INTRODUCTION

Physical Features

In the extreme south of India is situated one of the country’s important regions, Tamil Country (now Tamil Nadu), steeped in antiquity and history. Tamil Nadu lies to the South of the Tirupathi hills in Andhra Pradesh and extends up to the Cape Comorin, or Kanyakumari, in the south where the Indian Ocean meets the Arabian Sea from the west and the Bay of Bengal from the east. As the Western Ghats extend to the south from the Nilgiri hills coming down to the Podiyil hills in the Tirunelveli District of Tamil Nadu the State is marked off from Kerala on the western side.\(^1\)

Put in geographical terms Tamil country lies between longitude 77\(^\circ\) and 80\(^\circ\) 20’ East and latitude 8\(^\circ\) and 13\(^\circ\) North.\(^2\) It lies entirely within the tropics. From north to south it is about 300 miles long and from east to west 150 miles broad. A vast plain and belt of low land, the country extends from the Western Ghats to the Bay of Bengal. The southern ranges of the Western Ghats separate Tamil Country from the western coast, yet they provide lines of easy access at Shencottai as well as at Aramboly. The coast is comparatively unbroken, yet it furnishes natural harbours at Nagore and Tuticorin. The Gulf of Mannar, famous for its pearl banks, lies beyond the south eastern coast. The Kaveri, Vaigai and Tambaraparani form

the major river systems. It is accessible from all sides, because of the absence of any insuperable natural barriers.

Being a tropical region Tamil country has a fairly high degree of temperature for the major part of the year. Yet proximity of the seas and occurrence of the monsoons render the temperature a little humid.\(^3\)

The people by and large belong to the Dravidian stock, though small sections belong to the aboriginal and Aryan group. The population is largely Hindus, but the Christians and Muslims are also numerous. The people of Tamil country were divided into four *varna* divisions and in due course they were regrouped as the Brahmins, the Non-Brahmins and Depressed classes. Normally, Brahmins held high position and status in society.\(^4\) The Vellalas occupied a position next to the Brahmins. They were the dominant peasants and chief advisers to the Chieftains of Tamil Country. The Maravas and Kallars were noted for their bravery. Most of the native military chieftains, poligars and kavalkars of Tamil country belonged to the Marava and Kallar community.\(^5\) The Naicks, a sect of Telugu speaking people migrated to Tamil country during the time of Vijayanagar rule in Madurai.\(^6\) The depressed class people, treated as untouchables, comprised

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of Pallas, Paraiyas and Chakkilias. Tamil was the popular language of the people and a few people spoke Telugu too.

**Early History of Tamil Country**

The first three centuries of the Christian era are generally designated as the Sangam age. Madurai is the centre of South Tamil country from the early centuries of the Christian era to the fourteenth century barring the Kalabhra interregnum. Situated in the southern part of the present Tamil Nadu, the early Pandya Country or South Tamil country comprised of Madurai, Ramnad, Tirunelveli, Kanyakumari and a part of Pudukkottai Kingdom. The territorial extent of the Tamil country waxed and waned according to the military might and valour of the rulers concerned.\(^7\)

The Early Pandyas ruled over Southern Tamil country in the Christian era. The first stage of the Pandya-Chola domination over South Tamil Country came to an end by about 300 A.D. The Kalabrahs, a tribe from the north, kept it under their sway subsequently for about two and a half centuries.

However, the Pandyas made a remarkable recovery during the last decades of the Sixth Century. Kadungon (590-620 A.D.), one of their chiefs, founded the First Pandya Empire. Greatly expanded by Maravarman and Raja Simha, the Empire included the entire peninsular India, extending up to Nellore. It reached

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\(^7\) *Souvenir of National Integration*, Madurai, 1991, p.1
climax of its glory under Varaguna I (765-815 A.D.). Their imperial sway over South India lasted for four centuries, after which the Pallavas of Kanchi stepped into their place.⁸

By Ninth Century the fall of the Pallavas was complete. The revival of the Chola power ushered in another period of greatness for the South. Aditya I (870-907 A.D), the first of the Imperial Cholas, founded the Chola power in Tanjore. Raja Raja, the Great (985-1016 A.D.) was the most powerful Chola Ruler. Equally great was his son and successor, Rajendra Chola (1016-1044 A.D.). The prestige of the Cholas suffered a severe blow due to the loss of overseas provinces. As the Eleventh Century drew to an end, increasing disorders engulfed the Chola Empire.⁹

Then the wheel of fortune turned in favour of the Pandyas. By the beginning of the Twelfth Century A.D. Jatavarman Kulaskhara (1190-1216 A.D.), founded the Second Pandyan Empire on the ruins of the Chola Empire. After him his successors ruled Tamil Country. The Pandyas again fell a prey to the internal conflicts and foreign invasions. In the first quarter of the Fourteenth Century they too made their exit from the political scene.¹⁰

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The fortunes of the country suffered an eclipse during the period that followed the Pandya-Chola epoch. In the first decade of the Fourteenth Century, the rising tide of Afghan imperialism swept over South India. In 1311, Malik Kafur, the general of Sultan Alaud-din Khilji of Delhi, taking advantage of a disputed succession in the Pandya Country, sacked Madurai and Rameswaram. On his departure from Madurai, he appointed a Khilji Governor for the newly acquired territories. In 1323, the Tughlaqs of Delhi, assuming the role of the Khiljis, completed the conquest of the Chola and Pandya Countries. Mohammed Bin Tughlaq created a new province called ‘Mabar’ with its headquarters at Madurai. These developments not only obliterated the individuality of Madurai but reduced it to vassalage under Delhi.

The decline of the Delhi Sultanate by the first quarter of the Fourteenth Century offered an opportunity to Madurai to assert its independence. In 1335 Jalaud-din Hassan, whom Mohamad bin Tughlaq appointed as his governor, threw off the overlordship of Delhi. Hasan and his successors ruled over the country for nearly four decades. In 1370 Kumara Kambana, in command of the forces of Vijayanagar defeated and killed Nasir-ud-din Damaghan Shah, the Sultan of Madurai. Towards the close of the Century, the forces of Vijayanagar

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11 Majumdar, R.C., (ed.), *The History and Culture of the Indian People, the Delhi Sultanate*, Bombay, 1960, pp.53 and 279.
completed the conquest of Madurai and incorporated the Tamil Country within their empire.¹²

The greatest ruler of the Vijayanagar, Krishnadeva Raya (1509 – 1530) sent his wise and talented general Viswanatha Nayak to establish peace and order in the south. Viswanatha Nayak fortified Madurai, acquired Trichinopoly and incorporated it in the Madura Country. Viswanatha Nayak sent his able General Ariyanatha Mudali to Tirunelvelvi to restore peace and order. Tirunelvelvi was at that time under the five confederate chieftains who styled themselves the ‘Pancha Pandyas’.¹³ When conciliatory methods failed, Viswanatha Nayak and Ariyanatha Mudali subdued the chiefs by force of arms and incorporated them in their Poligar system. Nanjayakalingaraya Gownder of Uttukuzhi Pollam on the order of his master cut off the head off one of the Five Pandyas and placed it at the feet of his Lord. For this courageous act, the Poligar was specially rewarded with a golden head of the enemy and tied it to his feet as an anklet.¹⁴

Then both Viswanatha Nayak and Ariyanatha Mudali set themselves to the task of improving the Country. Agricultural and economic measures were undertaken, and peace and order was restored. Next there came the colossal task of administration. There were, already in existence the old chieftains, the vassals of

¹² Venkataramanayya, N., The Early Muslim Expansion to South India, Madras, 1942, pp.10-130
¹³ Sathianatha Aiyar, R., History of the Nayaks of Madura, Oxford, 1924, pp.53-54.
¹⁴ Lalitha, P.M., Palayagars As Feudatories Under The Nayaks of Madurai, Chennai, 2009, p.133.
the Pandyas, who wielded considerable influence and power, there were also the bold and turbulent emigrants from the north, who had gained footholds in the Tamil Country and besides them, there were also the faithful followers of Viswanatha Nayak, who were greedily awaiting rewards. Viswanatha Nayak now faced the formidable task of reconciling the conflicting interests of all these classes and ironing out their differences, in order to facilitate the smooth functioning of the administrative machinery. In these circumstances a central authority alone would have been incapable of being in control of the situation. Power and freedom of administration had to be given to auxiliary powers, for effective political administration. The utter confusion and anarchy of the period had crippled agriculture and economy and there was always the imminent threat of foreign invasions. Thus political, economic and military motives were the main causes for Viswanatha Nayak and Ariyanatha Mudali to institute the Pollam (Palayam) system, whose rudiments were already in existence. The credit for having given a definite form and shape to the Pollam system goes to Viswanatha Nayak. Thus this system came to be legalized.

There were seventy-two bastions to the fort of Madurai. These were transformed into Pollams and each was put under the charge of a 'Poligar' (Palayakar), holder of an armed camp. The Mackenzie collections give the total

15. The etymology of the word Poligar can be traced to the Telugu ‘Palegadu’ or the Canarese ‘Palegara’ and not the Tamil ‘Palayakara’. (Dua, J.C., Palegars of South India, Forms and Contents of Their Resistance in Ceded Districts, New Delhi, 1996, p.47.)
number as seventy-two along with Tirunelveli, Madurai and Tiruchirappalli Pollams. The Carnatic Treaty of 1792 mentions forty-six Pollams. The number of the Pollams had been constantly changing. The office of the Poligar was made hereditary. Viswanatha Nayak gave incentives to loyal Poligars, by making concessions in the tribute, sometimes to the extent of the whole amount. The complete conquest of Tamil Country and the wresting of power, would entail, not only the capture of Madurai, but also the subjugation of each and every Pollam. Under the face of foreign threat, there would thus be a formidable united resistance.

Towards the end of the Seventeenth Century, the Nayaks due to internal dissensions and foreign aggrandizement were on the last phase of their rule in Tamil Country. By tradition the Poligars owed their allegiance to the Nayaks, and they tried to support the weakening Nayaks. Between 1685 and 1688, Bijapur and Golconda, the Muslim Kingdoms of the South, were annexed by Emperor Aurangzeb. In 1694, the Emperor appointed Zulficar Khan, as the Nawab of the Carnatic with Arcot as Capital. This was a threat to the Hindu Kingdoms of the South. Queen Mangammal (1689-1706) of the Nayak Dynasty and Rajah Shaji (1684-1712) of Tanjore accepted the Mughal sovereignty. But with the death of Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707 and the resulting chaos, these provinces declared their independence. Meanwhile the Nawabship of the Carnatic was acquired by
Sadatullah Khan and the house of Navayets came to power.\textsuperscript{16} The headquarters of the Nayaks, had in 1665 changed from Madurai to Trichinopoly. The Nayak ruler Vijayaranga Chokkanatha died in 1732, leaving no heir to the throne. There arose a dispute between two claimants- Meenakshi, the Queen, who adopted a minor and ruled as regent in Trichinopoly, and Bangaru Tirumalai, the cousin of the departed Nayak ruler. Bangaru Tirumalai, set up a rival Government at Madurai and the Poligars of the region supported him.

Taking advantage of this confusion, the opportunistic Nawab of Arcot sent an army under Chanda Sahib in 1734, who won the confidence of Queen Meenakshi and treacherously usurped the throne. To consolidate his position, he had to liquidate the Poligars, who still supported the Nayaks. Bangaru Tirumalai and the Poligars appealed to the Marathas of Satara for help against the Mohammadan invader. The Maratha King Sahu, who was eager to consolidate his position in Tanjore against the Muslim onslaught, accepted the challenge. Arcot fell to the victorious Marathas. In 1741 Chanda sahib was imprisoned, and Trichinopoly and Madurai were taken over by the Marathas. There is not much evidence to show that Tirunelveli came under the Maratha Rule. But the Marathas did not interfere with the functioning of the Poligars.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{16} Journal of the Madras University, Madras, Vol.XLVI, No.1, 1974, p.94.
When the Nizam of Hyderabad, Asaf Jah, came, at the head of a large army, to the Carnatic in 1743, the Marathas surrendered after a token resistance. The Poligars and Kallars of Tamil Country offered resistance, but it was of no avail.\(^{18}\) In 1744, Asaf Jah appointed his general Anwar-ud-din as the Nawab of Arcot and thus started the lineage of the Wallajahs. The Poligars made a bid to restore the Nayak rule. In order to suppress them, Anwar-ud-din sent his son Maphuz Khan in 1744, but the Kallars forced him to retreat. Mohammed Ali, the second son was then sent. He gained control of Madurai and partial control of Tirunelveli, by destroying the mud forts and taking some of the Poligars as prisoners. He then levied tributes. The Poligars of Tamil Country sought the help of Mysore, to crush the Wallajahs of Arcot and to reinstate the Nayaks.

Soon the Tamil Country became the centre of intense political activity. In the meanwhile, the Europeans had appeared on the political scene of Tamil Country and they too contributed immensely to the already chaotic state of affairs in Tamil Country.

Choice of the Topic

The present study, entitled, "Expansion of British Power in Tamil Country, 1751-1801" is chosen by the scholar due to the following reasons.

1. It is purely a study on the military movements of the British in the acquisition of Tamil Country.

2. In the recent years, a number of works were done on the consolidation of British power in different regions of India. But they do not describe in detail about the political diplomatic maneuvers, and military expeditions and exploits of the British in Tamil Country.

Period and Significance of the Study

The time-frame of 1751-1801 A.D. relating to the Tamil Country is significant because in 1751 A.D that the first British Expedition took place in South Tamil Country under Col. Innes. Since then the history of Tamil Country was characterized by the struggle between the British and the native rulers like Tanjore King, Sivagangai Ruler, Ramnad Ruler, Khan Sahib, and the Principal Poligars of Madurai, Tiruchirappalli, Ramnad, and Dindugul. The period from 1792-1801, witnessed the eclipse of the Nawab's Power from the political scene of Tamil Country and there was direct head-on collision of the Poligars and the British. It was finally in 1801, due to the continuous military expeditions, the
British did away all the rebellious Poligars completely. It took the British a little more than half century to extinguish the native Rulers and Chieftains of Tamil Country, who had survived for a long time. The period from 1751 to 1801 marks the last phase of the great and remarkable institution of the Poligars and the rapid expansion and consolidation phase of British power in Tamil Country which paved the way for the British Ascendancy in Tamil Country on the whole.

Hypotheses

In this study, certain fundamental questions constitute the basis for hypotheses.

1. Whether or not the British military expeditions put an end to the political instability and chaos in this region, which was caused by the native rulers and the rebellious activities of the Poligars.

2. Whether or not the various military expeditions of the British were guilty of suppression of the people and if so, in what way it was different from the oppressive measures of the native Rulers and the Poligars.

3. What military strategic moves, initiated by the British, helped them to establish their ascendancy in Tamil Country?

4. Were the military Commanders of the British capable of bringing down the native Kings and the principal rebellious Poligars of Tamil Country?
5. To what extent the native Rulers and the Poligars furnished stiff resistance to the talented and well-equipped military Commanders of the British in the form of rebellion in Tamil Country?

Several questions of similar nature have been raised in this study and an attempt has been made to find answers which constitute the findings of this research work.

Objectives of the Study

The major objectives of the study are

1. to highlight the military diplomacy of the British in establishing their political supremacy in Tamil Country.

2. to assess the military strategy of the British to quell the rebellious activities of the native chieftains.

3. to focus the role played by the military commanders of the British in their expeditions in various parts of the Tamil Country.

4. to highlight the British expansion activities and the internal resistance posed by the native Rulers and the Poligars.

5. to study the troop movements of the both the British and the native Rulers and the Poligars.
6. to find out the reasons for the final success of the British in their onward political and military mission.

7. to highlight the early liberation struggle waged by the Queen of Sivagangai, Setpathi of Ramnad, the Poligars of Nercattanseval, Panjalamkurichi, Sivagangai, Madurai region, Dindugul Region and Tiruchirappalli Region and the Maratha King of Tanjore in the second half of the Eighteenth Century.

Chapterization


In the 'Introduction' Chapter, physical features, early political history of the Tamil Country, period of the study, area of the study, universe of the study, objectives of the study, hypotheses, sources for the study, methodology and the Chapterization are given.

The First Chapter, 'Advent of the Europeans and the Rise of British', deals with the emergence of European Powers in South India, especially the rise of British Power in the coastal areas of Tamil Country. The British, who came for routine trade in India, later began to involve themselves in the Indian politics. The favourable factors like industrial revolution in England, the decline and disintegration of the Mughal Empire in 1707 and the internal politics in Tamil
Country, enabled the British to carry on effective trade in the Coromandel Coast and the Pearl Fishery Coast in particular. The British established several factories and trade settlements in the region by influencing local chieftains and rulers. Supporting the cause of the Wallajah Nawabs, the British confronted the Nevayets and defeated them. Thus they spread their influence in the Carnatic, or the Tamil Country.

The Second Chapter on, 'Ascendancy in Tiruchirappalli' narrates the political condition of Tiruchiraappalli in the second half of the Eighteenth Century. It elaborately deals with the military aid and expeditions rendered by the British to the Nawab of Arcot against Tiruchirappalli. The British aided the Nawab by rendering military assistance to suppress the Neyayets especially Chanda Saheb, the Marathas, the Mysoreans and the rebellious Poligars of Udaiyar Palayam and Ariyalur. The Nawab was left in a position to depend upon the British to establish his authority. But the British proved their military superiority over the Nawab and other native Rulers. It cleared the road for British ascendancy over Tiruchirappalli in due course. The Nawab slowly lost his grip over Tiruchirappalli against the British for various reasons.

The Third Chapter on, 'Suppression of Marava Poligars', highlights the British military activities against Marava Poligars or Western Poligars of Tirunelveli who offered organized resistance. The Marava Poligars, who under the leadership of Puli Tevar, collectively rose up in rebellion in 1755. The first
significant military operation of the British started in Tirunelveli region under the commandership of Col. Alexander Heron. Puli Tevar purchased alliances with the political enemies of the Nawab and the British. At this critical juncture, the British appointed Khan Saheb, an able General as Governor of Tirunelveli. With the strong military reinforcements of the British, Khan Saheb defeated Puli Tevar and subsequently brought the Marava Poligars of Tirunelveli under the British control.

The Fourth Chapter on, 'Control over Sircar Territory in Tirunelveli', deals with the steps taken by the British Commanders to regain the sircar territory, known as the southern part of Tirunelveli, from the grip of Khan Sahib, Western Poligars and Travancore forces. After the suppression of Puli Tevar, Khan Sahib acted independently and began to oppose the authority of the Nawab and the British. He wanted to become the true ruler of sircar territory and hence he tried to win the alliance of the King of Travancore. The British felt that Khan Sahib was a source of constant threat to their authority and wanted to eliminate him. In 1764, Khan Sahib was captured and executed. From 1765, the British made Palayamkottai as their military station in Tirunelveli. The postal communication between the Governor of Madras and Bombay passed through Palayamkottai. Meanwhile, the Travancore forces frequently invaded the Kalakkad Region. When the Nawab brought the matter to the British, the latter sent Major Donald Campbell to the Kalakkad region. The British forces were placed in the military outposts of Kalakad. The arrival of Donald Campbell compelled the Travancore
forces to retreat, and Panagudi, Thirukkurungudi and Kalakkad were once again brought under British control. The campaign of Donald Campbell was so decisive that Travancore army never again tried to enter the region.

The Fifth Chapter, entitled, 'Military Campaign in Tanjore and Ramnad', deals with the expeditions undertaken by the British Commanders over the Tanjore and the Marava States of Ramnad and Sivagangai. In the pretext of the dependable states, the Nawab of Arcot extorted the revenue and exploited the economy of the three native states of Tanjore, Ramnad and Sivagangai. The Nawab allowed the King of Tanjore to annex Ramnad and Sivagangai as a reward for his services in his war against Mysore. Then the Nawab feared about the enhancement of the power of the Tanjore King. The ambitious Nawab also decided to annex Tanjore. He promised to give presents to the Madras Government on its aid to annex Tanjore Kingdom. The helplessness of the Rajah of Tanjore, the avarice of the Nawab and the connivance of the British sealed the fate of the Tanjore Kingdom. The Nawab’s acquisition of Tanjore with the military aid of the British marked a serious error on the part of the British. Mohammed Ali, the Nawab of Carnatic Subha cherished his own diplomacy to get rid of the British influence. Now the British found a prospective rival in the Nawab. The Military superiority of the British helped them to establish their hold over the Nawab and in due course over the Carnatic Subha or the Tamil Country.
'British Power in Madurai Region', forms the Sixth Chapter. The British annexed Madurai Country in a phased manner. The Dindigul region was captured from Tipu Sultan during the Third Mysore War in 1790. The revenue administration of Madurai assumed significance due to the conclusion of the Carnatic Treaty with the Nawab of Carnatic or Arcot in 1801. The Dindigul Poligars were rebellious chiefs who disobeyed the authority of the British. Taking advantage of the change of rule, the Poligars created lawlessness and disturbances. The early British Collectors frequently undertook military action to bring them under control. The Poligars formed formidable alliances against the British and resisted their growing influence. The insurrections of Poligars were suppressed and the British consolidated their authority over the region.

The Seventh Chapter is, *Eclipse of the Nawab's Rule*. The Wallajah Nawab was the ruler of the Carnatic Subha. In the Wallajah -Nevayet conflict for the throne of the Carnatic, the British, through their policy of aid and alliance, helped the Wallajah Nawab Mohammed Ali in the Carnatic wars against the camp of the French and Nevayet. The offer of financial aids enamoured the British representatives. The Nawab's private debt too went high. The Nawab borrowed huge amounts from the British including members of the Madras Government. The result was that enemies were routed. But the Nawab incurred debts, known as 'Carnatic Debts', to the British. The British, through many Carnatic treaties, eliminated the Nawab's power and influence from the political scenario of the
Carnatic region and acquired the Carnatic region from the Nawab by pensioning him to retirement.

The Eighth and the Last Chapter is the, 'Consolidation Phase'. The provisions of the Treaty of 1792 were interpreted both by the British and the Nawab's agents to serve their own purpose. The Nawab's officials induced the Poligars to disobey the British by focusing on the Carnatic Treaty of 1792 as a temporary settlement. The British Commanders warned the Government against the loopholes in the Carnatic Treaty and the possibility of the rising of Poligars in Tirunelveli. As Kattabomman was considered a major foe after Puli Tevar in Tirunelveli, W.C.Jackson, the Collector, decided to punish him and destroy his influence. But his drastic measures compelled the Government to recall him. The new Collector, S.R. Lushington, warned Kattabomman and asked him to obey the British authority. Kattabomman formed the 'Eastern Poligars' League' and ignored the Collector's warning. The end of Tipu Sultan alerted the Madras Government to take military action against the rebellious Tirunelveli Poligars. Major Bannerman was asked to design a military strategy to nab Kattabomman. On October 17, 1799, Kattabomman was executed. Escaping from the Palayamkottai jail, Umaithurai, the brother of Kattabomman, entered the Ramnad region. The Marudhu brothers of Sivagangai strongly supported the cause of the rebellious Tirunelveli Poligars. Colonel Agnew assumed the new military leadership. The whole of southern forces of the British were directed towards Ramnad region. The
Marudhu brothers were captured and executed. All the suspected Poligar men were arrested and punished mercilessly. The British firmly believed that the dual system was the root cause of all the evils. Lord Edward Clive, the Governor of Madras, made Azim-ud-Daulah, the grandson of Mohammed Ali, the nominal Nawab of the Carnatic to sign the Carnatic Treaty of 1801. It put an end to the dual system prevailed in Carnatic Subha. Thus the British ensured the establishment of their power in Tamil Country on the whole.

‘Conclusion’, is the last part of the study in which the major research findings of the study and the historical trends related to the expansion of British Power in Tamil Country are analysed. Besides, the phases of British military movements, their military diplomatic manoeuvres, and expansion of British influence in the entire part of the Tamil Country are also portrayed.

Sources for the Study

The present study entitled, “Expansion of British Power in Tamil Country, 1751-1801”, is based mainly on the various valuable sources that are kept and preserved in the Tamil Nadu State Archives, Chennai. The archival sources are the products of East India Company’s dealings in the erstwhile Madras Presidency. The source material for this study is both primary and secondary. The primary source mostly constitutes archival records. They are manuscripts in bound volumes related to the administration of East India Company covering the period from 1750 to
1857. They include historical manuscripts, bulk of consultations, despatches to and from England which are available in political, revenue, military and secret departments, and in various military and political country correspondences. There are press lists up to 1800 and guides to district records up to 1835. Nevertheless, it is found unsafe to proceed on these lines as there are many omissions of valuable materials. The researcher therefore had to depend upon other official documents also. These records are related to the Government of Fort St. George.

The country correspondence records contain details about the political history of the Europeans and the natives. They throw much light upon the strategies adopted by the European Rulers in India. They make it clear that the military strategy of the British alone was responsible for their supremacy for many years. Again they provide a vivid account of the Anglo-French rivalry in the form of Carnatic Wars and the consequent military action, including solutions to settle the problems.

A Select Committee was appointed by the House of Commons in 1809 to enquire into the affairs of the country and people of India under the rule of the East India Company. The report of the Select Committee was submitted on July 28, 1812 and it was popularly known as the 'Fifth Report.' The Fifth Report of the Select Committee describes the erstwhile revenue settlement in Tamil Country ever since 1736. Papers on Poligar
Peshkush regarding the disaster in the Carnatic consequent on the invasion of Hydar Ali and Papers relating to the Poligar Wars in Tirunelveli and Dindigul are utilized for the present research to establish authenticity. In addition, the documents relating to negotiation of Tipu Sultan with the French Government and negotiations with Tipu Sultan and Lord Cornwallis’s letters respecting the Carnatic Treaty of 1792 are extensively used to understand the political situation that challenged the authority of the British in Tamil Country.

District manuals, gazetteers, manuals of administration, unpublished dissertations and theses, souvenirs and published works of eminent Indians as well as foreign historians, form the secondary sources. In spite of all the inadequacies, the gazetteers and the manuals contribute descriptive accounts of antiquity, people, occupation and tradition of Poligars of Tamil Country.

Survey of Relevant Literature

The following works are available on the general nature of this subject of study. But they do not touch on the major issue i.e., military aspect, the scholar aimed at.

‘The Manual of Madras Administration’ by B.S. Baliga in four volumes speaks about the British administration in general in the Madras
Presidency. In this work, the British acquisition of Tamil Country is generally dealt with.


‘History of the Nayaks of Madurai’, by R. Sathiyanatha Aiyar gives a short account of the introduction of the Poligar system in Tamil Country. ‘Setupatis of Ramanathapuram’ by S.Tiruvenkatacheri highlights the relations between the Ruler of Ramnad with the Nawabs of Arcot and the native resistance against the British in the Ramnad Region in detail.

Pamela G. Price’s ‘Kingship and Political Practice in Colonial India’ explains the main features of colonial British policy and the
political practice in the monarchical kingdoms of Ramnad and Sivagangai in the Tamil Country and the relationship between the ruling houses of the Marava States with the Nayaks, Nawabs and the British

'The Ruling Chiefs, Nobles and Zamindars, and the Aristocracy of Southern India' by A. Vadivelu furnishes a good account of the antiquity of the Poligars and also about the ascendancy of the British in Tamil Country.


Taylor's Oriental Manuscripts provide a list of the Poligars of Madurai Kingdom and describes the area which was under the direct sway of the Nayaks of Madurai. 'A Collection Treaties, Engagements, Sanads etc., Related to India and Neighbouring Countries' by C.U. Aitchison gives detailed provisions contained in various Carnatic treaties, which helped the British to establish their power in Tamil Country. 'Palayappattukalin Varalaru' in three volumes (Tamil), the Manuscripts collected by Col.Mackenzie and edited by R. Nagasamy in three volumes
are helpful in tracing the military manoeuvres and exploits of the British Military Commanders in the given period of the study.


Limitations

Some primary materials collected from different places were not easily accessible because of their brittle condition and the old nature of records. In some volumes and documents, dates are not available. Some of the published works are silent with regard to the author, place and year of publication. Hence care has been taken not to misinterpret the available data.

Methodology

The methodology followed in this research study is partly descriptive and partly analytical and interpretative. In order to describe
the major historical incidents and military events in a chronological sequence and to establish their inter-relations, a chronology-based narration is adopted. In highlighting the significance of the military strategy of the British to establish their hegemony in the study area, historical explanation and critical interpretation are given.