textit{A History of the Maravas 1700 – 1802} (Madurai: Madurai Publishing House, 1977), 169,183.

\textsuperscript{12} Two brothers (Vella and Chinna Marudu) served Military chief under Muthu Vaduganatha Tevar, ruler of Sivaganga Kingdom; Kadhirvel, \textit{A History of the Maravas}, 167-169.


\textsuperscript{14} A. Ramasamy, mentioned the ‘Board of Revenue’ was formed in 1790. Ramasamy, \textit{Tamil Nadu District Gazetteers, Ramanathapuram}, 6.
Tinnevelly and the dependent poligars. A few years later, in 1787, the rest of the Nawab’s territories came under the control of the Company. Charles Cornwallis, Governor General of Madras made a treaty with Muhammad Ali which cancelled the 1781 treaty and the Company got the right to collect the tribute from the entire Nawabi. After the collection, they paid one-fifth as share to the Nawab.

On 10th May 1787, Setupathi’s diwan or Pradani Sankara Narayana Pillai wrote a letter to Count Counday, the Governor General of French India, asking for support for independent status of Madura and Ramnad. Under the leadership of Bussy, the French force came to assist the Setupaths to make their domain independent from the Nawab and the Company. However, owing to the disturbance caused by the Mysore and Carnatic forces in the French territory, the French could not help the Setupathi. Muthuramlinga Setupathi’s serious efforts, failed to achieve for Ramnad an independent status from the control of The Nawab and the Company. The Nawab deposed Muthuramalinga Setupathi I and took control of Ramnad. During the period of Nawab’s supremacy he named Ramnad Ali Nagar and Sivaganga Hussain Nagar. The disunity among the Maravans of the domains of Ramnad and Sivaganga created way for the establishment of the authority of the Nawab and the Company.

---

15 Pate, Madras District Gazetteers, Tinnevelly, 78.
16 Report on Permanent Settlement of Dindigul and Madura, Vol. 27. 2; Rajayyan, Tamil Nadu: A Real History, 290-291.
17 Pradani means a minister; Wilson, A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms, 423.
18 Kadhirvel, A History of the Maravas, 182-183
After the Company established the ‘Board of Assigned Revenue’ to administer the revenue, Alexander Macleod was appointed the supervisor of the revenue collection of the Madura Country; he was considered the first Collector of Ramnad. During the Nawab’s reign in Ramnad, there were internal resistance to Nawab rule, by the followers of Muthuramalinga Setupathi I. Therefore, the Nawab decided to bring back Muthuramalinga Setupathi I to Ramnad as ruler and demanded him to pay a tribute of Rs 1,75,000. Muthuramalinga Setupathi I found that Muthirulappa Pillai was in favour of and loyal to the Company. As a result, Setupathi dismissed him and appointed Muthu Kumarappa Pillai as Pradani of Ramnad. In March 1791, Macleod, Collector of Madura, temporarily increased Ramnad peshcush from Rs 1,75,000 to Rs. 2,20,000. In 1792 the Company restored the administration of the Nawab, since the little war with Mysore had ended.

2.2. Carnatic Treaty of 1792

The treaty agreed between the Nawab Muhammad Ali and Charles Cornwallis was called Carnatic Treaty of 1792 which was more advantageous to the Company. According to this treaty, the Nawab gave military and financial control over his territory to the Company. Further, Ramnad Setupathi agreed to the control of the Company and he had to pay an annual tribute of Rs. 2,20,000 to

---


20 The peshcush means fixed land revenue paid by Poligars or Zamindars to the Company. Glossary to the Fifth Report from the Select Committee, 1813, 36.

21 Ramasamy, Tamil Nadu District Gazetteers, Ramanathapuram, 96-97; Ram Row, Ramnad Manual, 243.
the Nawab.\textsuperscript{22} According to this treaty the Poligars of the southern region were placed under the control of the Company. The Company had rights to collect tax from the Poligars (about one-fifth of the total produce). The Nawab lost his authority over the Poligars and the \textit{Circa}\textsuperscript{23} territory ultimately came under the control of the Company.\textsuperscript{24} The Poligars and other subordinate revenue collectors came under the control of the Company. The treaty of 1792 enabled the Company collect \textit{peshcush} from southern \textit{palayams} like Tinnevelly, Madura, Manaparai, Ramnad and Sivaganga of southern Tamil country. In 1801 the remaining parts of the Carnatic, Palnaud, Nellore, Ongole, Arcot, Chittoor, district of Satovaid, Tinnevelly and Madura were transferred to the Company.\textsuperscript{25}

After the treaty of 1792, the Company established indirect control over Ramnad. After a few years, the Company deposed Muthuramalinga Setupathi I from the throne for his complicity with Kattaboma Nayakkan, poligar of Panjalankurichi, against the Company.\textsuperscript{26} As a part of this treaty, on 12 July 1792, Benjamin Torin was appointed as the Collector of revenue from the poligars of Tinnevelly, Madura, Trichinopoly, Ramnad and Sivaganga.\textsuperscript{27} The fifth article of Carnatic treaty of 1792 gave rights to Torin to collect the regular tributes from the Poligars and estimated the tribute or \textit{peshcush} around 264.70420:26 star

\textsuperscript{22} Rajayyan, \textit{Tamil Nadu: A Real History}, 272; Ram Row, \textit{Ramnad Manual}, 242.
\textsuperscript{23} The \textit{Circa} means the Government
\textsuperscript{24} Ramasamy, \textit{Tamil Nadu District Gazetteers, Ramanathapuram}, 6; Kadhirvel, \textit{A History of the Maravas}, 185-186; Rajayyan, \textit{Tamil Nadu: A Real History}, 281.
\textsuperscript{26} Ramasamy, \textit{Tamil Nadu District Gazetteers, Ramanathapuram}, 97.
\textsuperscript{27} Pate, \textit{Madras District Gazetteers, Tinnevelly}, 77.
The article sixth demanded the Poligars to pay village watch fee to the Nawab. The agreement of 1792 was officially described “disgraceful to the character of the Company's government and destructive of the peace and prosperity of the country”.

3. The Company and the Ramnad Domain

On 8th February 1795, Muthuramalinga Setupathi I was deposed by the British for his ‘disobedience’ and ‘misrule’ thus creating internal disturbance in the Ramnad Kingdom. Muthuramalinga Setupathi I was terminated from his throne and sent to the Trichinopoly prison and the Company made enquiry about the deposed Muthuramalinga Setupathi I through the former Pradani Muthirulappa Pillai. The Company found that he had two sisters Mangaleswari Nachiyar and ParvataVardhani Nachiyar and it decided to make Mangaleswari Nachiyar the ruler of Ramnad, as she had claimed it earlier. The Company had agreed orally to enthrone her, but it had taken eight years for implementation.

This decision was made by the Company for ending once for all the insurgence of Muthuramalinga Setupathi’s followers. The Company continued its control over Ramnad until it made Mangaleswari Nachiyar as the ruler on 22nd April 1803 by Robert Clive, Governor of Madras. The internal disputes, domestic quarrel and civil war of Setupathis always weakened the Ramnad realm in the

---

28 Pagoda means the gold coin, a pagoda was equal to three rupees and a star pagoda was equal to three and a half rupees. Wilson, A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms, 387; M. Renganathan, Zamindari System in the Madras Presidency 1802-1948 (Chennai: Siva Publications, 2010), 7.
29 Kadhirvel, A History of the Maravas, 185-87.
30 Pate, Madras District Gazetteers, Tinnevelly, 271.
32 Ramasamy, Tamil Nadu District Gazetteers, 96-97.
eighteenth century. After the imposition of the Company’s power over Ramnad, the Setupathies were made into representatives of the Company in the Marava Kingdom. Finally the Company gained power over its political rival the Carnatic Nawab of the South. The internal circumstances and local opposition towards the British made the French enter this power contest. For some time, the French had controlled limited areas of the Carnatic region, but ultimately they lost control of these territories to the British.\textsuperscript{33}

On 4\textsuperscript{th} March 1795, a treaty was signed between Nawab Wallajah Muhammad Ali and the Company. According to this agreement the entire Greater Marava Kingdom or Ramnad came under the direct control of Robert Hobart, Governor of Fort St. George for three years. In the same year, Hobart proposed to the Nawab for modifying the existing settlement and reorganization of the Poligari system.\textsuperscript{34} After the expiry of three years, the amount of \textit{peshcush} had to be paid to the Company by the Nawab of Arcot. The amount of \textit{peshcush} might be not less than ten percent of the total revenue.\textsuperscript{35} Based on the treaty of 1795 Ramnad came under the direct control of the Company management which appointed a Collector to administrate Ramnad on its behalf.\textsuperscript{36} Ramnad was the first little kingdom\textsuperscript{37} of southern Tamil country which came under the direct control of the Company management in 1801. The desire of the Company to

\textsuperscript{33} Ram Row, \textit{Ramnad Manual}, 261; S. Thiruvenkatachari, \textit{The Setupatis of Ramnad} (Karaikudi: Department of Extension Services Dr. Alagappa Chettiar Training College, 1959), p.57
\textsuperscript{34} Revathy, \textit{History of Tamil Nadu: The Palayams}, 50.
\textsuperscript{36} Ramasamy, \textit{Tamil Nadu District Gazetteers, Ramanathapuram}, 943.
\textsuperscript{37} The \textit{palayakarar}s of southern Tamil country was termed as ‘Little Kingdom’ by Nicholas B Dirks. Nicholas B Dirks. ‘The Pasts of a Palayakarar: the Ethnohistory of a South Indian Little King,’ \textit{The Journal of Asian Studies} 4, No. 4 (1982): 659.
establish their supremacy over the entire southern India led to local resistance against the Company.

4. Poligar Resistance against the Company Rule

During the tenure of Muhammad Ali, the Marava Rebellion led by Mappila Tevar captured most of the Circar territory. The rebel raided over the camp of the English and the forts of Wallajahs. A rebellion broke out in Sivaganga under Vella Marudu and Chinna Marudu. The people of Sivaganga followed Marudu brothers and proclaimed Vellachi Nachiyar, the daughter of Velu Nachiar as the ruler of Sivaganga. Finally the Wallajahs failed to extend their power and dominance in the Marava countries in the last two decades of eighteenth century. Muhammad Ali, Nawab of Arcot ruled for six years but he failed to control the inhabitants (Maravans) of Ramnad Kingdom.

In 1797, the disaffection with the poligar of Panjalankurichi led to a rebellion in Ramnad. Kattaboma Nayakkan the poligar of Panjalankurichi was the first to join the insurgents against the Company’s supremacy. The Poligar’s rising of 1798 took place in Tinnevelly, Madura, Ramnad, Tanjore and some part of present Pudukkottai District. Kattaboma disobeyed the authority of the Company and refused to pay the demanded kist or tribute. He plundered Circar territory and the territories of the pro-British poligars. Ramnad also faced such raids. Collector Jackson summoned Kattaboma to meet him at Courtallam

38 Follower of Muthuramalinga Setupathi I of Ramnad
39 Rajayyan, Tamil Nadu: A Real History, 275-277.
40 Pate, Madras District Gazetteers, Tinnevelly, 79.
41 Thiruvenkatachari, The Setupatis of Ramnad, 61.
(Kuttralam) and pay the arrears of the Panjalankurichi palayam. After a number of avoidances Kattaboma met Jackson at Ramnad on 9th September 1798. At the end of the meeting the Collector tried to take Kattaboma into custody but he escaped. At this moment several poligars refused to accept the British authority. Therefore in 1798 and 1801 there was great Poligars resistance in southern Tamil country. The Company frequently interfered in the internal affairs of palayams on behalf of the Nawab of Arcot. Tinnevelly and the neighbouring states became the venue of constant warfare of poligars and the British.

The Company established direct administration over Tamil country through wars, alliances and diplomatic policies. In 1792 and 1799, the British ruled over Mysore and western parts of the Tamil country. In 1799 the British made a treaty with the Marathas making Tanjore one of their territories. On 24th April 1799, under the head of Milapen rose a revolt for restoration of Muthuramalinga Setupathi I to Ramnad throne. As a result of this revolt, the Company shifted Muthuramalinga Setupathi I from Trichinopoly to Madras prison and finally he passed away in Madras itself. On 5th June 1799, the Court of Directors issued orders to all the feudatories to destroy their military forces and revised the agreements with palayams. In 1799 the Tinnevelly League collapsed by the British and the Malabar League came to an agreement with the British when Veeravarman got some amount from the Company for withdrawing

---

42 Ramasamy, Tamil Nadu District Gazetteers, 99.
43 Thiruvenkatachari, The Setupatis of Ramnad, 61
44 Rajayyan, Tamil Nadu: A Real History, 279.
45 shervagar (bishop) of Muthuramalinga Setupathi I.
47 Revathy, History of Tamil Nadu: The Palayams, 50.
his support to the League. Mysore came under the Company’s control and Tipu Sultan was killed in the battle field itself in the end of the eighteenth century.\(^{48}\)

After the death of Muhammad Ali, his son Umdat-ul-Umara took over as the Nawab of Arcot. The Company accused him of maintaining secret correspondence alliance with Tipu Sultan; it was proved by certain papers at Srirangapatnam after the fall of fort during the fourth Mysore War in 1799. The letter was in Persian, it was translated into English by N.B. Edmonstone, the Company’s Persian translator.\(^{49}\)

After Jackson, Stephen Rumbold Lushigton became the Collector of Tinnevelly and Ramnad on 12\(^{th}\) June 1799; he recommended to the government to make expeditions against the aggressive poligars. The Company forces lead by Major Bannerman with the support of Pudukkottai force captured Kattaboma and hanged him at Kaittar (Kayathar) in the presence of all other poligars.\(^{50}\) After, the hanging of Kattaboma resistance spread over to Ramnad which opposed the authority of the Company. In 1801, Muthukaruppa Tevar of Mangudi rebelled against the Company in Ramnad.\(^{51}\)

On 24\(^{th}\) April 1801 Kattaboma’s armed supporters attacked Abiramam for releasing Kattaboma’s brothers Kumaraswami Nayaka (dumb-boy or Oomaithurai) and Suppa Nayaka (Sivattaiya) from prison. At the end of the attack the amildar was wounded and sepoys (soldier) were disarmed. Similar attacks also took place in Muthukulathur and Kamudi taluks. Milapen, *shervagar*

---


\(^{50}\) Ramasamy, *Tamil Nadu District Gazetters*, 99.

\(^{51}\) *Raja of Ramnad I*, p.38. Collected from Institute of French Library, Puducherry.
(bishop) of the former Setuapathi, was leading the resistance and with his efforts, the number of rebellions increased. The poligal of Kadalgudi in support sent three hundred men to the rebel groups. The Company forces were sent to Madura and Panchalankurichi and attacked insurgents at Muthukulathur and this disaffection spread over to other taluks. The Company realised that the reason behind this riot was the deposition of Muthuramalinga Setuapathi I. The Company decided to restore Setuapathi to the Kingdom, acknowledging the hereditary rights of Mangaleswari Nachiyar. After the installation of the Zamindarini, the riots came to an end; and the Company management of Ramnad domain was transferred to the Zamindarini by the beginning of the nineteenth century. On 15th June 1801, the death of Umdar-ul-Umara provided the opportunity to launch the Company’s authority to collect the revenue of Carnatic. His eldest son Ali Husain refused to make any agreement with the Company; as a result, Edward Clive, Governor of Madras, diplomatically made a treaty with Azim ul Doulah, one of the heirs of Muhammad Ali’s family. Accordingly, the Collector of Dindigul was appointed as the Collector of the entire Madura region.

5. The 1801 Revolt and its Impact in the Ramnad Kingdom

The rebellion of Panchalankurichi in 1799, which paved the way to the vital revolt of 1801 in Tinnevelly, spread to Ramnad and Sivaganga. The Marudu brothers led the rebellion from the side of Sivaganga. According to S. Kadhirvel

52 Ramasamy, Tamil Nadu District Gazetteers, 100.
(1977) in the case Ramnad this revolt arose the main cause of the kaval issue. After the treaty of Carnatic in 1792 the Company collected the sthalam kaval and desa kaval from the Nawab’s territories. The Company’s right of tax collection was who contested by the Marava kaval chiefs in the poligari territory and non-poligari territory. Therefore, rose against the Company administration. The Marudu brothers of Sivaganga closely associated themselves with Gopala Nayak of Dindigul and Yadul Nayak of Anaimalai to form the South Indian Confederacy to oppose the Company. The league of poligars of Nagalapuram, Mannarkottai, Povali, Kollarpatti and Chennalgudi opted to follow the Marudu brother’s league.

During the South Indian Rebellion in May 1801, the Marudu brothers and their followers proclaimed Muthukaruppa Tevar as the ruler of Ramnad. Mailappan, the chief of the Marava revolt, captured the southern and northern parts of the Ramnad. Ramnad and Sivaganga rebels joined under the leadership of Sevatha Thambi, son of Chinna Marudu. But he and his insurgents were subdued near Mangudi by Captain William Blackburn, a ‘Resident’ of Tanjore. In May 1801, the force of Captain Agnew subdued the Maravas’ rebellions. The Maravans came under the control of the Company and Ramnad and Sivaganga rulers acted as nominees of the Company. The British succeeded against these rebels and established their supremacy over the domains of Tanjore, Pudukkottai

---

54 The Company’s action of the abolition of the kaval system was affected the political and economic domination of the Maravans of southern Tamil country.
55 Kadhirvel, A History of the Maravas, 192.
57 Mailappan was one of the General of Setupathis of Ramnad
58 Rajayyan, Tamil Nadu: A Real History, 297-99; Kadhirvel, A History of the Maravas, 196-203.
and Ettayapuram. After the suppression of the rebellion, the ‘Resident’ of Dindigul, Ramnad and Madura ordered the poligars to disarm and destroy the forts. On 1st December 1801, Robert Clive the Governor of Madras proclaimed to give amnesty to all the chieftains who were involved in rebellion and to abolish the system of *palayams*. The treaty of 1801 set of implement the Zamindari settlement and promised to respect the right to property, life, wages and customs of the inhabitants. 59

The treaty of 1801 contained twelve articles: The first part ensured the proper establishment of Azim-ul-Doula in the state on behalf of the Company. The second article noted that the Company and the Nawab should strengthen the alliance. The third part spoke about the maintenance of the military for defending the Carnatic region. The fourth article stated that the Company had the full right to control the civil and military government of the Carnatic region. The Company had the ultimate power to appoint the officers for tax collection and administrate officers for civil and criminal jurisdiction. The fifth article fixed one-fifth of the total revenue of the Carnatic monthly to be the payment of 12,000 *star pagodas* for the maintenance and support of the Nawab and his family as pension. The sixth article gave details of the methods of deciding the fate of another one-fifth of the net revenues.

The seventh part fixed the Company as accountable to pay 6, 12,105 *star pagodas* a year from the total revenue of Carnatic to the Nawab. The eighth article fixed the Nawab’s cavalry loan amount with its interest to 13, 24,342 *star pagodas*.

pagodas as debt, after deducting the amount the Company had to pay to the Nawab. The ninth article demanded the Company to make suitable provision for the support of Umdut-ul-Umara. The tenth part required that, always the Nawab be treated with respect and honour connected with the functions of British government. For protecting him and his place, a suitable safeguard should be appointed from the Company troops. The eleventh article noted that British government only was responsible for the protection of the entire state of Carnatic against foreign intervention and for internal peace. But the armed men and forces should be maintained at the cost of the Nawab. The final article noted that the Nawab should give the legal order transferring his civil and military officials to the British government.  

The British government destroyed the forts of the poligars and prohibited them from reconstructing the forts and keeping military forces. The English forces made an efficient abolition of the Poligari system in the southern Tamil country. The suppression of the poligar rebels and South Indian Rebels ended the powers of poligars in the southern Tamil country. The practice of the mixed government of the Nawab and the Company over southern India finally made the Company succeed in power and made the Company’s power ultimate.

---

60 Military Consultation, 1 December 1801, Vol. 2899, 7669-70, Cited in Revathy, History of Tamil Nadu: The Palayams, 67-68.
6. Ramnad and the Company Rule (1795 – 1803)

The Company wanted to remove Muthuramalinga Setuapthi I from power for his ‘disobedience’ of the government and the Nawab also had the same intention to remove him. For these reasons, the Madras Council decided to take military action against Ramnad country in 1795. Under the leadership of Major Stevenson, the Company forces entered Ramnad and captured the fort on 8th February 1795. Muthramalinga Setuapthi I was sent to prison in Trichinopoly. The Madras Council granted a pension of Rs 1000 a month to Muthuramalinga Setuapthi I. After this action the Company had their direct rule in Ramnad. Prior to this the Setuapthi’s sister Mangaleswari Nachiyar had made claims for the Zamindarini of Ramnad. The Company accepted her claim in 1795 and took steps to make her Rani of Ramnad in 1803. The Nawab’s heavy arrears made the Company to interfere in the politics of the Carnatic region. From 1800 onwards the Company had control over the entire Madras Presidency; but in 1801, the Company took Ramnad into their control.62 Earlier Ramnad and Sivaganga were added with the Tinnevelly District for administrative purpose from 1781 to 1803. Therefore, Ramnad was under the direct control of the British Collectors like Lawndan, Bowny, Jackson and Lushington.63 During the period of S.R. Lushington, the Collector of Tinnevelly, Parish was the Head assistant of the Ramnad affairs. In 1803 after the introduction of Permanent Settlement in Ramnad, the Zillah or district court was established at Ramnad. Parish was the 62 Pamela G Price, ‘Warrior Caste ‘Raja’ and Gentleman ‘Zamindar’: One Person’s Experience in the Late Nineteenth Century,’ Modern Asian Studies 17, No. 4 (1983): 564; Kadhirvel, A History of the Maravas, 172.
63 S.M. Kamal, Setuapthi Mannar Varalaru (Ramanathapuram: Sharmila Publishers, 2003), 95.
first Collector of Ramnad Zillah, Madura and Dindigul. After the separation of Ramnad from the Tinnevelly, Cohrane was the first Collector of Tinnevelly from on 5\textsuperscript{th} November 1803. The Board of Revenue mentions that ‘the Ramnad Zillah included the Zamindari of Sivaganga and Tinnevelly Zamindari and Districts of Dindigul and Madura. In 1808 the Zillah of Ramnad was abolished and the twenty nine little Zamindaries were denominated as the “Tinnevelly Pollams” which included the Tinnevelly district.\textsuperscript{64}

At the end of the eighteenth century, the Nawab’s control over the southern Tamil country came under of the Company. In this circumstance, Muthuramlinga Setupathi’s follower Milapen from Sirthirankudi resisted the British rule in 1802. There was a political turmoil, which affected the British administration. Therefore Collector Lushington recommended to the Company to convert Ramnad to a Zamindari and to entrust the estate to a local. The British accepted the claim of Mangaleswari Nachiyar as the Zamindarini of Ramnad but the formal authorisation would be declared after eight years of this consideration. This diplomatic action stopped Milapen’s internal disturbances in Ramnad.\textsuperscript{65}

During the period between 1802 and 1805, a permanent settlement was introduced in the northern districts of Madras Presidency. After discussions and debate among the officials Read, Mundro and Macleod, a Permanent Settlement was introduced in the districts of Salem, Coimbatore, Madura, Malabar, Canara, Cuddapah, Bellary and Kurnool of the Madras Presidency. This settlement


produced better results in the northern districts, than in the southern districts of Madras Presidency due to the nature of soil and irrigation sources.\textsuperscript{66}

7. Ramnad: Little Kingdom to Zamindari

In the beginning of the nineteenth century the Company captured and controlled most of the little kingdoms in southern India and brought the poligars under control. Some parts of the southern Tamil country were ruled by local chieftains but they were the nominal rulers of the British government. They were Ramnad, Pudukkottai, Travancore and Mysore rulers.\textsuperscript{67} After the suppression of the poligar’s uprising in the southern Tamil country, The Company decided on the policy of Zamindari settlement in the erstwhile poligars. On 1\textsuperscript{st} December 1801, the Government of Madras issued a proclamation to poligars of Tinnevelly, Madura, Sivaganga and Dindigul to disarm and dismantled the military force. After this declaration a permanent revenue assessment was made with the loyal as well as subdued poligars on the basis of the Zamindari settlement of the Bengal Presidency. With the proclamation of the ‘palayams’ conversion to Zamindari, the government fixed the peshcush permanently. Their armed personnel or peons were absorbed into government revenue service.\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{66} Dharma Kumar, \textit{Land and Caste in South India, Agricultural Labour in the Madras Presidency during the 19th Century} (New Delhi :Manohar Publishers, 1992), 78.
\textsuperscript{67} K.K. Pillay, \textit{Tamilaka Varalaru: Makkalum Panbudum} (Chennai: International Institute of Tamil Studies, 2007), 483.
The Government issued deeds or Sunnad\textsuperscript{69} to Ramnad and Sivaganga. The muchilikka\textsuperscript{70} or agreement of Rani Mangaleswari Nachiyar was made with the Company. On 29\textsuperscript{th} April 1803 the Company recognised her as Zamindarini of Ramnad without political authority and she on her part agreed to pay annually a fixed amount of Rs. 3, 24,404-3-10 to the British government as peshcush or tribute. She ruled Zamindari region with the help of the Pradani Thiyagaraja Pillai, for four years. She was the first queen who agreed to the Sunnad-i-Milkiat-Istimrar.\textsuperscript{71} Thus she was called Istimrar Zamindarini in remembrance of the settlement.\textsuperscript{72} According to Ramnad Manual, muchilikkas no. 1 and 2 described about the details of peshcush the queen had to pay regularly. Accordingly she was responsible to pay an amount 13,541-26-6 sterling pound\textsuperscript{73} for the year of 1801 A.D.\textsuperscript{74} In 1803 the Government fixed the permanent settlement in Ramnad.\textsuperscript{75} Two-thirds or half of the produce as peshcush was collected.

\textsuperscript{69} Sunnad means a grant or a charter or a patent: a document conveying to an individual emoluments, privileges or government rights to revenue from land. Wilson, A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms, 460.

\textsuperscript{70} There were different spell used by scholars like H.H. Wilson Muchchilika and by B.H. Baden Powell (Muchalka). Here researcher used spell of muchilikka which mentions in primary records collected from Pondicherry Archives, Pondicherry. According to H.H. Wilson, Muchalka or Moochulka or Muchchilika means a written obligation or agreement commonly applied to a counterpart covenant on the part of the proprietors or cultivators of land, agreeing to the rates of assessment imposed by the government; also to an engagement under a penalty to observe the conditions of any deed or grant. Wilson, A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms, 348.

\textsuperscript{71} Istimrar means holder of a perpetual farm or lease. Milkiat-istimrar means proprietary right or possession in perpetuity. Wilson, A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms, 221,341.


\textsuperscript{73} In 1815 there were seventy two verities of gold coins and sixty kinds of silver coins and twenty five varieties of copper coins were followed in the Madras Presidency. In 1818 onwards the rupee currency came to practice. During the period of Sir Thomas Munro, the various kind of currency abolished and he introduces new currency system. Accordingly the earlier currency system was banned and the rupees system was introduced in the Madras Presidency. He fixed the old coin of single varagan to three and half rupees of current currency system. K.K. Pillay, Tami\textlaks Varalaru: Makkalum Panbadum, 485.

\textsuperscript{74} Ram Row, Ramnad Manual, 254-256.

\textsuperscript{75} According to J.H. Nelson, in 1802 Permanent Settlement was introduced in Ramnad; Nelson, The Madiura Country A Manual, 155.
According to regulation XXV of 1802, the proprietary right of the soil was handed over to the Zamindar. The Permanent Settlement was introduced in Chinglepet, Salem, Chittoor, Western and Southern poligars of Ramnad, Krishnakiri, Dindigul and some other areas of the Madras Presidency. During the nineteenth century, Ramnad Zamindari’s total area comprised around 2,000 square miles and 2,167 villages. The cultivable areas of the Ramnad Zamindari were 5,38,000 acres. Sivaganga Zamin consisted of 1,200 square miles and 2,058 total villages. Bernard S Cohn noted that at the end of the nineteenth century, 804 Zamindars held 40 per cent of the land in Madras. The remaining 60 per cent was in Ryotwari tenure.

The poligar’s fire arms and other weapons were seized by the British. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Company established its sovereignty in the entire southern Tamil country. In 1802 Sunnudd were issued to ‘poligars’ who were redesignated ‘Zamindars’ and ‘palayams’ were named ‘Zamindaries’ in the Madras Presidency. After the introduction of Zamindari settlement the ‘Little Kingdom’ status was reduced by ‘Zamindari’. The assessment of the

---

77 Kumar, Land and Caste in South India, 79. 
80 Ramasamy, Tamil Nadu District Gazetteers, 103. 
81 Sunnudd means a prop or support, a patent, charter or written authority for holding either land or office. Milkiat- Istammar means property rights in continuation. Wilson, A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms, 28,44. For more elaborate details about Sunnudd see Appendix No.6. 
82 Kadhirvel, A History of the Maravas, 193, 203.
land tax was fixed and collected as two-third or half share from the total produce. In the Madras Presidency the amount of the tax was fixed from one-third to two-thirds. According to this *sunnuds* the poligars’ rights of collecting tax and his status was reduced and forts were destroyed. The *Maravans* were forbidden to keep artillery with them.

Those who converted to this Zamindari tenure were each given the title of *Sunnud-i-Milkiat-Istimrar* which recognised the authority of Zamindarship. Those who agreed to Zamindarship were called ‘settled palayams’ or Zamindars. The Madras Presidency had western *palayams* (Chittoor, North Arcot and South Arcot) and southern *palayam* (Ramnad, Madura and Tinnevelly). After the conversion of poligars into Zamindars, the armed peons were taken for revenue services. Zamindars leased their lands to private owners or landlords, gave *muchilikka* or agreement documents called *qabuliyat* or acceptance which was the legal tie-up of landholders or tenants and Zamindars. Letter, dated 5th April 1803, a *Special Commission* submitted proposal to the government regarding fixing the permanent land assessments in the southern Zamindaries. Based on this proposal, the government fixed the Zamindari assessment at the rate of two-thirds of the total produce. This *Special Commission* fixed the permanent assessment of Sivaganga at fifty percent; in case of Tinnevelly *palayam* they fixed land

---

87 *Muchilikkas* a document called as *kubuliyat* or acceptance which was the legal tie-up of ryots and Zamindars. For original document of *muchilikka* see Appendix No. 7.
assessment fifty four to fifty seven percent for large palayams and forty one to forty nine percent for small palayams. On 22 April 1803, the Madras Government approved the Special Commission recommendation and ordered ‘Sunnad to be given to a Zamindar to approve him as the holder of the Zamindari tenure.89 From 1803 onwards the Ramnad Kingdom was redesignated and converted to Ramnad Zamindari.90

8. Administrative Structure of Ramnad Zamindari

8.1. First Phase: 1803-1858

After the suppression of South Indian rebellion of 1801 and the Vellore Rebellion of 1806 the Company regained its control over the southern territory and later the Company's control spread over neighbouring areas. When The Company established its sway over the Tamil region. It found a variety of land revenue system prevailing in different parts of the region. They followed scheme of revenue was inconvenient for getting proper revenue from agriculture. The Company initially thought reorganising of the administrative setup of these territories.91 After the permanent or Zamindari settlement was introduced over Ramnad, the Company appointed Collectors to control the Zamindari. The Zamindars were the revenue collectors of their allotted areas or estates. The Zamindars or Setupthis of Ramnad were demanded to pay an annual tribute or peshcush to the Company. They could make any decision unrelated to political and military affairs.

89 Gnanasundara Mudaliyar, Notes on the Permanent Settlement, 56-57.
91 Rajayyan, Tamil Nadia: A Real History, 308.
This new land revenue policy of the British made great changes in southern Tamil country. A new administrative structure was introduced towards agricultural and village settlements. The Company appointed a Collector in each district for administrative convenience. The princely state of Tanjore and other territories were assisted by Council of advisors, called sirkeel in Tanjore, diwan in Ramnad, karyakarta in Pudukkottai and Pradani in Panchalamkurichi. For his assistance representatives were appointed. They were known as vakeel, tahsildar, taluqdar, killedar and subhedar and stationed at the Court of the respective Zamindari. In the administrative setup, kannakkapillai(Accountants), sibbendies (Revenue peons), daroghas (Superintendents), gomastas (Clerks) and mahatadi peons (messengers) played a major role. Each district was divided into taluks and pirkana. Taluks were supervised by tahshildars. At the village level munsif and karnam were appointed mostly from dominate castes of the village and their main duty was collecting tax from the rural areas. Every year they conducted the jamabanthi or auditing. In that meeting, the village officers verified the revenue accounts under the supervision of the district Collector. This kind of land and administrative systems of the Company was followed from the Muslim rulers.

During the period of Vijayaragunatha Setupathi (1711-25) revenue administration of Ramnad was maintained properly. He brought Vellalans as accountants from Madura country to Ramnad to maintain the accounts of revenue administration. Further he divided his country into eight revenue divisions for

---

93 Pillay, Tamilaka Varalaru: Makkalam Panbadum, 483.
easier administration. Again owing to continuous warfare, the military was divided into seventy two military divisions and had appointed chieftains for each division. This administration setup was maintained for more than sixty years. During the reign of Muthuramalinga Setupathi I (1782-1795), Pradani Muthirulappa Pillai, divided Ramnad into ninety-six mahanam or revenue divisions and appointed maniyakar (mostly belonging to Maravan caste) to each mahanam, the maniyakar had assistants like sambirithi and thandalkar. During the collection of tax sambirithi used to maintain the accounts and thandalkar performed as peon or kavalkar in maniyakar divisions. The local servants belonged to socially and economically dominant castes. For further administrative function these ninety-six divisions were formed into seventeen taluks. These taluks were managed by Amins who had assistant staff and officers to support him. For a short period, after the introduction of Zamindari settlement in Ramnad in 1803, the government decided to make revenue tahsils. Under Ramnad estate there were five revenue tahsils: Ramnad, Tiruvadanai, Paramakudi, Tiruchuli and Muthukulathur with a total area of 2,104 square miles. The government frequently divided and modified the Ramnad estate for their convenient rule. But it is not clearly shown in other archival records. Quite a lot of records and sources indicate that initially Ramnad Zamindari had seventeen taluks and later it was grouped into three divisions. Again it became six taluks for convenient administration.

95 There were no records to find the list of 96 revenue divisions, after this revenue division was formed into 17. There was list of 17 taluks found in the Ramnad Manual.
96 Ram Row, Ramnad Manual, 335-337.
Before 1858, Ramnad Zamindari had been classified into seventeen taluks and it had head quarters in each taluk. The country was divided into seventeen taluks for the purpose of revenue administration by Pradani Muthirulappa Pillai.

The seventeen taluks were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Taluks</th>
<th>Head Quarter Stations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ramnad</td>
<td>Ramnad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Kelakadu</td>
<td>Pirappanvalasai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Sickal</td>
<td>Sickal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Muthukulathur</td>
<td>Muthukulathur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Pappankulam</td>
<td>Sayalkudi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Kamudi</td>
<td>Kamudi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Abiramam</td>
<td>Abiramam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Vendoni</td>
<td>Paramakudi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Kamankottai</td>
<td>Kamankottai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Saligramam</td>
<td>Saligramam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Rajasingamangalam</td>
<td>Rajasingamangalam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Arunuthimangalam</td>
<td>Kelapanayur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Hanumanthakudi</td>
<td>Kannangudi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Kuthagainadu</td>
<td>Eravuseri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Orur</td>
<td>Kattivayal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Kottaipatinam</td>
<td>Kottaipatinam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Pallimadum</td>
<td>Tiruchuli</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


8.2. Second Phase: 1858 – 1873

Ramnad Zamindari contained 2,162 villages and 574 hamlets. In 1858, after India was brought under the rule of the British Crown, Ponnusami Tevar took over the ministership of Ramnad. He converted the seventeen taluks and

---

98 During Muthuramalinga Setupathi I (1763-72 and 1782-1795) reign he was diwan or Pradani in his rule. Setupathi got information of his illegal actions against him, thus he dismissed him.
99 Pharoah, A Gazetteer of Southern India, Madras, 392.
100 Manager of Rani Parvata Vardani Nachiyar (1846-62) who was the ruler of Ramnad Zamindari
grouped them into three divisions or *Vattagai*, Northern division, Central division and Southern division.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL. No.</th>
<th>Divisions</th>
<th>Comprising Taluks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Central division</td>
<td>1. Ramnad, 2. Kilakkadu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Ponnusami Tevar had grouped the taluks into these three divisions without altering them territory wise.

### 8.3. Third Phase: 1873-1910

In 1873, the Ramnad Zamindari came under Court of Wards, when Muthuramalinga Setupathi II (1862-73) was a minor. These seventeen taluks were regrouped into six taluks as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL. No.</th>
<th>Name of the Taluks</th>
<th>Comprised portion of the early taluks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ramnad</td>
<td>Ramnad, Keelakadu, some portion of Kamankottai and Rajasingamangalam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Muthukulathur</td>
<td>Sickal, Vendoni, portion of Muthukulathur, Abiramamum and Kamankottai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kamudi</td>
<td>Pappankulam, some Portion of Muthukulathur, Kamudi and Abiramam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pallimadam</td>
<td>Pallimadam and portion of Kamudi and Abiramamum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rajasingamangalam</td>
<td>Saligramum and portion of Kamankottai, Rajasingamangalam, Arunuthimangalam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Hanumanthakudi</td>
<td>Hanumanthakudy, Kuthagainadu, Orur, Kottaipatinam and portion of Arunuthimangalam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each taluk was managed by a *tahsildar* with peons for his assistance. They were accountable to estate manager. All these taluks had fifty eight revenue divisions which were supervised by revenue inspectors.\(^{101}\) These taluk divisions were maintained till the formation on 1\(^{st}\) June 1910 of Ramnad District,\(^{102}\) which included some part of Madura and Tinnevelly districts.\(^{103}\)

9. Land Revenue Administration in Ramnad Zamindari

During the eighteenth century, agricultural land was divided into two groups, *palayam* lands and *circar* lands. The *palayam* land was controlled and managed by poligars. In case of *circar* or government lands, the term was used by the Nayaks and the Nawab to mean the land under their control. The Company appointed *renters* to collect revenue or *peshcush* from these lands, instead of the government. These territories were called as *circar* territory.\(^{104}\) Several land tenures were followed in the Madras Presidency in the sphere of land revenue administration. It was not uniform in all the provinces, but was a practice based on the conditions of the soil.\(^{105}\) Under the control of the Company, land revenue was the main source of income. The Company followed different kinds of land tenure and methods of tax collection in the entire Madras Presidency. The earlier

---


\(^{102}\) In 1910 Ramnad district contains nine taluks, such as Ramnad, Muthukulathur, Paramakudi, Tiruvadanai, Tirupathur, Sivaganga, Aruppukottai, Sattur and Srivilliputhur. In 1985 Ramnad district was bifurcated into three major districts like Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Tevar district, Kamarajar district and Ramanathapuram (Ramnad) district. In 1996 by government order the personality name was wiped and renamed all districts named by it’s headquarter. Likewise these districts named as Sivaganga district, Virudhunagar and Ramanathapuram district.


\(^{104}\) S. Manikandan, *Contest for Power and Legitimacy: Little kingdoms of Southern Tamil Country during the Eighteenth Century* unpublished Ph.D thesis, Submitted to Pondicherry University, 2013. 34.

\(^{105}\) A. Goodrich., ‘Land Revenue in Madras,’ *The Economic Journal* 1, No. 3 (1891): 449.
system of land tax collection was modified and changed. The Company introduced new taxes to increase revenue. The Company practised revenue settlement based on the nature and conditions of the soil. After the British annexed most parts of southern India by the beginning of the nineteenth century, they introduced three kinds of land revenue settlement in the Madras Presidency, such as Zamindari, Ryotwari and Mahalwari systems. The Permanent Settlement or Zamindari system was first introduced in Bengal, by Lord Cornwallis in 1793. This system was engaged with landlords and it was introduced in Bengal, Orissa, Bihar, Central province and later in parts of the Madras region. The Ryotwari system was imposed on with cultivators, which came into practice in the second decade of the nineteenth century. This settlement was first adopted in the Baramahal District under Colonel Read. After him, it was extended to other parts of the Madras Presidency by Colonel Munro (Governor of Madras 1820-27) and Collectors like Captain Macleod, Graham and Hurdis who served under him. These Collectors practised it in their territories of Dindigul, Coimbatore, Provinces of Canara and Ceded Districts. Ryotwari settlement was adopted in almost all areas of Madras, Bombay and Assam. In the 1830’s the Mahalwari system (village based) was followed in all villages of Punjab.\(^\text{106}\) For the purpose of land administration each province was divided into districts. The numbers of the districts varied from time to time. In 1829, there were sixty six districts in the Bengal Presidency, twenty districts in Madras Presidency and eleven districts in

---

Bombay Presidency. In the Madras Presidency the government stabilised peace and order after the end of the Poligari system. They wanted to get more and regular income from the land revenue of the Madras Presidency. Thus they planned to introduce a permanent settlement in the Madras Presidency which was followed in the Bengal Presidency.

10. Overview

Frequent warfare and weakness of forces led to the decline of the Vijayanagar Empire as a central authority in the second half of the sixteenth century. The political weakness of the central power prompted representatives to declare independent authority in their respective territories. The Madura Nayaks, one of the tributary rulers of Vijayanagara Empire, declared themselves independent after the fall of Vijayanagara rulers in the Battle of Talikota in 1565. Madura Nayakdom initiated by the Visvanatha Nayak in 1529, declined after the death of Tirumalai Nayak (1659), as there was no talented ruler to control entire Madura. The weakness of Madura Nayaks and internal disturbances and policy towards the tributary domains led to the downfall of Madura Nayak in the first half of the eighteenth century.

After the death of Auranqazeb (1707) and the fall of Mughal Empire in northern India the Mughal representatives declared their independence. Chanda Sahib, one of the representatives of Delhi Sultan, declared himself an autonomous ruler of the Carnatic provinces. The internal disputes and

\[107\] J. Kumar, *Company India A Comprehensive History of India (1757-1858)* (Patna: Janak Prakashan, 1980), 186.
disturbances of the Madura Kingdom turned Chanda Sahib’s attention towards the Madura Kingdom in 1736. The weak administration of the Nawab and his financial debt made Chanda Shaib form inevitable tie-up with the French in Pondicherry and finally lose his territory to his rival Muhammad Ali Wallajah and the Company. The Wallajah Nawab and the Company’s agreements of 1781 and 1792 played major roles in the Company’s control being established in the Carnatic region. The status and power of Ramnad Setupathis turned the Company’s attention towards the Marava rulers. The Maravans’ and the southern poligars opposed the Company’s and the Nawab’s supremacy. Therefore the Nawab and the Company made alliance and tried to suppress the Setupathi of Ramnad. Ultimately in 1795 the Company captured and occupied Ramnad and made its settlement there. The transformation of the Company from being on commercial body into a political, diplomatic group and bureaucratic power in southern India occurred in the beginning of the nineteenth century (1801). After its entry into and establishment of power in Ramnad, the Company began their activities to get more and regular land revenue from Ramnad. Therefore, the Company tried a permanent settlement in the Madras Presidency based on the model of the Bengal Presidency. In 1802, the permanent or Zamindari land tenure was introduced in the District of Chingleput; and the rest of the districts followed afterwards, leading to far reaching consequences which are discussed in the next chapter.