CHAPTER—II

ASCENDANCY IN TIRUCHIRAPPALLI

For the purpose of provincial administration the Nayak Kingdom was divided into provinces having headquarters at Tiruchirappalli, Tirunelveli, Madurai and Sathyamangalam. Tiruchirappalli Province was considered as an important one. Under the control of Tiruchirappalli Province, there were some Poligars or Palayakars. The important among them were the Poligars of Udayarpalayam, Ariyalur, Thuraiyur and Marungapuri. The Poligars were vassals to the Nayaks. The location of the capital of the Nayaks, the strategic situation of the fort of Tiruchirappalli, the existence of two well known temples one at Srirangam and the other at Jumbukeswaram and the high productivity of the soil gave a special importance to the Tiruchirappalli Province of the Madurai Nayaks.

In 1736, Chanda Saheb, on behalf of the Mughal Empire, established his rule at Tiruchirappalli suspending that of the Nayaks. The Mughal Rule ultimately changed into that of the Nawabs of the Carnatic, defacto as well as dejure. The period between 1736 and 1744 forms an interlude between the end of the Nayak Rule and the rise of the Wallajah Power in Tiruchirappalli. Essentially, it was an epoch of Mughal's struggle, spearheaded first by the Nevayets and then by the

1. Rajayyan, K., History of Madurai, op.cit., p. 57.
Nizam, against the Nayaks and the Marathas for domination of the Tamil Country. This conflict marked by ups and downs on either side led to the ascendance of the Wallajahs, the representatives of the Mughals, to prominence.²

The Mughal Incursions

Aurangazeb, the Mughal Emperor (1656 - 1707) conquered the Sultans of Bijapur and Golconda in the South and virtually brought the entire South India under his Rule. Zulfikhar Khan was appointed as the Nawab of Carnatic with headquarters at Arcot in 1694. He was succeeded by Daud Khan, who also collected payments from Rani Mangammal of Madurai and reduced the Nayakdom into a mere tributary. But these two Nawabs did not aim at annexing the territory with that of theirs. The successors of Daud Khan, who assumed greater powers than that of the first two Nawabs, however, followed a more aggressive policy towards the powers of the far south.

In the Carnatic, Saadatullah Khan, the successor of Daud Khan in the Nawabship of Arcot, asserted his independence. He founded the rule of his house, the Nevayets, on a hereditary basis. The Nevayets complemented their steady transformation into an independent monarchy with the consolidation as well as extension of their sway over Madurai and Tiruchirappalli. While the early Nawabs

merely collected tributes from the powers of the far south, Nawab Saadatulla Khan took a step further, when he stationed an army south of the river Cauvery. 3

Dost Ali, the nephew and successor of Saadatulla Khan, assumed the Nawabship in 1732. Embarking upon a policy of annexation, in 1734 he sent an army of 12,000 men under the joint command of his son Safdar Ali and his son-in-law Chanda Sahib on an expedition to the south. Their encounter with Meenakshi of Madurai and the final annexation of the territory of the Madurai Nayaks with that of the Arcot Nawab’s was remarkable event.

The significance of the year 1736 is the usurpation of Nayak Kingdom by the Mughals or rather the Nevayets. After consolidating his victory Chanda Sahib decided to suppress the other powers. He laid siege to the fort of Tanjore but failed. Then, he marched to the west and occupied the territories (Karur Area) wrested by the Ruler of Mysore from Tiruchirappalli during the Civil War.

Concerned at the growing power of Chanda Sahib and suspicious of his machinations in the south, Safdar Ali decided to win Tanjore for himself. In 1739, Safdar Ali subdued the Tanjore King, imprisoned him and enthroned another claimant, Pratap Singh to the Kingship. Thus, Tanjore came under the virtual control of Safdar Ali.

Unmindful of Safdar Ali's intervention in Tanjore, Chanda Sahib in a spirit of statesmanship proceeded ahead with the consolidation of his gain. He subdued the Poligars of Udagarpalayam and Ariyalur and restored order in the Province of Tiruchirappalli. He annexed Pudukkottai Kingdom after killing its Tondaiman rulers who were firm ally of the Nayaks. Besides winning many victories, Chanda Sahib and his brothers who were ruling from Dindigul and Madurai, repaired the forts of their headquarters (i.e.,) Tiruchirappalli. Madurai and Dindigul and established new military posts at different places of strategic importance.

But, they did not take any steps for pacifications of the inhabitants. On the other hand, they plundered the places of worship, confiscated the temple lands and obliged the devotees to carry the idols away to remote places for fear of loss. The series of revolutions which synchronised with the steady expansion of the Mughal authority had their impact upon the life of the people. The long civil war accompanied by severe drought and pestilential fevers plunged the Tamil Country into untold misery.
The Maratha Interlude

Confronted with the critical situation Bangaru Thirumalai, the claimant of Nayak throne of Madurai and Sayaji of Tanjore who was dethroned by Safdar Ali to enthrone Pratap Singh, appealed to the Marathas, the premier Hindu power of the times, for aid. Moved by the fate of his relative, (Sayaji), Sahu, the Maratha King agreed to support them. Besides, the prominent Hindu powers of the south, Mysore, the Maravas and the Tondaiman of Pudukkottai also entreated the Marathas to intervene in the South Indian politics. The Nizam of Hyderabad to whom the Nevayets were Deccan Governors who then denounced their allegiance to their overlord, also instigated the Marathas to teach a lesson to the Nawabs of Arcot and Tiruchirappalli. The Marathas who had a design to extend their imperial sway upto Kanniyakumari took it as an opportunity to realise their goal.

Nevertheless, the positive factor, which invited the Maratha intervention was the dissension among the Nevayets. The establishment of an independent Kingdom at Tiruchirappalli by Chanda Sahib and the interference in Tanjore by Safdar Ali precipitated a bitter rivalry between these Chiefs.

In May 1740 the Marathas invaded the South with a huge army. Raghoji Bhonsle and Fateh Singh, the two Maratha Generals led a cavalry of about 50,000 horses.
The sudden Maratha invasion startled Dost Ali, the Nawab of Arcot who then was engaged in the marriage of a family member. Hearing this, both Safdar Ali and Chanda Sahib from Tanjore and Tiruchirappalli respectively hurried to Arcot. Meanwhile Dost Ali marched towards Chandragiri to face his invaders. In the ensuing attack Dost Ali and his son Hasan Ali were killed.

Both Chanda Sahib and Safdar Ali retired to Vellore as Arcot came into the hands of the Marathas. Both of them then escaped to Pondicherry, then a French Settlement. Both became rivals as there were mutual mistrust and jealousies developed between them and Chanda Sahib came to Tiruchirappalli while Safdar Ali went to Arcot.

Safdar Ali entered into a secret agreement with the Marathas and accordingly, he promised a huge sum to them if they could suppress the regime of Chanda Sahib. He also granted them permission to occupy Tiruchirappalli after driving away Chanda Sahib. According to the terms, the Marathas evacuated Arcot and Safdar Ali crowned himself the Nawab.

The Maratha Army proceeded from Arcot towards Tiruvannamalai, stayed there for two months, equipped its forces with 10,000 horses of Murari Rao, the Maratha Chief of Gooty and prepared to invade Tiruchirappalli. They marched on Tiruchirappalli in February 17414. Chanda Sahib also prepared himself to face the

---

4. Ibid., p.80.
Marathas. He had sent his family members to Pondicherry for safety and posted forces at strategic places. He applied for the French help but it was not forthcoming.

On reaching a striking distance from Tiruchirappalli, Raghoji Bonsle delivered an ultimatum to the Nevayet Ruler directing him to send a handsome present, failing which to face retaliation. Chanda Saheb on his part offered to pay seven lakhs of rupees but warned the Marathas of his readiness to fight them unless they accepted the offer. Dissatisfied with the meager offer and indignant at the warning Raghoji Bonsle took up the gauntlet.

The Maratha Army, camped at Valikandapuram, began to leave the camp and proceeded towards Tiruchirappalli. The troops of Chanda Saheb led by his General Sesha Rao ambushed a column of the enemy and routed it, before long the main body of the Maratha Cavalry took position in the capital city and cut off its communications. Thereupon a large body of the Nevayet troops under Buddha Sahib, a brother of Chanda Sahib, Governor of Dindigul Territory, marched to the northern border for its defence. The Marathas sought to intercept the march of Buddha Sahib. But he acting in co-operation with his another brother Sadak Sahib, Governor of Madurai, defeated the enemy at Dindigul. Losing no time the two brothers rushed towards Tiruchirappalli to meet Chanda Sahib, their brother, but were intercepted by Raghoji Bonsle at Manapparai where a fierce battle took place between the Marathas and the Nawab’s forces in which the brothers were
killed. The decisive victory of the Marathas at Manapparai considerably helped their siege of Tiruchirappalli.

Despite the formidable odds, Chanda Sahib resisted the onslaught for more than a month, after which he gave way. On March 16, 1741, the Marathas scaled the walls of ramparts, surprised the exhausted garrisons and took possession of the Nevayet stronghold. Chanda Sahib offered to make a peace treaty and payment of 12 lakhs of Rupees. But the victors demanded one crore of Rupees. The Nawab could not meet the Maratha's demand and so the Marathas took him and his son Abhid Sahib as prisoners to Berar and then to Satara.

Raghoji Bonsle appointed Murari Rao, the Maratha Chief of Gooty, who had lent his forces for Tiruchirappalli siege, as the Ruler of Tiruchirappalli. This marked the end of the Nevayet Regime at Tiruchirappalli after five year of its precarious existence.\(^5\)

The Maratha expedition resulted in the re-establishment of the Hindu Rule at Tiruchirappalli, however, not of the Nayaks but of the Marathas.\(^6\) Bangaru Thirumalai and his own son and Queen Meenashi's adopted son Vijayakumara requested the Marathas to recognise their rights to the Kingdom, but in vain.

\(^5\)Ibid., p.81.

\(^6\)Ibid.
Expedition of the Nizam of Hyderabad

The years that followed the defeat of Chanda Sahib constitute quite an ominous period in the history of the Nevayets. They lost their stronghold in Tiruchirappalli and half of their dominions besides Chanda Sahib, an able General.

Nawab Safdar Ali was killed by his brother-in-law Murtaza Ali to usurp the throne. But the loyal troops of Safdar Ali prevented Murtaza Ali to occupy the Nawabship and enthroned Safdar Ali's infant son, Saadatulla Khan-II as the Nawab. This confusion weakened the Nawabs. Murari Rao at Tiruchirappalli also could not count upon Maratha's support as they were engaged in the contests for leaderships. The Nizam now decided to exploit the favourable circumstances at Arcot and Tiruchirappalli to his advantage.

Asaf Sha, the Hyderabad Nizam marched unopposed to Arcot early in 1743, with an army of 2,00,000 soldiers and a cavalry of 80,000 horses. He accepted Saadatulla Khan-II as the Nawab and appointed his own nominee as the infant Nawab's custodian.

In 1743, the Nizam attacked the fort of Tiruchirappalli, despite the overwhelming strength of the enemy. Murari Rao, the Maratha Chief of Tiruchirappalli, offered a heroic resistance. The siege continued for six months. Having exhausted all his resources and disappointed in not getting any succour, Murari Rao, agreed for a settlement. The Marathas evacuated the fort and on
August 29, 1743. The Nizam hoisted the flag of the imperial Mughals on the historic Tiruchirappalli Fort. For the evacuation, Murari Rao was also paid two lakhs of Rupees and his title as the Ruler of Gooty was also recognised by the Nizam.

The victory of Asaf Sha, the Nizam, terminated the Maratha Rule and re-established the Mughal Regime in Tiruchirappalli and Madurai Regions. He appointed Khwaja Abdulla as the Nawab of Tiruchirappalli. The new ruler combining in himself the powers of the Nawab as well as the influence of the guardian of the Nevayet Prince, virtually held the reigns of power.

**Wallajah Usurpation**

Khwaja Abdullah Khan, the Ruler of Tiruchirappalli and custodian of the Arcot Nawab of Nevayet line, died in 1744. Nizam sent Anwar-ud-din as the guardian of Saadat uilla Khan. But the young ruler was murdered cold bloodedly. The Nizam appointed Anwar-ud-din, who belonged to the House of the Wallajahs as the Nawab. The Rule of the Wallajahs thus started amidst the scenes of tragedies, which swept the Nevayets out of power.7

Bangaru Tirumalai and his son Vijayakumara, the scions of the Madurai Nayaks requested the Nizam to recognise their right of Kingship at Tiruchirappalli

---

and in turn they offered to pay huge annual tributes to the Nizam. The Nizam also instructed Anwar-ud-din to consider the Nayak's claims but Anwar-ud-din postponed it saying that he would restore the Nayaks after reestablishing peace and order in the Tamil Country. The Nayak even joined the military services of Anwar-ud-din and when he realised that his dream could not come true, he got frustrated.

The Nawab finally poisoned the Nayak to death. His son Vijayakumara escaped to Sivagangai. Had Anwar-ud-din restored the Nayak Kingdom of Tiruchirappalli (Madurai), it might have also continued as 'Native State' under the British administration like that of Pudukkottai, Travancore, etc.

**British in the Wallajah Versus Navayet (1744- 1752)**

The success of Anwar-ud-din in obtaining the Nawabship of Arcot marked the beginning of the Wallajah Administration in Tiruchirappalli. He renamed Tiruchirappalli as Natharnagar in honour of Sayyed Saint, Adrat Nathar Wali. He made Tiruchirappalli (i.e.) Natharnagar as the principal seat of his power in the south, adorned it with the construction of a beautiful mosque known as Hasjid-i-Muhammade and strengthened it by the improvement of the strategic fort. In 1743, he appointed his eldest son Maphuz Khan as the Governor of

---

Tiruchirappalli. But in 1745, he transferred Maphuz Khan to Arcot and appointed Mohammed Ali, his favourite son, as the Governor of Tiruchirappalli. Anwar-uddin himself stayed at Tiruchirappalli.

Chanda Sahib of Navayet Clan who was languishing in Satara Prison with his son Abhid Sahib claimed the Nawabship. The rivals of Chanda Sahib at Arcot who were paying the Marathas regularly for not releasing the Nevayet General, stopped payment. In consequence, Raghoji Bhonsle agreed to release Chanda Sahib and his son if he could arrange for the payment of seven and a half lakh rupees. Chanda Sahib, without delay, requested Dupleix, the French Governor at Pondicherry, to advance the amount on security of the jewellery, which he had deposited with his family at Pondicherry. Dupleix opened communications with Satara, agreed to pay the amount and secured the release of Chanda Sahib and his son in 1748. On his way to Arcot he lost his son in a battle fought by the father and son against an enemy, Muzzafar Jung of Hyderabad.

There was also a war of succession in Hyderabad for Nizamship between Nasir Jung, the son and Muzzafar Jung, the grandson through the daughter of the dead Nizam Asaf Sha. Both claimed to be the Nizam of Hyderabad. On his release Chanda Sahib befriended Muzzafar Jung who appointed him the Nawab of Arcot, Gingee, Tiruchirappalli, Tanjore and Madurai. The French, the Nevayets and Muzzafar Jung formed themselves into a confederacy and prepared for the expulsion of Wallajahs from the Carnatic.
In June 1749, Chanda Sahib and Muzzafar Jung at the command of 14,000 horses and 15,000 infantry descended upon the Carnatic. Within a few days a French Army of 2,300 men led by D Auteunil joined the Confederates. On the approach of the enemy, the Nawab at the command of his troops and assisted by his two sons left Tiruchirappalli for the defence of Arcot. In the battle at Ambur, fought on July 23, 1749, the confederates defeated and killed Anwar-ud-din. They took Maphuz Khan as prisoner but Mohammed Ali escaped to Tiruchirappalli. Chanda Saheb took possession of Arcot while Mohammed Ali retained control of Tiruchirappalli.

Until Mohammed Ali's flight to Tiruchirappalli, the British and the French in their relation with the south Indian powers appeared isolated and mutually exclusive. Tiruchirappalli played a vital role in bringing the two European powers, the British and the French into major conflict, which subsequently left the British free to assert their supremacy over India.\(^9\)

The political condition by 1750 was that Chanda Sahib was Nawab of Arcot recognised by Muzzafar Jung and Mohammed Ali who had Tiruchirappalli under his control as its Governor was recognised as the Nawab of Arcot by Nasir Jung.


the rival of Muzzafar Jung to the Nizamate of Hyderabad. Chanda Saheb's raid of Udaiyarpalayam and Ariyalur.

Chanda Sahib marched towards Tanjore from Pondicherry. On the way, he entered the 'Pollams' of Udaiyar Palayam and Ariyalur. He directed the Poligars to pay huge contributions to which they evaded. In consequence, the Nevayet General raided the country for about a month and finally exacted 70,000 pagodas, a meager amount for a prolonged military operation.

Chanda Sahib directed Pratap Singh, the Tanjore Ruler, to furnish financial and military aid to occupy the Fort of Tiruchirappalli by driving out Mohammed Ali. Pratap Singh evaded which caused the siege of Tanjore by Chanda Sahib.

Finally, Chanda Sahib and his allies decided to march towards Tiruchirappalli. By then Nasir Jung with a large army descended upon Arcot-upholding the claims of Mohammed Ali. The Confederate Forces suspended the Tiruchirappalli march and prepared to face the forces of Nasir Jung.

Nasir Jung invaded the Carnatic in support of Mohammed Ali. He positioned his troops of 50,000 near Pondicherry. Mohammed Ali joined Nasir Jung. The British also extended their support. The descendants of the Nayaks also joined the forces of Nasir Jung and requested him to liberate their country from the rule of
the Nawabs. The Nizam received such an overwhelming support that it appeared that the cause of the Confederates was doomed. 11

In the battle between Muzaffar Jung and Nasir Jung held near Pondicherry, Muzaffar Jung surrendered to Nasir Jung. The French Governor Dupleix sent his General to Arcot where Muzaffar Jung was taken prisoner. Nasir Jung was killed by the intrigue of the French and Muzaffar Jung was released from Arcot. Muzaffar Jung hurried to Pondicherry and thanked Dupleix. His Nizamship was confirmed and in turn he rewarded his allies, the French and Chanda Sahib. But, when Muzaffar Jung proceeded to Hyderabad, he was also killed on the way by his enemies. On Muzaffar Jung’s death Dupleix declared Jalabath Jung, the third son of Asaf Sha, as the Nizam.

The political climate was not in favour of Mohammed Ali in Tiruchirappalli. The Nizam Jalabath Jung had also asked Mohammed Ali to quit his fort. Mohammed Ali sought the help of the British to defend his hold in Tiruchirappalli. Thomas Saunders, Governor of Fort St.George, saw in this an offer of an opportunity for bolstering up the sinking prestige of the British. He rightly considered the defence of Tiruchirappalli as the first step for keeping the growing power of the Nevayet-French coalition under check. Promptly he sent a force

under the command of Captain Cope to the Fort of Tiruchirappalli. The Wallajahs in the meantime enlisted the support of the Rulers of Tanjore, the Maravars, Tondaimans of Pudukkottai and several Poligars.

**Contest for Tiruchirappalli**

The momentous struggle for the control of the Fort of Tiruchirappalli between Mohammed Ali backed by the British and some minor chieftains and Chanda Sahib supported by the French and the Nizam of Hyderabad began in March 1751. At the commencement of the contest, though Chanda Sahib appeared more formidable than his opponent, Tiruchirappalli presented the real obstacle to the establishment of his supremacy. Mohammed Ali had a small army but his great advantage was the possession of the Tiruchirappalli Fort which in fact neutralised the military superiority of his enemies.

D' Auteuil commanded the French forces placed at the services of Chanda Sahib while Captain Rudolph Gingins led the British forces sent for the rescue of Mohammed Ali. Both the European Generals were really a match for each other. Chanda Sahib and the French appeared before Tiruchirappalli in March 1751. Alam Khan from Madurai joined Chanda Sahib's forces with a large army. Abdul Bop Khan, the brother-in-law of Mohammad Ali, led the Wallajah Army and in the ensuing fight between the forces of Wallajahs and Nevayets, the latter won.

---

some minor victories in Valikandapuram and Uttathur. Chanda Sahib. the Nevayet General blockaded the fort on March 17, 1751.

Peace talks were held while the siege was on. Chanda Sahib offered Mohammed Ali any territory in the Carnatic. if he evacuated the fort. But Mohammad Ali, the Wallajah Chief, advised by Thomas Saunders, the Governor of Madras, evaded direct reply though he kept the talk alive. Thomas Saunders obtained a document from Mohammad Ali for establishing that the Wallajah Nawab mortgaged the Tiruchirappalli Fort to the British with effect from July 15, 1750 and at this strength he demanded the withdrawal of the French troops from the territory mortgaged to the British. He also directed Chanda Sahib to evacuate the "British Territory". However, both Dupleix and Chanda Sahib treated the demand as a mere joke, characterising the story of transaction as concoction. Chanda Sahib asserted that the country belonged to the Mughals and charged the British as responsible for kindling troubles. Besides, he declared his firm determination to expel Mohammed Ali from the fort. Thereupon Thomas Saunders tried to bring about a compromise by suggesting Chanda Sahib to retain Arcot for himself and leaving Tiruchirappalli under the Wallajahs. The compromise proposal went unheeded and the siege continued.

Chanda Sahib made repeated attempts to storm the fort, but failed particularly because of the unenterprising attitude of the French. In the midst of the siege, D'Auteuil with his forces crossed the River Cauvery and encamped at
a secure place on the northern bank of the river Kollidam. Dupleix now, understanding his folly of entrusting the command of the forces with D'Autouil. replaced him with Jacques Law, a better Officer, but equally unenterprising.¹³

Having felt that the French support could not fetch him victory, Chanda Sahib sought for the alliance of the Rulers of Tanjore and Mysore. His attempts to threat and offer of reward to secure the help of the Marathas, however, failed. Chanda Sahib invaded Tanjore and occupied the territories of Thiruvarur, Kumbakonam and Mannargudi. This made the Ruler of Tanjore to stop his assistance extended to Mohammed Ali. The Mysore Ruler agreed to send an army of 2,000 horses and 5,000 soldiers to assist Chanda Sahib. But Dupleix did not approve the help from Mysore. As Chanda Sahib turned down the offer of assistance sought for, the King of Mysore having felt insulted, volunteered his support to Mohammed Ali.

Mohammed Ali took quick advantage of the situation created by Dupleix's repudiation of the alliance with Mysore. Though he lacked the military enterprise of Chahda Sahib, he, in intrigue, undoubtedly overshadowed his rival. He sent his emissary Sesha Iyer Pandit to Srirangapatnam, the Capital of Mysore, with attractive proposals for a firm alliance. The price which he offered for military aid was the cession of the whole Country of Tiruchirappalli with all its dependencies.

The King of Mysore, naturally readily accepted the grand offer and agreed to render active assistance to the Wallajahs for the recovery of the Carnatic from the Nevayets. If the scheme failed, the King agreed to confer the possession of his District, Ardanaballi, upon Mohammad Ali. This alliance brought with it the services of Murari Rao, the experienced Maratha General and Ruler of Gooty with his well-disciplined cavalry. Murari Rao was at this time in the service of Mysore, but when he decided to serve the Wallajahs, he too had an ambition to re-assert his authority over Tiruchirappalli in the event of any turn of fortune.

Despite the heavy price offered to Mysore, the terms of the settlement seemed advantageous to Mohammed Ali. If he won the war he stood to gain control of the Arcot. On the other hand, if he failed, still stood the chance to get a district. Thomas Saunders, the Governor at Fort St George sent an army of 500 men under the command of Robert Clive from Fort St David to Arcot in support of Mohammad Ali on August 22, 1751. Robert Clive occupied Arcot without any serious opposition. As a capital city, the loss of Arcot was a severe blow to Chanda Sahib. Soon afterwards a body of 2,000 horses sent by Chanda Sahib under the command of his son Reza Sahib from Tiruchirappalli, besieged Arcot. The Nevayet forces could not capture Arcot from the occupation of Robert Clive.

In September 1751, the much expected re-inforcements from Mysore reached Tiruchirappalli. The Mysore force was under the able command of the
Generals Nanja Rajah and Veeranna. Hyder Ali, who later became the Mysore Hero, was a minor captain in the Mysore Army.

The other powers helped Mohammed Ali were that of Tanjore and Pudukkottai. Chanda Sahib could enlist the support of the Sethupathi of Ramnad. The balance of power tilted in favour of the Wallajahs. The battle that took place subsequently crippled the forces of Chanda Sahib and the French. In April 1752, Murari Rao and Clive routed the troops of Chanda Sahib at Samayapuram near Tiruchirappalli. The French troops at Srirangam were also defeated. The Camp of Chanda Sahib was completely surrounded and he found it impossible to escape. Chanda Sahib's attempt to bribe Murari Rao and Manoji, the Tanjore Maratha General, to allow him in disguise to Karaikal failed. Chanda Sahib surrendered to Manoji. The same day, Manoji held a secret conference with Major Lawrence and other chiefs and decided the fate of their victim. On June 11, 1752, he treacherously executed the Nevayet Chief. Chanda Sahib was beheaded in Dalwai Mantap where 16 years ago he falsely swore on the 'Koran' that he would not injure Queen Meenakshi. While Chanda Sahib was uttering his noon-prayers, his head was struck off. His head and body were then taken to his arch enemy, Mohammed Ali. It is also said that the head was taken to Mysore where it was exhibited for three days. But Robert Orme, in his accounts on the Carnatic Wars,


15 Rajayyan, K., *History of Madurai, op. cit.*, p. 120.
says that his head was not taken out of the Carnatic. K. Rajayyan also feels that Orme's account must be correct on the grounds that Chanda Sahib was not considered as a deadly enemy of Mysore and when Chanda Saheb was executed, the relationship between Mohammad Ali and Mysore became hostile over the question of the possession of Tiruchirappalli.\(^\text{16}\) Still the war at Tiruchirappalli lingered on. The French Governor Dupleix raised another army and continued the war. The French even won a victory against the Wallajah and the British Army in Vikravandi and Gingee. But Mohammed Ali and the British defeated the French Army led by D'Auteuil. The Wallajahs were now left as the masters of the Tamil Country undisputed by the Nevayets.

**British in the Wallajah - Mysore Struggle for Tiruchirappalli (1752-1755)**

Mohammad Ali had sought the alliance of Mysore against Chanda Sahib on condition that he would cede Tiruchirappalli to Mysore if he succeeded in the conflict. But Mohammed Ali flagrantly violated his solemn assurance and refused the cession of Tiruchirappalli to Mysore. However, Srirangam was left to be occupied by the Mysoreans. In 1752, there ensued a struggle between the two groups of powers lasting to till 1755.

Mohammed Ali at first told the Mysore King that he would consider the latter's demand after two months. When the Mysore King, Nanja Rajah pressed,

Mohammed Ali said that the territory belonged to the Mughals and he could not alienate the Mughal's property. He was supported by the British and the Rulers of Pudukkottai and Tanjore. On the other hand, the Mysore King got the assistance of Murari Rao, the Maratha Chief, the French and the Maravars.

As all attempts to an amicable settlement failed, Nanja Rajah decided to fight out the issue. The Mysoreans and their allies converted the island of Srirangam into a base of their military operation. In the end of the battle, the French and Murari Rao withdrew their support to the Mysore King. After the withdrawal of the French, there remained no serious threat to the security of Tiruchirappalli Fort. Thus ended the attempt of Nanja Rajah of Mysore to capture Tiruchirappalli Fort.

While the Wallajah-Mysore War for Tiruchirappalli did not come to a finality, Jalabat Jung, the Nizam of Hyderabad, threatened to invade Tiruchirappalli in support of the French. Nizam's threat gave an indirect but quick remedy to the tussle at Tiruchirappalli. Though the Madras Council feared that Jalabat Jung would invade the Carnatic, what happened was that he, assisted by Bussy, a French General, attacked the ill-defended Country of Mysore. Hence, he left the army at Srirangam and Tiruchirappalli and rushed to Mysore, virtually abandoning their claim for Tiruchirappalli. On the night of April 8, 1755, Nanja Rajah with his forces returned to Mysore ceding Srirangam to the French, though the latter already stopped helping the King of Mysore and then joined Jalabath
Jung to attack Mysore. As he reached Mysore, Jalabath Jung defeated Nanja Rajah and forced him to purchase peace for fifty two lakhs of rupees. Nanja Rajah's claim of either Tiruchirappalli or the expenses incurred by him to terminate the Nevayets in alliance with Mohammed Ali and the British could not fructify. Tiruchirappalli remained in the undisturbed possession of the Wallajahs.

It is difficult to ignore the significance of the conflict at Tiruchirappalli and the related events. Their immediate results were that they enhanced the prestige of the Wallajahs who were backed by the British and shattered the influence of the Wodayars of Mysore. Mohammed Ali emerged triumphant as Tiruchirappalli came into his possession. Before long, the Mughal Emperor extended recognition to his title as Nawab of the Carnatic. Finding his position at Tiruchirappalli unassailable, Mohammad Ali left the Fort on August 21, 1755 on victorious march to the Capital, Arcot. Yet it cannot be denied that his triumph was the product of the flagrant violation of his obligations to Mysore and the devoted services of the British. In Mysore, taking advantage of the confusion in the Country, Hyder Ali, who fought for the King in Tiruchirappalli as a General, usurped the throne in 1761. In later years, Hyder Ali determined to wreak vengeance upon Mohammed Ali for his betrayal of Mysore, ravaged the Carnatic.

---


The Mysore wars of the subsequent times not only weakened the Wallajahs but also made them more dependent upon the British. Besides, the assistance which the Nawab secured from the British for the defence of Tiruchirappalli, so much overburdened his debt that he found it difficult to extricate himself. This process together with the Nawab's practice of obtaining loans, continued. If the Wallajahs had ceded Tiruchirappalli to Mysore, they would have, no doubt, lost a large territory, but, perhaps they could have preserved their independence in Arcot for an indefinite period by keeping a balance between Mysore and British in South India. The subsequent conflict which were in reality the offshoots of the struggle for Tiruchirappalli so much weakened the Carnatic and Mysore that both powers fell easy prey to British expansionism.19.

**British-French Rivalry**

The centre of political activity had been shifted to Madurai from Tiruchirappalli in 1755. After his triumph over Chanda Sahib the principal task which faced Mohammed Ali was the consolidation of his authority. Meanwhile in European political scene a war between England and France was declared which had its repercussions on the Anglo-French relationship in Tamil Country. Tiruchirappalli was guarded by the British troops under the command of John Caillaud. John Caillaud, the British Commander at Tiruchirappalli left for

---

Madurai in an expedition to consolidate the Nawab's position there in the year 1757. This weakened the garrison at Tiruchirappalli. The French found in it an opportunity to attack Tiruchirappalli. On the way to the town, the French Army exacted a promise of tribute from the Poligar of Udaiyarpalayam. On receiving information that the French troops were moving from Pondicherry towards Tiruchirappalli, Caillaud rushed to Tiruchirappalli and saved the town from falling into the hands of the French.

Since the evacuation of Mysore forces in 1755, Srirangam had been in possession of the French. But, in May 1758, the French garrison was withdrawn from Srirangam to join the siege of Cuddalore and handed over the islands back to the Mysoreans. But, the English Captain Joseph Smith captured the island from the Mysore army. In 1758, when Lally, the French Governor was attacking Tanjore, the British garrison at Tiruchirappalli went to the rescue of the King of Tanjore and the attempt of the French Governor to subdue the King of Tanjore was foiled.

In 1758, the Nawab established his sway over Thuraiyur, a principal Pollam of Tiruchirappalli, taking advantage of a succession dispute. The ruling chief was Varadaraja Reddy but his claims were contested by his cousin Venkatachala Reddy. At the request of Venkatachala Reddi for military aid, a body of the British forces led by Khan Sahib and Joseph Smith marched to Thuraiyur in September.

1758. The ruling chief now withdrew to the woods from where he prepared for resistance. The invading forces captured the barriers erected by the Poligar while the latter was allowed to take his flight to Mysore with his followers. Venkatachala Reddy now assumed management of the Pollam and it seemed that the expedition was a success. However, in March, 1759, soon after the withdrawal of the forces of the British, the expelled chief descended upon the district. The ruling chief (Venkatachala Reddy) now fled and a body of troops which had been stationed by Khan Sahib surrendered. Varadaraja Reddy, however, permitted the forces of the British to return to Tiruchirappalli. Subsequently, he offered terms which the Nawab accepted for fear of the Poligar joining the French. Mohammed Ali recognized the title of Varadaraja Reddy and received tribute. Thus, the Nawab, despite a setback, established his influence over this Pollam with the support rendered by the British.

In 1760, Hyder Ali, the Mysore Ruler and the French entered into an alliance against the Nawab and the British. They decided to conquer the Carnatic and to divide between themselves. Hyder Ali was to get Southern Carnatic including Tiruchirappalli and the western part of Carnatic while the French were to get the rest. On June 4, 1760, Hyder Ali arrived at Tyagadurg on the southern borders of Mysore but he could not be joined by the forces of Lally, the French Governor, owing to financial difficulties. Hyder Ali raided the Province of Tiruchirappalli,

advanced up to Natham and cut off the Nawab's communication with Madurai. In a counter move, the Nawab and the British sent forces to occupy Karur and Dindigul, then formed Mysore Territory. A British Army under the command of Richard Smith advancing from Tiruchirappalli won a series of victories culminating in the reduction of Karur to submission in August 1760. The Mysore forces withdrew from Natham and Tyagadurg. Among the Generals who were in the forefront in the Nawab's and the British side, the name of Khan Sahib deserved special mention.22

Khan Sahib, when he turned hostile to the British and the Nawab sought the alliance of several powers. He also entered into correspondence with Hyder Ali, the Nizam and the French. Hyder Ali agreed to send forces in support of him. Mohammed Ali feared that Hyder Ali and Khan Sahib would attack Tiruchirappalli and Arcot simultaneously.23 But, this did not happen, as Khan Sahib could not win the support of the Nizam.

Mohammed Ali annexed the two Pollams of Ariyalur and Udaiyarpalayam, located within the Province of Tiruchirappalli on grounds of default in payment of tribute and failure to assist him in quelling the rebellion of Khan Sahib.24 In

---

22 Rajayyan, K., *op. cit.*, p.221.


November 1764, Mohammed Ali represented the issue to Madras Council and obtained military aid. On January 3, 1765, the forces led by Umdat-ul Umara and Donald Campbell entered Ariyalur. They captured the Fort of Ariyalur. The young Poligar together with his followers, thereupon, fled to Udaiyarpalayam. On January 19, 1765, the army marched upon Udaiyarpalayam. The Poligar’s troops were defeated and the Pollams were occupied. The two Poligars fled their town and took refuge in Tharangambadi, then a Danish Settlement. The annexation of the Pollam gave the Nawab uninterrupted possession of all his territories extending from Arcot to Tiruchirappalli.

The First Anglo-Mysore War broke out when Hyder Ali led an expedition to the Carnatic in August 1767. Tiruchirappalli Province received the impact of the war in January 1769 when Hyder Ali advanced as far as Thuraiyur. He carried fire and sword to Tiruchirappalli and Tanjore. However, the First Anglo-Mysore War came to an end in 1769 with the peace settlement at Madras.

The triumph of Wallajah expansionism imparted the greatest activity to Mohammed Ali’s endeavour to assert his complete independence and sovereignty. He appointed his second son Amir ul Umara as the Deputy at Tiruchirappalli and entrusted with him not only the administration but also the command of all his forces. The Madras Council looked upon the concentration of vast powers upon Amir ul Umara as a tendency dangerous to the British influence. When the British requested the Nawab to decentralize powers, Mohammed Ali refused saying that
he was the Absolute Lord of the Country and the best judge of his own affairs. This direct confrontation of the Nawab with the British was to a considerable extent the logical sequel to the liquidation of these states.

Second Anglo-Mysore War - 1780 and Effects in Tiruchirappalli

In July 1780, Hyder Ali descended upon the Carnatic. After making a futile attempt to storm Tiruchirappalli, he advanced to the south. For the next two years, the forces of Mysore held an undisturbed possession of most of Tanjore and Srirangam and part of Madurai. The British forces made repeated efforts to expel the forces of Mysore from Southern Carnatic. In 1780, Colonel John Braithwaite sought to check the advance of the Mysoreans to the Province of Tiruchirappalli. The Poligars of Udaiyarpalayam and Ariyalur who had taken shelter in Tharangambadi returned to their Pollams with the help of Mysore forces and began to rebel. It was the oppressive administration of the Nawab's amuldar that assisted in the return of the chiefs of Udaiyarpalayam and Ariyalur. The amuldars increased the taxes four times of what the inhabitants had paid to the Poligars and mercilessly tortured or killed those who did not yield to exactions. The inhabitants, therefore, exclaiming against avarice and cruelty of the Nawab's administration, rose in rebellion and demanded the restoration of Poligar System. Hyder Ali, understanding the favourable situation, sent the former Poligars with small bodies of troops to their Pollams. Supported by the inhabitants, the Chiefs expelled the
Nawab's troops and established their authority. Thus the Nawab lost control of Ariyalur and Udaiyarpalayam of the Tiruchirappalli Province.

The Second Mysore War virtually came to an end soon after Hyder Ali died in 1782. The Treaty of Mangalore was signed on March 7, 1784 between the British and Tipu Sultan, the brave son of Hyder Ali. But the signatories agreed to mutual restitution of conquered territories and return of the prisoners.

A result of the war which endangered the Nawab's territory was the assignment of revenues to the British by the Nawab. At the request of the Madras Council the Nawab agreed to take over the revenues of the Province of Tiruchirappalli for the duration of the war. The Nawab gave his consent either because he found it impossible to collect taxes or because he did not grasp the implications of the British intervention, or both. By an agreement made in February 1781, the British appointed 'Receivers' in Tiruchirappalli for the collection of revenue from the Nawab's amuldars. As this dual system did not work, smoothly, the British constituted a Committee for the Administration of the Assignment, consisting of a Senior Member and five other Members. It functioned through native officers called British Collectors, who resided at the Taluk or District offices. The Committee appointed its own nominees in the place of corrupt renters. Anxious to conciliate the Poligars, it appointed the former Chiefs of Udaiyarpalayam and Ariyalur as the 'Renters' of their respective countries.
These Chiefs in consequence, abandoned their alliance with Tipu Sultan and joined the British.

In the Province of Tiruchirappalli, the Superintendent of Revenue, strengthened the British administration. As the Chiefs of Udaipurpalayam and Ariyalur did not pay the rent, he imprisoned them at Tiruchirappalli and established direct administration of the British.

The decade that followed the “Assignment of Revenue” witnessed with the phenomenal growth of British Influence in Madurai. The Treaties of 1785 and 1787 defined the British Relations with the Nawab and furnished vast scope for the extension of the sphere of activity.

Assumption of the British

In 1790 the British took over the revenue administration from the Nawab at the pretext of the outbreak of the Third Mysore War. In the same year, Tipu Sultan advanced to southern Carnatic along the banks of the Cauvery and camped at Srirangam. Yet he soon withdrew his forces to Mysore when it faced danger. The short duration of the Mysore War forced the British to restore the administration to the Nawab in 1792. As Tipu Sultan found his position unfavourable, sued for peace and on March 19, 1792 he signed the Treaty of Seringapatam surrendering half of his territories to the victorious powers. The entire Baramahal and other few territories were ceded to the British. The British gave up the administration of the
Assumed Revenue of the Carnatic in 1792, but occupied a recognised position of authority under a fresh treaty settled with Mohammed Ali.

**Dual System of Control over Tiruchirappalli**

The Treaties of 1787 and 1792 resulted in the dual system of administration in Tiruchirappalli Province. The British had the control over the military and foreign relations while the Nawab administered the revenue and justice. However, in times of war this form of dual government was liable to be replaced by the sole jurisdiction of the British. The dual form of control was extended to the Poligar System too. While the Nawab retained the sovereign power of the Pollams, the British collected the tribute. The period from 1792 to 1799 was characterised by an uneasy side-by-side existence of the two conflicting jurisdictions, each struggling to expand and consolidate its sphere at the expense of the other. The steady ascendancy kept up by the British during the period culminated in their suppression of the Poligers.

The Nawab was able to assert his rule over the Pollams of Udaipalayam, Araiyalur and Thuraiyur. The Chieftains of these 'districts', formerly Poligars, but later Renters, did not fall under the jurisdiction of the British as they were not considered as tributaries as the Poligars were. This permitted the Nawab to have a free hand in dealing with them.

During the Second Mysore War the Chiefs of the Pollams of Ariyalur and UdaiyarPalayam lost their titles as Poligars and became the Renters of the respective areas. They looked for an opportunity to regain their former status of Poligars. When the Third Mysore War broke out in 1790, they withheld payments. The Board of Assumed Revenue sent a detachment to the Pollams and brought them as prisoners to Tiruchirappalli. The people of the Pollams revolted in support of their chiefs. In 1792, Mohammed Ali, seeking to remove their influence, dubbed them as robbers of public revenue and removed them to Udaiyarpalayam thinking that they would be condemned by the people. But his calculations proved wrong as the people scaled the walls of the forts where the chiefs were imprisoned and got them released. The chief of Udaiyarpalayam rushed to Madras to make futile attempt to get back his Pollam by paying large tribute to the Nawab. The Ariyalur Chief fled to Tanjore.

In 1796 the Chiefs returned to their 'districts' and excited a rebellion which, with violence and success, continued for about two years. The British Army led by Major Cuppage suppressed the disturbances in May 1797. Subsequently, the Nawab made a settlement with the former chiefs of Udaiyarpalayam and Ariyalur by which he retained possession of their former districts, but granted them monthly allowances of 1,000 Rupees and 750 Rupees respectively and the right to
collect the ‘kaval’ fees as was the custom. This ensured a peaceful possession of the two districts by the Nawab.

Thuraiyur was another major Pollam in the Province of Tiruchirapalli. There were chaos and confusion in the family of the Pollam since 1773. The Poligar as per the practice of the time, made over the management of the Pollam to his son. But when his wife died he married again and had a son through his second wife too. The Poligar, yielding to the curtain lecture of his second wife, decided to resume the management of the district either with the consent of his son or by killing him.

The son, having sensed his father’s plot, presented his case before Mohammed Ali, the Nawab at Madras in 1785, who came forward to help the young man but enhanced the tribute. He sent an army to Thuraiyur in the next year and reinstated the young chief. Now, the father offered to pay a huge sum to the Nawab for deposing his son. In consequence in 1787, the Nawab replaced the son by the father. After two years it was the turn of the son to pay a huge sum to the Nawab to help in grabbing the chieftaincy for himself. This repeated changes in the leadership and payments to the Nawab caused severe financial crisis in the Pollam. Hence the Chief was not able to pay the agreed tribute to the Nawab. In 1793, the father consented to pay the said tribute and regained the leadership. The

Nawab knew the inability of the old chief to pay the agreed sum, still he reappointed him with the object of imputing bad faith on the Poligar in the event of default in payment and of annexing the Pollam.

As the Nawab expected, the tribute from Thuraiyur fell in arrears. He imprisoned both the father and the son and occupied the Pollam. The father and son escaped, arrived at a compromise, which at an earlier time might have saved them from total ruin, and uniting their broken fortunes, fled to Tanjore where the father died. In 1798 when the disturbances broke out in UdaipurPalayam, the young Thuraiyur Poligar returned to his Pollam and organised a serious rebellion. The rebels destroyed the water courses, burnt down the villages and obliged the inhabitants to desert the villages. Convinced of the necessity of rehabilitating the deserted Pollam, the Nawab offered terms. He retained possession of the Pollam but granted a monthly allowance of 1000 Rupees and 25 per cent of the net revenue from the Pollam to the chief. Subsequently, the Chief of the Pollam sought British protection, but the Madras Council took no notice of it, thus honouring the Nawab's rights in their instance. These pollams which had their chequered history became 'Zamins' under the British Rule 'Zamindari Sannads' were issued to them.
Establishment of British Rule in Tiruchirappalli

In the history of South India the year 1799 was remarkable for the rebellion against the emerging British Power. A South Indian Revolt was organized. However, the British force was able to quell the rebellion with iron hands. The scenes of the rebellion did not affect Tiruchirappalli much.

In the midst of the military operations against the insurgents, the British entered into a political transaction of major significance. On the July, 31 1801, it concluded the Treaty of the Carnatic which provided for the transfer of authority to the British. This marked the formal establishment of British rule over the Carnatic dejure as well as defacto.

Though the British attributed many reasons to relieve the Nawab of the administration, the immediate pretext was the discovery of some secret correspondence between Tipu Sultan and the Nawabs, Mohammad Ali and his son, in Seringapatnam when the palace Archives was searched after its fall. Tiruchirappalli Province was thus transferred to the British and in August 1801, an British Collector, John Wallace was appointed. The British Rule initiated many reforms in the the pacification of the District and consolidation of its rule. The Government granted general amnesty to all those Chiefs who supported the Anti-

---

British rebellion in 1801. The British promised to honour the rights of property, religious usages and customs. It declared its intention of carrying out the reorganisation of the administration for giving due respect to the rights and traditions of the people on a stable basis.