CHAPTER - III

TRAVANCORE - THIRUNELVELI RELATION

UNDER MARTHANDA VARMA

Bala Marthanda Varma (1729 - 1758)

The Modern History of Travancore begins with the rule of Bala Marthanda Varma who ascended the throne in 1729 A.D. During the time of his accession, the political conditions were unstable due to rebellions and the incessant inroads made by the Nayak forces. This instability of the Government gave free hand to the feudal barons such as Yokakkars and Ettuveettil Pillamar to take advantage and assert their independence. But Marthanda Varma put a cheek by his determined action to subdue the rebels, by seeking the assistance of the English East India Company and the Nayaks of Madura. Meanwhile, the feudal barons took up the cause of Padmanabha Thambi and Raman Thampi, the two sons of the previous king, who conspired to capture the throne of Travancore, they were captured of Nagercoil and executed. Having consolidated his position, Marthanda Varma started his career of expansion.¹

¹ Gopala Krishnan, Kanyakumari District gazetteer, Madras, 1995, p.84.
Invasion of the Carnatic Nawab in Travancore and Tinnevelly

After the disintegration of the Mughal Empire several independent states sprouted on its ruins in South India. The Marathas carved out the kingdom of Maharashtra in the western region. The Nizam founded an independent state, Hyderabad, in the east. The Wodayar Raja extended his power over Mysore. The Nawab of Arcot strengthened his control over the Carnatic. Encircled by the territories of the Nizam of Hyderabad on the north and by the states of Mysore and Travancore on the south-west, the Carnatic of the eighteenth century extended along the east coast from Guntur in the north to Kanyakumari in the south.²

The extensive province of Tinnevelly situated south of Madurai and Ramanathapuram, had a common boundary with Travancore in the west and extended up to Kanyakumari in the south. It was one hundred and fifteen miles long and seventy miles broad. The boundary between Tirunelveli and Travancore passes at present, through the town of Shenkotta. Formerly it lay a little to the eastward, so that they whole of the town belonged to Travancore. The Taluk of Shenkotta, that is, the district between Shenkotta and the hills, appears to have belonged originally to the Pandya’s, but has been a portion of Travancore for centuries.³ Tinnevelly was the headquarters of the province, and Palayamkottai had the strongest fort.

² Chopra P.N., History of South India., New Delhi., 2003., p. 86
Tuticorin, the centre of trade, remained in the possession of the Dutch. The Nayaks exercised their control over a part of the province, while numerous chieftains kept a large area under their influence.⁴

Due to the innumerable political factions the unity of the people was lost. Their mutual conflicts destroyed the vitality of the country. Unity and strength were no doubt essential for the preservation of a country’s independence, but in 1730 Madurai remained highly chaotic. Having a lot of independent and conflicting authorities the country languished under misrule and fell a prey to foreign invasions.⁵

Carnatic Nawab, Ullah Khan, followed a policy of annexation, he sent an army of 12,000 men in 1732 under the joint command of his son Safdar Ali and his son-in-law Chanda Sahib on an expedition to the south. The motive was no doubt conquest, yet as the concealment of the real objective appeared essential for the success of the venture, the Nava yet forces moved leisurely to the south, in an attempt to give no suspicion about their destination. They spent a few days at Madras, more days at Pondicherry and then suddenly swooped on Thanjavur. They

⁴ Ibid., p. 26
⁵ Chopra P.N., op.cit., p. 87
killed numerous inhabitants, plundered the villages and laid waste the fertile country.\textsuperscript{6}

The political condition of the country in the south about 1736, on the eve of the Mughal conquest, was indeed highly confused. Fifty three groups of powers claimed independence; first in importance came the Nayaks who held possession of the district of Tiruchirappalli, Madurai and Tinnevelly then came the rulers of the Maravars and Kallarnadu and finally came the Poligars.\textsuperscript{7}

The Madurai Kingdom, under Thirumalai Nayak embraced the major part of Tamilnadu extending from Kanyakumari to Cauvery. The Marava and Travancore Kingdoms where tributaries. However, external aggressions an internal disorders presented a threat to its territorial integrity. The Marava and Travancore asserted their independence. These developments lead to the disintegration of the Kingdom.\textsuperscript{8} Madurai was the capital of the Nayaks for a considerable period. A fertile 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, which form the dominating topographical feature of the country, attain a height of 1654 m, when they reach the limits of Madurai, and then gently slope while terminating near Kanyakumari.\textsuperscript{9}

\textsuperscript{6} Chopra P.N., op.cit., p. 88

\textsuperscript{7} Rajayyan, K., History of Tamilnadu 1565 - 1965, Madurai, 1978, p. 21

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., p. 45

\textsuperscript{9} Gopala Krishnan, M., Kanyakumari District gazetteer, Madras, 1995, p. 4
These ranges separate the country from the western coast, yet they provide lines of easy access of Shenkotta as well as at Aramboly. The coast is comparatively unbroken, yet it furnishes natural harbours at Nagoor and Tuticorin. The Gulf of Mannar, famous for its pearl banks, lies beyond the south eastern coast. Lying half way on the maritime routes between the east and the west, the country has commanded a large trade since time immemorial. The Kaveri, Vaigai and Tamaraparni form the major river systems.\textsuperscript{10}

The rulers of Madurai always found it an arduous task to subdue the Kallar chiefs. Situated south of Kallarnadu were the Marava states of Sivaganga and Ramanathapuram. Sivaganga measured about fifty miles from the sea-coast of Madurai in the west and about forty miles from the southern borders of Thanjavur to the northern limits of Ramanathapuram. The inhabitants were numerous and war-like.\textsuperscript{11} The Raja who ruled from his capital either at Sivaganga or at Siruvayal maintained an army of about 12,000 fighting men. The woods of Kalaiyarkovil formed the stronghold of the rulers of this district. The land of the Sethupathi, Ramanathapuram, extended from the coast to the confines of Madurai for about sixty miles and from, the southern limits of Sivaganga to the northern borders of Tinnevelly for about fifty miles. The land was well peopled. Rameswaram, situated

\textsuperscript{10} Gopala Krishnan, M., Kanyakumari District gazetteer, Madras, 1995., p. 5

\textsuperscript{11} Rajayyan K., op.cit., p. 34
within the bounds of Ramanathapuram, was famous, for its shrine.\textsuperscript{12} The town of Ramanathapuram, where the Sethupathi had his capital, was large and well-fortified. Thus, the numerous political divisions disrupted the unity of the people, and their mutual conflicts sapped the viability of the country.

The Nayaks were superseded and the Mughal power was established in Madurai in 1736. During this time, Safdar Ali and Chanda Sahib advanced from Thanjavur and Tiruchirappalli respectively to Arcot. On the eve of his departure from Thanjavur, Safdar Ali, after receiving a present, released Sayaji from prison. The Navayet chief marched up to Arcot, but disappointed at the fall of the capital before he could reach for its rescue, retired to the strong fort of Vellore.\textsuperscript{13} Chanda Sahib joined Safdar Ali at Vellore and consoled him for the loss of his father. Both the chiefs, now forging unity under the stress of sorrow, concerted ways and means for the expulsion of the intruders. Expecting to win the support of the French, they proceeded to Pondicherry, but it does not appear that they received anything. After spending a few days at the French settlement, the two chiefs, left for Ginji. But personal rivalry separating them again, Safdar Ali went to the province of Arcot, while Chanda Sahib returned to Tiruchirapalli.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{12} Chopra P.N., op.cit., p. 87

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p.88

\textsuperscript{14} Caldwell. R., op.cit., p. 85
Marathas were fully involved in plundering the areas. Nevertheless, he opened negotiations and entered into a settlement, by which he agreed to pay them one crore of rupees as the price of their evacuation of Arcot. By a secret article of the settlement, Safdar Ali promised to give a present of four lakhs of rupees to the Marathas for the suppression of the regime of Chanda Sahib. He also granted them permission to take possession of Tiruchirappalli for themselves.

In fact, the Navayets suffered from the same evil disposition that gave ruin to the Nayaks Queen Meenakshi was betrayed by Chanda Sahib and the latter in his turn by Safdar Ali.\textsuperscript{15} According to the terms, the Marathas evacuated Arcot and Safdar Ali crowned himself the Nawab. In 1739 the Nayak dynasty came to an end after the death of Meenakshi. The Nawab of Arcot came to possess the dominions of the Nayaks of Madura. Even during the Nayak rule, Venad had constant disputes with them. The Nawab of the Carnatic, who succeeded the Nayaks of Madura also fell heir to these disputes.\textsuperscript{16}

Taking advantage of this, the Nawab of Arcot ordered his generals, Safdar Ali Khan and Chanda Sahib to attack and plunder the southern Kingdom. In 1740, Chanda Sahib was the son-in-law and confidential minister of the Nawab of Arcot and hence he was made leader of the operations. In February 1740, Chanda Sahib assisted by Bada Sahib invaded the Travancore territories in the east. The Anjengo

\textsuperscript{15} Caldwell. R., op.cit., p. 86

\textsuperscript{16} Press list of ancient Dutch records from 1657-1825, Serial No.288, 1740, 21st January, Cochin.
Factors reported in February.17 “The Twenty-fourth the Naiques forces took from the king of Travancore Towall (Thovalai) which they keep and have since marched into Catata (Kottar): the king at present has got with most of his forces into Cockolone (Kalkulam) Fort. The ‘Naiques forces’ to which the Factors referred, were really the invading armies of Chanda Sahib.” Through the strategic pass of Aramboly, they entered Nanchilnadu and took possession of Kottaram. Ravaging the places on the way, the invaders reached Ittankad about two miles south-east of Suchindram.18

The trustees of the Suchindram Temple were alarmed at the invasion. They sent a band of tenants and servants of the Suchindram Temple towards Eathankadu. A fierce struggle ensued at Eathankadu, but as the ill-organised band of men from Suchindram was no match to the Nawab’s soldiers, it was easily put to flight. Highly engrossed with success, the invaders marched on to Suchindram. Meanwhile, the Yogakkar of the Suchindram Temple put up granite walls to protect the inner shrine and the sacred images from sacrilege.19

They also hid the valuable jewels and ornaments which adorned the idol inside the cellars. The prodigious image of Anjaneya was kept hidden underground.

17 Ibid. Serial No. 289, 1740, 29th January, Cochin.

18 Press list. op.cit, Serial No. 334, 1741, Hughley.

Chanda Sahib and his men reached Suchindram and burnt the huge temple-car stationed in front of the temple. After this, the plunders rushed inside the pagoda. They could not find anything valuable. Then they damaged all the figures of lamp-bearers in the inner prakara. The head of the image Chandesvara, was also broken by them. From Suchindram the army proceeded to Kottar, Vadasery, Thiruppathisaram and Vimanaseri. They plundered paddy and seed-grains in all these places.\textsuperscript{20}

After getting information about the invasion, the Travancore army hurried to the east under Ramayyan, the shrewd and capable Dalawa of Travancore. As Marthanda Varma was then engaged in a fight against Kayamkulam and the Dutch, he deputed Ramayyan to negotiate a settlement with Chanda Sahib. Ramayyan succeeded in inducing the latter to withdraw the invading force by offer of “rich presents”. After the withdrawal of Chanda Sahib, Marthanda Varma repaired and restored certain forts damaged by the army of Chanda Sahib in the eastern frontier. He also constructed a new fort from Kadukkarai to Kanyakumari and stationed a garrison at the eastern frontier near Cape Comorin.\textsuperscript{21}

The revenue of a large block of land lying to the east of the river Palayar at Suchindram was set apart for the maintenance of this garrison. The Marathas were

\textsuperscript{20} Velu Pillai T.K., Travancore State Manual., Vol. II, Trivandrum, 1940, p.126

\textsuperscript{21} Caldwell R., op.cit., p.87
not disposed to launch a sudden attack on Tiruchirappalli. On the other hand, they halted near Thiruvannamalai quietly spending the months of October and November with the pretended motive of realizing the amount due from Safdar Ali, but really for plundering the town during Karthigai, a temple festival which attracted lakhs of devotees. At the right moment they fell upon the town and took a rich body. Equipped themselves with abundant provisions and reinforced by 10,000 horses of Murari Rao, the Maratha Chief of Gooty, they marched on Tiruchirappalli in February 1741.22

On the other hand, Chanda Sahib, in anticipation of the Maratha expedition sent his family away to Pondicherry for safety and posted parties at strategic places. Chanda Sahib pleaded to the French for aid, but it did not provide any response. On reaching a striking distance from Tiruchirapalli Raghuji Bhonsle delivered an ultimatum to the Navayet ruler directing him to send a handsome present, failing which to face retaliation. Chanda Sahib on this part offered to pay seven lakhs of rupees but warned the Marathas of his readiness to fight them unless they accepted the offer.23 Dissatisfied with the meagre offer and indignant at the warning, Raghuji Bhonsle took the gauntlet. An advanced group of the Marathas army, leaving the camp at Wallegandapuram, threatened Tiruchirapalli.

22 Pate H.R., Tinnevelly District gazetteer, Madras, 1970, p. 69
23 Caldwell R., op.cit., p. 88
The troops of Chanda Sahib led by his General Sesha Rao ambushed a column of the enemy and routed it. But on the 16th of March 1741, the Marathas scaled the walls of the ramparts, surprised the exhausted garrison and took possession of the Navayet strong hold.\textsuperscript{24} Chanda Sahib was for peace. He offered to pay twelve lakhs of rupees for his safe departure, but the victors demanded one crore. As nothing turned out of the proposals, the Marathas carried away the Navayet general together with his son Abid Ali as prisoner to Berar and then to Satara. Raghuji Bhonsle appointed Murari Rao, the ruler at Tiruchirapalli.

This marked the end of the Navayet regime after five years of its precarious existence. The Carnatic expedition of the Marathas relieved the kingdom of Thanjavur from the threat of extinction.\textsuperscript{25} After the evacuation of the Navayets from the country, Sayaji ascended the throne but soon he was replaced by Pratab Singh. The invaders, eager to obtain a reward for their service, advanced to Thanjavur and demanded the payment of one crore of rupees. In exacting money, the Marathas, in fact, made no distinction between enemies and their kinsmen. Pratab Singh, either because of his inability to support a refusal or because of his fear that they would lend their support to his rival, Sayaji, agreed to pay the amount or handed over his principal minister Govinda Rao as hostage.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{24} Pate H. R., op.cit., p.69
The Marathas evacuated Thanjavur, but on their return, they sacked Nagapatnam, the principal Dutch settlement on the coast. Seeing the fulfilment of their mission, they made their way back to Maharashtra. Hindu rule was founded in Tiruchirapalli as a result of the Maratha expedition. It was however not of the Nayaks but of the Marathas. The overthrow of the Navayets revived the fallen hopes of the Nayaks. Bangaru and his son Vijaya kumara requested the Maratha Chiefs to recognise their rights to the kingdom, but in vain. Understood by the Nayak endeavors, the Marathas proceeded ahead with the consolidation of their gains.  

Appaji Rao, a lieutenant of Murari Rao, established Maratha authority over Madurai. The new ruler revived worship in the temples and restored the removed images as well as confiscated lands to the temples. These measures did much to under what the Navayets unwisely did; and helped the Marathas to pacify the people. 

The Maratha intervention further relieved the Maravar, Kallar and Poligar chiefs from the pressure of the Navayets. The Thondaiman taking advantage of the turmoil at Tiruchirapalli, reoccupied his territory. The Poligars too reasserted their independence.  

Murari Rao was responsible for creating cordial relation with the Maravars. At their best, the Marathas maintained the status quo; as a result of which

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27 Robert Sewell, The Historical Manuscripts of Southern India, Madras, 1932, p. 297


29 Pate H.R., op.cit., p.70
their rule extended no further than the bounds of Tiruchirapalli and Madura provinces. Kallarnadu, Ramanathapuram and Tinnevelly continued under the rule of different chieftains.\textsuperscript{30} The departure of Chanda Sahib from the political scene of the Carnatic shot up the imagination of persons of less note, of whom the most intriguing was Murtaza Ali, the ruler of Vellore and brother-in-law of Safdar Ali. He aimed at the usurpation of the throne of Arcot. If the conquest of Tiruchirapalli created the split among the Navayets, paradoxically the loss of this territory widened it. Murtaza Ali found his chance in 1742, when Safdar Ali went to Vellore for attending a festival.\textsuperscript{31} This chief, without any hesitation, murdered his brother-in-law in a mid-night and proceeding to Arcot, occupied the throne for himself. However, the forces of the late Nawab refusing to stand as idle spectators of a diabolic treachery, mutinied, expelled the usurper from the capital and enthroned Syed Mohammad, the infant son of the late Nawab, with the name, Saadat-ullah Khan II.\textsuperscript{32}

The assassination of Safdar Ali left the Navayets leaderless; for the new Nawab was only an infant. This struggle for power which weakened the Navayets strangely coincided with a similar development among the Marathas. Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao and Raghujji Bhonsle entered into a keen contest for power which

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\textsuperscript{30} Caldwell. R., op.cit., p.88
\textsuperscript{31} A Letter from Arcot to Madras Council, Vol. I, p.83
\textsuperscript{32} Shungunny Menon P., History of Travancore from the Earliest time, Trivandrum, 1878, p.110
\end{flushright}
ultimately led to the victory of Baji Rao. This struggle drew the attention of the Maratha powers that it left Murari Rao unsupported.\textsuperscript{33} The Nizam, now decided to exploit the favourable circumstances at Arcot and Tiruchirapalli to his advantage. In 1743, Asaf Jah, the Nizam, at the command of a formidable army of 2,00,000 foot and 80,000 horses marched unopposed to Arcot, re-established the Mughal authority and confirmed Saadat-Ullah Khan II in the nawabship. Saadat-Ullah Khan II appointed his own nominee Khawaja Abdullah Khan as the guardian of the boy-Nawab.\textsuperscript{34}

This was indeed a wise measure, for he kept the Navayets calm by preserving the status quo, while he obtained the control of the administration by appointing his own nominee as the guardian of the boy Nawab. The Nizam, thereupon, marched to Vellore, drove off the Marathas, who had been besieging that fort and then marched to the far south.

In March 1743, the Nizam attacked the fort of Tiruchirapalli.\textsuperscript{35} Despite the overwhelming strength of the enemy, Murari Rao offered a heroic resistance. The siege continued for six months. Eventually, exhausted in his resources and disappointed in getting any succor, he agreed to a settlement. The Marathas

\textsuperscript{33} Pate H.R., op.cit., p.70

\textsuperscript{34} A Letter from Arcot to Madras Council, Vol. I, p. 92

\textsuperscript{35} Caldwell. R., op.cit., p. 90
evacuated the fort and the Nizam on his part paid two lakhs of rupees to Murari Rao, recognized his title as the ruler of Gooty and ceded the district of Penukonda. On the 29th of August 1743, the Nizam hoisted the flag of the imperial Mughals on the historic fort. This victory of Asaf Jah terminated the Maratha rule and re-established the Mughal regime in Madurai.\textsuperscript{36}

In 1743, Nawab Anwar-ud-din appointed his eldest son Maphuz Khan as the Governor at Tiruchirapalli. But in 1745 he sent Maphuz Khan to Arcot, appointed his favorite son Mohammad Ali in his place and himself stayed in this former Nayak capital. However, the Wallajahs had to face two powerful enemies, Chanda Sahib of the Navayets and Vijayakumara of the Nayaks. For long, Chanda Sahib had languished in the Maratha prison, in consequence of which Anwar-ud-din anticipated no threat to his interests from the Navayets.\textsuperscript{37} On the other hand, Vijaykumara had established himself in Ramanathapuram and made alliance with the local powers. It appeared that the settlement of the country under the Wallajahs primarily depended upon their ability in subjugating the power allied to the Nayaks.

In 1744, the Nawab sent an army under the command of Maphuz Khan on a campaign to the far south for the suppression of the Poligars and the Maravars, who were allied with the Nayaks. But on its way to Madurai, the war like Kallars of

\textsuperscript{36} Mily. Count. Corr., Vol. XVII, pp.113 -114

\textsuperscript{37} Shungunny Menon P., op.cit., p.110
Natham attacked the Wallajah army and inflicted a crushing defeat. Maphuz Khan, abandoning the project, returned to Tiruchirapalli. Mohammad Ali, thereupon, led a second expedition to the south.\textsuperscript{38} He made his way through Natham and established his rule at Madurai. Marching to the far south, he routed a confederacy of the Poligars of Tinnevelly and destroyed about seventy of their mud-forts. He levied contributions upon the Poligars, took several of them prisoners, and secured a partial control of the country. But on his way back to Tiruchirapalli, the Kallars ambushed his troops at Natham and looted his camp, Mohammad Ali making a narrow escape.\textsuperscript{39}

This serious reverse wiped off what the Wallajah forces had achieved, and the Poligars regained their independence. No immediate step was taken either to coerce the Poligars or to subdue the Maravars. Therefore, the Nayaks maintained their influence undiminished. The only importance of the expedition was that it marked the first of a long series of campaign undertaken by the Wallajahs for the supervision of the auxiliary powers of the far south.\textsuperscript{40}

However, the Nawab curbed the growing power of Thanjavur. While the Wallajah’s forces were engaged in the southern campaign, Raja Pratab Singh, in an
attempt to acquire more territories, renewed his conflict with the Maravars. Convinced of the necessity of keeping this kingdom within bounds, the Nawab sent Mohammad Ali on a relief expedition. The Wallajah prince assisted Muthukumara Raghunatha (1734-1747), the Sethupathi of Ramanathapuram, for repulsing the Maratha invasion. Yet, this service rendered to the Maravars did not confer any benefit on the Wallajahs.\textsuperscript{41} Neither did Maravar pledge allegiance to the Nawab nor did they abandon the cause of the Nayaks. At the most, it gave a pretext to the Wallajahs for making a claim as protectors of the Maravars in their attempt to counteract the growing influence of Thanjavur in that region. An indirect result was that the Thondaiman of Pudukottai, in his endeavour to strengthen himself against Thanjavur, entered into an alliance with the Nawab. Between 1744 and 1745 the Wallajahs defeated Pratab Singh in two battles, the first campaign waged by Maphuz Khan and the second by Anwar-ud-din, assisted by his two sons.\textsuperscript{42} Willing to gain possession of the imaginary riches of Thanjavur, the confederates made it the next target of their attack. They directed Pratab Singh to furnish financial and military aid to occupy the fort of Tiruchirapalli.

A requisition from the opposite camp for Mohammad Ali too requested aid together with uncertainty about the result of the struggle reduced the ruler to

\textsuperscript{41} Mohammed Ali, June 1762, Letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., Vol.10, p.167

\textsuperscript{42} Thondaiman of Pudukkottai, Letter to Madras Council received on 20\textsuperscript{th} November 1759, M.C.C., Vol. VII, pp.196-197
indecision. Pratab Singh evaded a direct reply, but Chanda Sahib, insisted upon the immediate payment of one crore of rupees and the cession of certain villages near Karaikkal to the French. As a settlement seemed unattainable, the prince assembled an army of 4,000 horses and 30,000 foot and enlisted the service of 500 English and Dutch troops. Yet, he found it impossible to expel the invaders. Chanda Sahib blockaded the fort of Thanjavur, set fire to the houses, plundered the country and damaged the water-courses.

Before his withdrawal from Thanjavur, Chanda Sahib sent an expedition to the far south. A Navayet army under the command of Alam Khan reached Madurai, expelled Abdul Rahim, the Wallajahs Governor, and occupied the city. This was a significant victory for Chanda Sahib, for he gained control of the rich provinces of Madurai and Tinnevelly. Subsequently, the Nawab and Major Lawrence on their way from Arcot to Tiruchirapalli halted at Thanjavur, persuaded the Raja to join the coalition and offered to cede the coveted provinces of Madurai and Tinnevelly in return for his co-operation. Besides these appeals and offers the dependence of his country’s agricultural prosperity upon the good neighborliness of Tiruchirapalli forced the Raja to enter into the contest on the side of the Nawab. During this time

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43 Thondaiman of Pudukkottai, Letter to Madras Council received on 20th November 1759, M.C.C., Vol. VII, p. 346


45 Rajah Pratab Singh, 30th May 1763, Letter to Madras Council, received on 9th March 1762, M.C.C., Vol. X, pp.196-197
Mohammad Ali frustrated the intrigues of the Patans. In order to counteract the threat of the formation of a hostile alliance and to win the support of Pratab Singh against Nanja Raja, Mohammad Ali ceded Madurai to Thanjavur. Now the aspirations of the two Hindu powers, who cherished an ambition to extend their respective territories right up to Kanyakumari, clashed against each other. Mohammad Ali allowed the turn of events to be decided by a triangular struggle— that of Nanja Raja, Pratab Singh and Miana.

The Patans, in the meantime, permitted their greed to grow. Determined to exploit the rivalry between Mysore and Thanjavur to their advantage, they opened correspondence with Pratab Singh too. They demanded three lakhs of silver Chackaram or about seven lakhs of rupees, as the condition of delivering Madurai to Thanjavur.

The Raja of Travancore occupied Kalakkad, a fertile district in Tinnevelly province. Therefore, the Nawab wanted to accomplish two objectives: re-establishment of the Wallajah rule at Madurai and the collection of tribute from the local powers. Mohammad Ali convinced the Madras Council that a large amount of the arrears of tribute for several years past was due from the Maravars and the Poligars. On the other hand, the Nawab had to pay back the heavy expenses incurred

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46 Rajah Pratab Singh, 30th May 1763, Letter to Madras Council, received on 9th March 1762, M.C.C., Vol. X, p. 198

by the Company during the war at Tiruchirapalli.\textsuperscript{48} “We may therefore take 1744 as the commencement of the rule of Nawab of Arcot in the districts heretofore held by the Nayaks, that is, in Tiruchirapalli, Madura and Tinnevelly, though it will be seen that till the appearance of the English upon the stage as the Nawab’s allies and helpers, his rule was little better than nominal.” During this period the political conditions in Travancore and Tinnevelly were unstable due to the rebellions and the incessant inroads by the Nayaks and Carnatic Nawabs.\textsuperscript{49}

This instability of the Government especially in Travancore gave free hand to the feudal barons to take advantage and assert their independence. But, Maharaja Marthanda Varma put a check by his determined action to subdue the rebels, by seeking the assistance of the East India Company. He also proved his ability even by meeting the Dutch in the battle-field at Colachel, which proved to be the death knell to the Dutch and also made them revert to their original position i.e., as traders, and allowed them to retain the territory.\textsuperscript{50}

Carnatic Nawab suppressed the natives and marched to conquer the whole of Tinnevelly and South Travancore. During this time Marthanda Varma, used to send his army to negotiate a rapprochement with them through payment of money or fight

\textsuperscript{48} Mily. Count. Corr., Vol. XVII, pp.115

\textsuperscript{49} Sreedhara Menon A., Kerala District Gazetteers, Trivandrum, 1962, p.127

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., p.138
with them. The important foreign policy of this ruler and his successors was that they maintained cordial relationship with the British in order to check the Carnatic Nawab and their invasion in Travancore and Tinnevelly.\textsuperscript{51}

Immediately after the battle of Kalakkad, Travancore became the most powerful kingdom in Malabar, Maharaja Marthanda Varma, with the assistance of his warrior-minister, Ramayyan and Captain D’Lannoy, made Travancore as modern Travancore. Not only were the petty principalities conquered and annexed, but even the European Companies were alarmed at its growing power.\textsuperscript{52}

Many new forts were built by the Maharaja in all strategic points in the country and repaired the old ones. A strong stone fort was thrown round Padmanabhapuram. The Udayagiri Hill was fortified and turned into arsenal. The Vattakottai was built in the Cape, and from it a strong wall was taken to Aramboly. A mud fort was built in Trivandrum. The forts of Quilon, Mavelikkara, Kottayam and Muvattupuzha were repaired and batteries, foundries and magazine depots were established in all important centres.\textsuperscript{53}

The army was developed and made very capable. The Dalawa was also the Commander-in-Chief and Ramayyan and Ayyappan Marthanda Pillai were very

\textsuperscript{51} Caldwell. R., op.cit., p.138
\textsuperscript{52} Sreedhara Menon A., op.cit., p.127
\textsuperscript{53} Caldwell. R., op.cit., p.139
able men. Captain D’Lannoy was made second in command, and he trained up the army on European lines and made them a formidable force.  

Apart from the traditional militia of the country, Marthanda Varma erected a standing army of 50,000 men well-disciplined and well-equipped, and divided into infantry, cavalry and artillery divisions. The soldiers were mainly drawn from the Nairs, Ezhavas of the country, but Christians, Nadars and Muslims from Tinnevelly were also recruited to it. Padmanabhapuram, Trivandrum and Quilon were regular cantonments, while garrisons were kept in other important places as well. Guns and ammunitions were bought from the English at Anjengo as well as from the French and the Dutch.

The Battle of Kalakkad

Kalakkad is a fertile village on the banks of Pachaiyar River which starts from the Pothigaimalai in Tirunelveli district. Kalakkad is located forty kilometer south west of Tirunelveli district, Kalakkad is encircled by the Western Ghats which has a height of 820 meters. The southern side of their village has the Vaishnava centre Thirukurunkudi. Nanguneri and Cheranmahadevi the two villages are

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54 Caldwell. R., op.cit., p.140
55 Pate H.R., op.cit., p.70
respectively located in the east and west. In medieval period Kalakkad ha strong fortifications.\textsuperscript{56}

Kalakkad, an ancient village in the district of Tinnevelly, is situated at a distance of 40 kms, south-west of Tinnevelly on the banks of Pachaiyar which rises from the Pothigaimalai. Kalakkad is bounded on the west by the Western Ghats which is at the height of 2,500 feet. Thirukurunkudi, a noted place for the Vaishnavites, is on the southern side of the village. The village is bounded on the east and north by Nanguneri and Cheranmahadevi respectively. Kalakkad seems to be a well-fortified village in ancient days.\textsuperscript{57}

Kalakkad was mentioned as ‘Kalantai’. Innumerable names such as ‘Vairavanagar’, ‘Camabenagar’, ‘Vallipuram’, ‘Punnaivanacethiram’, ‘Corakaraniyam’, ‘Purakarapurai’ and ‘Kalavukkadu’ are found in the Thalapuranam.\textsuperscript{58}

In an inscription, this place is mentioned as ‘Veeramarthanda Chaturvedimangalam.’ Another inscription mentions to this place as ‘Cholakulavallipuram’. This place was known as ‘Pandimarthanda Valanadu’ in the period of Cholan Thalaikonda Virapandiya. But again it was called as

\textsuperscript{56} Pate H.R., op.cit., p.72
\textsuperscript{57} Caldwell. R., op.cit., p.139
\textsuperscript{58} Somalay, \textit{Thirunelveli Maavattam (Tamil)}, Madras, 1971, p.304
The name of the village ‘Karavandapuram’ which was in ‘Kalakkudinadu’ was changed as ‘Kalakkudi’ and it was again mentioned as a village in Kalakkudinadu.

The old capital of Kalakkad was Nanguneri which lies at a distance of 14 kilometers from here. It was once the capital of the Pandya and Travancore kings and had importance as a military outpost from the earliest days. From a very long time this ancient village was under the control of the Travancore rulers. Travancore lies in the extreme south-west of India between latitudes, $8^\circ4'$ and $10^\circ22'$N and between longitudes $76^\circ12'$ and $77^\circ38'$E.\textsuperscript{60}

The Western Ghats separates Kalakkad from Travancore. There is a pass from Kalakkad to Muthu Kuzhivayal which is a prominent health-resort in Travancore. Another familiar route from Travancore to Kalakkad has been Aramboly pass which is situated at a distance of about 25 kilometers from Kalakkad.\textsuperscript{61} This pass was used by the Travancore rulers for stabilizing their power on the eastern side of the Western Ghats. The Travancore kings had their access to Kalakkad region through Shenkotta Pass too, as they were in possession of the land up to Shenkotta in the modern Tinnevelly region.\textsuperscript{62}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{59} Somalay, \textit{Thirunelveli Maavattam (Tamil)}, Madras, 1971, p.305
\item \textsuperscript{60} Velu Pillai T.K., op.cit., p.57
\item \textsuperscript{61} Nagam Ayya V., The Travancore State Manual, Vol. I, Trivandrum, 1906, p.16
\item \textsuperscript{62} Yesu Bakthan S., \textit{Travancore Charithra kathaikal (Tamil)}, Nagercoil, 1931, p.11
\end{itemize}
Administration

In the early days of this region there was a system known as *Kaval* or watch which was the basic duty of the Poligars. Those, who actually performed this work, were addressed the *Kavalkars* or the *Talayaris*. The *kaval* system that was widely spread in Travancore resembled the kaval system of the Anglo-Saxon England. From the very early period every village had its *kaval* system administered by the village councils or the central Government.63 Until the Mughal occupation of Tamilnadu the *poligare* and the *kaval* systems existed as two separate but parallel organizations. The early Poligars had nothing to do with the *kaval* establishment of the *Circa*r villages. However, in subsequent period, when the rulers failed in affording protection to the villages and when the local communities sought protection from the chieftains, the two systems got themselves integrated, adding to the prestige of the Poligars.64

The *kavalkars* belonged to four groups: the ‘*arasu kavalkars*’, the ‘*nudu kavalkars*’, the ‘*desai kavalkars*’, and the ‘*stalam kavalkars*’, ‘*arasu*’ means government, ‘*nudu*’ district, ‘desai’ or ‘desam’ direction or region and ‘*sthalam*’ place or village. A *kavalkara* protected the grain, cattle and other domestic property of the inhabitants and guarded the public places like the roads and markets. If any

63 Rajayyan K., History of Tamilnadu 1565 - 1965, Madurai, 1968, p.50
64 Caldwell. R., op.cit., p.92
theft occurred, the concerned kavalkara was held responsible for the recovery of the stolen property, failing which the kavalkara had to pay damages. The services of the kavalkars were rewarded by a fee called ‘desha-kaval’, which consisted of a portion of the crop, which they protected or a monetary payment in lieu thereof. The kaval system was in substance based upon the principle of ‘set a thief to catch a thief’. According to Rajayyan K., op.cit., p.50, this principle was applied to prevent the overgrowth of their influence and to safeguard the interests of the ruler as well as of the people.

Accordingly, the responsibility of apprehending a thief was usually entrusted with those inhabitants, who were considered as traditional and professional robbers. The assignment of this duty upon a habitual thief created in him a sense of responsibility. Thus, the system sought to rectify a social evil by the application of a self-corrective remedy.

The two systems, the poligar and the kaval, were highly appreciated. The Poligars rendered military service to the king and gave security to the country against external attacks whereas kavalkars, on the other hand, performed police-duties and upheld internal order. The Poligars were for the poligar territories, while the kavalkars were largely for the government lands doing appreciable duties. Both the establishments were supported by the people. According to Rajayyan K., op.cit., p.51, the aim of the king was to note them whether they were functioning properly without interfering with each other.

65 Rajayyan K., op.cit., p.50
66 Ibid., p.51
the people.\textsuperscript{67} Anyhow the turbulent state of affairs which attended the Mughal invasions and the consequent rebellions created circumstances favourable for the integration of the two systems. The Chaotic condition exposed the people to the dangers of universal conflagration. The central administration affected by foreign aggressions and internal troubles, could no more extend protection to the \textit{kavalkars} in the performance of their duties. Since they neglected their duties the confused condition threatened the villages. The village people sought and secured the protection of the chieftains and gave them the fee called ‘\textit{desakaval}’.

This development added to the resources and influence of the chieftains.\textsuperscript{68}

The Poligar appointed the \textit{kavalkars}. The \textit{kavalkars} kept watch at night, and noticed the movements of the strangers and reported the suspicious persons to the chief. If a theft occurred, the \textit{kavalkara} tracked the thief by tracing the foot-print. If it was established that the thief went out of the limits of the village, then it was the duty of his counterpart in the next village to take up the work in pursuit.\textsuperscript{69}

The last village to which the thief was clearly traced was made answerable for the stolen property, which would otherwise fall on the village, where the robbery was committed. The \textit{kavalkara} was required to restore the stolen property to the

\textsuperscript{67} Caldwell. R., op.cit., p.93

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., p. 94

\textsuperscript{69} Revenue Consultations, 28\textsuperscript{th} November, 1800, Vol. 16, pp.3198 – 3201
owner. If he failed to do it, the Poligar forced him to make good for the loss to the extent of his means and levied the remainder upon the entire village. This indicated that the protection of property was the individual responsibility of the kavalkara and the collective responsibility of the village community.\(^\text{70}\)

The Desa kaval of Kalakkad was looked after by Thirukurunkudi Marava Chief Family. The Maravas in that area came under them. Likewise many references are presented to show that the Maravas performed desakaval duties also, alongside with Sthalam Kaval. These references clearly show the number of villages under the leaders and the extent of their area of operation. It seems probable that when the province of Tirunelveli was convulsed by the struggle of contending interests during the second half of the eighteenth century, these leaders extended their sphere of activities.\(^\text{71}\) The non - Marava Palayagars might have also entered the scene as Desakaval Chiefs. This is evident from the many Kaval disputes, which the Marava leaders had with the Nayak Palayagars.

The Kaval system gave them an opportunity to be united under a leader and the leader became powerful. When the central administration failed, the institution of Kaval (both Sthalam and Desakaval) attained importance and those leaders

\(^{70}\) Ibrahim Kunju, P., Rise of Travancore - A study of the life and times of Marthanda Varma, Trivandrum, 1976, p.82

\(^{71}\) Caldwell. R., op.cit., p.93
virtually became rulers.\textsuperscript{72} The Marava Palayagars were powerful with a faithful Marava army to obey their orders. The country’s defence was in their hands. Moreover, they were enjoying certain rights and privileges under their own leaders and to safeguard their interests they could not afford to allow any outside interference.

This is how they fought to save the country from foreign yoke in the eighteenth century. From the time of the expulsion of the Marathas by the Nizam between 1744 and 1748, the Madura country was held by officers appointed by Anwar-ud-din who had been appointed Nawab of Arcot by the Nizam in 1744 and his son Mohammad Ali succeeded him in 1749.\textsuperscript{73} Thus, from 1744 onwards the rule of Nawab of Arcot begged in the districts of Tiruchirapalli, Madurai and Tinnevelly.

During this time Maphuz Khan brought with him from the Carnatic 2,500 horses and 4,000 foot. Five hundred of the horses and a 1,000 of the foot were left to defend the city of Madurai and its districts. But the Company’s Sepoys came with him to Tinnevelly.\textsuperscript{74} Before he arrived there, Moodemiah was ready with 2,000 Nairs, and two thousand infantry foot, which the king of Travancore had entrusted to his command. They were joined by the forces of the Puli Thevar of Nelkattanseval

\textsuperscript{72} Ibrahim Kunju, A. P., op.cit., p.83
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., p.84
\textsuperscript{74} Caldwell, R., op.cit., p.98
near Kalakkad where the troops stationed by Maphuz Khan in these parts assembled, gave battle, and were routed. Three hundred of the Nawab’s Sepoys were in the action to lighten their flight, but at last they threw away their muskets. They were collected by the Puli Thevar’s people and rewarded by them as a very valuable prize.

After this success, the enemy inverted the fugitives in the fort of Kalakkad, but before they could reduce it, the troops of Travancore, returned home, pretending they were recalled by the emergency in their own country. However, they retreated from the dread of confronting the army and more especially the cavalry of Maphuz Khan, which were approaching. Moodemiah went with them and Puli Thevar retried to gain his fort and woods, against which Maphuz Khan proceeded and encamped near the fort, which he could not take but in this situation repressed the incursion of the Puli Thevar’s Collieries into the districts of Tinnevelly and content with this advantage gave out with ostentation that he had settled the country. These were soon contradicted.

In the month of September, Moodemiah returned from Travancore, with a large body of troops, and again defeated the army of Kalakkad who in this battle suffered much for 200 of their horses and 500 Sepoys were made prisoners. It was

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75 Ibrahim Kunju, A. P., op.cit., p.84
76 Military Consultation, Madras, 22 April.1775, Vol. IV, p.71, 72
77 Ibid., p.233
the time of harvest, when the rents were collected, of which the Travancoreans took possession, and maintained their ground. Maphuz Khan, nevertheless, continued before the Puli Thevar’s place, whose troops in the months of November cut off a detachment of two companies of Sepoys which had been sent to escort provisions. They were of those belonging to the Company and the commanders of both were killed.\footnote{Caldwell. R., op.cit., p.99}

Maphuz Khan after loitering before the Puli Thevar’s place until the middle of November, returned to Tinnevelly in order to borrow money for the payment of his troops, which could only be obtained by giving assignments of the land to the lenders. Meanwhile, Puli Thevar with Moodemiah and Nabi Khan Attack, encouraged by their late successes extended their prowess. Puli Thevar was more from the subtle activity of his character than the extent of his territory and force, had acquired the ascendance in the councils of all the Western Poligars of Tinnevelly.\footnote{Sathyanantha Ayyar R., History of the Nayaks of the Madura, p. 233} Of these, the most powerful was the Poligar of Vadakarai.

The Vadakarai Palayam was identical with that of Chokkampatti, whose districts adjoin on the west to the Puli Thevar’s and exceeded them in extent and inhabitants. He, nevertheless, conformed to whatsoever Puli Thevar suggested and sent his men on every call. The Poligars to the eastward of Tinnevelly were under
the direction of Kattabomman Nayak. Puli Thevar proposed a union between the two divisions, but Kattabomman Nayak as well as his dependent of Ettayapuram having given hostages to Colonel Heron who were in prison at Tiruchirapalli, feared for their safety, and refused.  

The Poligars of Madurai, whose districts lay along the foot of the mountains to the west, were solicited with more success, and promised their assistance. Mianah, the fugitive colleague of Moodemiah and Nabi Khan Cuttack, at the same time spirited up the Poligars of Natham to join the league, of which the immediate object was nothing less than to get possession of the city of Madurai. Such an extensive confederacy could scarcely be kept a secret. Throughout the Seventeenth century, Venad had constant border disputes with the Nayak rulers of Madura. Nanjilnad and the Venad possessions east of the Ghats were the cockpit of fighting between Venad and Madura. The Nawabs of the Carnatic, who succeeded the Nayaks of Madura in power, fell heir to this dispute also. It was this relationship which made the Nawabs of the Carnatic claim over lordship over Travancore.

In 1736, Dost Ali - the Nawab of the Carnatic, sent an expedition to the south to conquer and annex the country. The Nayak principality of Madura was in the last throes of disintegration. Chanda Sahib, one of commanders in the southern

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80 Father Gaston’s letter dated 6th January, 1939, Vie L. Besse, Father Beschi, His times and his writings, p. 157
expedition, ingratiated himself into the good books of Rani Meenakshi, the last of the Nayak rulers of Madura, later on imprisoned her and became the de facto ruler of the Madura country. 81 Regarding the unscrupulous conduct of Chanda Sahib, the author of the Tuzak-i-Walojahi observed that “he went Trichinopoly in the guise of peace. Swearing on the word of Allah, he span the thread of relationship of a brother to her, made it into a noose of punishment and deceived her. He broke the plighted word, took possession of the fort.” 82 The unfortunately queen committed suicide. In the words of Father Gaston Coeurdou, “the fate of the kingdom of Trichinopoly is at present sealed; that is to say, hereafter it will be a Moorish country.” 83 In February, 1740, Chanda Sahib invaded the Tirunelveli district and occupied the Venad possessions beyond the Ghats. The Anjengo Factors reported in February. “The twenty-fourth the Nayaks forces took from the King of Travancore Thovala which they keep and have since marched into Cotata (Kottar) the King at present has got with most of his forces into Cockolone (Kalkuam) Fort.” 84 The Nayaks forces, to which the Factors referred, were really the invading armies of Chanda Sahib. They entered Nanjilnad by the way of Aralvaimozhi pass and took possession of Nagercoil, Suchindram and the rich industrial town of Kottar. Hearing of the invasion, the Travancore army defending Attingal against the Confederate forces

81 Sathyanatha Aiyar. R., History of the Nayaks of Madura, p. 233.
83 Father Gaston’s letter dated 6th Jan., 1939. Vide, L. Besse, Father Beschi, His times and His writings, p.159
of Quilon, Kayamkulam and the Dutch, hurried to the South “but meeting with some advices from the King” returned.\textsuperscript{85} With his hands full with the war against the Confederates, Martanda Varma could not meet this challenge in the South. Therefore he deputed Ramayyan to negotiate a settlement with Chanda Sahib and Ramayyan succeeded in inducing the withdrawal of the invading forces “by rich presents.”\textsuperscript{86}

It appears from a Mathilakam document dated 14th Vaikasi, 921 M. E. (13th May. 1746 A. D.) that Muthukrishnappa Nayak, son of Vankaru Thirumala Nayak, Pretender to the Nayakship of Madura visited Trivandrum. The purpose of the visit probably was to seek the assistance of the Venad King in regaining his ancestral throne. But what became of the negotiations is not known.

The English and the French East India Companies supporting their respective candidates, the struggle between Muhammad Ali and Chanda Sahib soon developed into a veiled struggle between the Companies for the mastery of the Carnatic. By 1751 Chanda Sahib, with French help, was generally recognised as the master of the Carnatic. He had appointed three officers to manage the southern districts. One of them. Muhammad Mainach, generally known as Moodemiah, captured Vallioor, Kalakkad and the adjoining districts belonging to Venad. Marthanda Varma who

\textsuperscript{86} Caldwell. R., op.cit., pp.86,87
still had his troubles in the Northern Principalities, was unable to forestall this sudden development.

Chanda Sahib had been murdered in the meantime and his lieutenants in Tirunelveli, in order to secure local attachments and enrich themselves, sold forts and districts ‘for presents of ready money.’ Martanda Varma deputed Ramayyan Dalawa to Tirunelveli (1752 A.D). Ramayyan negotiated with Moodemiah and secured the return of twelve districts extending from Kalakkad to Cape Comorin for a considerable sum of money. The districts were immediately garrisoned with 2,000 Travancore sepoys.

Muhammad Ali, who had become undisputed master of the Carnatic on the death of Chanda Sahib, decided to punish Chanda Sahib’s officers for alienating territory and to bring back Tirunelveli under his effective control. He despatched a considerable force under Mahfuz Khan and Col. Heron to the South. The consternation which this news of the Nawab’s troop movements created in the mind of the Raja of Travancore, was so serious that he besought the Anjengo Factors to despatch a token contingent to take possession of his eastern possessions, “which otherwise he was apprehensive would fall into the enemy’s hands”.

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87 Mathilakam Records, C. 2220 0.97 (Reverse). The year 921 M.E. (1744 A.D) record is evidently a mistake for 931 M.E. (1755 A.D.)
On receipt of this news, Martanda Varma protested in March, 1755, to the Madras Council, through the English Factors at Anjengo, that “he is apprehensive they have designs, of entering his country”. He asserted that such a move would be” a violation of the friendship and good understanding that has so long subsisted between the Hon’ble Company and him.” Thereupon the Madras Council cautioned Col. Heron, commander of the English forces with Mahfuz Khan, to be particularly careful that no damage was done to Travancore territory. Though the Nawab contended that “the said Rajah is one of the Poligars of this country”, the Madras Council observed: “We do not look upon him in the light of a Poligar of the Nabobs but as a prince quite independent: it matters not whether by right or increase of power”. They also pointed out that “he is now grown so powerful that is most prudent to keep fair with him as well prevent the hurt he might do to the Company’s affairs on the other Coast as in consideration of the weight he would add to the Nabob’s enemies in the Trichinopoly country were he to be provoked to enter into alliance with them.”

Moodemiah abandoned Tirunelveli on the arrival of the Nawab’s forces and took refuge with Puli Thevar, the Poligar of Nelkattanseval. The Travancore troops

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92 Hill, S.C., Yusuf Khan, the Rebel Commandant. p. 53.
also withdrew from Kalakkad and other eastern possessions, which were immediately taken possession of by the soldiers of Mahfuz Khan. But as soon as the English contingent, accompany Mahfuz Khan, returned to Trichinopoly, Moodemiah came of hiding. He also persuaded the King of Travancore to assist him in expelling the troops of Mahfuz Khan. Assisted by two thousand Nayars, supplied by the King of Travancore, and the Kilians of Puli thevar, Moodemiah routed the forces of Mahfuz Khan (July, 1755). 94

Immediately afterwards the fort of Kalakkad was besieged but before the fort could be reduced, the Travancore troops returned home “pretending they were recalled by the emergency of some disturbances in their own country.” 95 Moodemiah thereupon retreated to Travancore and Puli thevar to his mountain retreat. Mahfuz Khan invaded the Thovala country in the wake of the fugitives. The King of Travancore seems to have come to terms with the invader. A Mathilakam Record dated 3rd Kanni, 921 M, E. (4th September 1745 A. D.) records that an elephant (called ‘Ananthapadmanaban’) was sent as a present to Mahfuz Khan, “who had attacked the Thovala fort.” 96 Martanda Varma must have found it dangerous to engage two enemies at once, the Nawab’s forces in the South and the confederacy of expelled Princes in the North. Hence his decision to come to terms

95 Ibid. (1757), No. 103.
96 Ibid. (1757), No. 103 b
with the more powerful enemy, the Nawab, for the time-being. For, we find the King of Travancore assisting Moodemiah “with a larger body of troops” later in the same month. The Travancore forces not only recaptured the fort of Kalakkad but also took 500 sepoys and 200 horse of Mahfuz Khan Prisoners. Commenting on the situation in Tirunelveli, following the defeat of the Nawab’s forces, Gen. Caillaud wrote to the Madras Council on 2nd October, 1755, that “it is an unlucky juncture, being now the time of harvest and collecting the rents all over the country.”\(^97\)

The Nawab of the Carnatic was greatly enraged at the conduct of the King of Travancore. He wrote to the President of the Madras Council that the King of Travancore, one of his poligars, had encroached upon the territory of the ‘Sircar’ by occupying Kalakkad and the adjoining territories and that he should be made to relinquish these districts which he had unlawfully occupied.\(^98\) The King of Travancore represented (August, 1757) that he had committed no aggression against the ‘Sircar’, and he had occupied only those districts in Tirunelveli, which were in the possession of his House from time immemorial and from which he had been unlawfully ousted by the officers of the Nawab. He added that he was willing to settle the dispute in an amicable manner, in proof of which he mentioned the instructions which he had issued to his forces, viz., to “let everything remain on the present footing till these matters are adjusted”\(^99\)

\(^98\) Ibid., F. 5  
\(^99\) Mily, Count. Corr., (1756), No. 371
In the meantime, the enemy poligars of Tirunelveli had joined Moodemiah in an alliance, the immediate object of which “was nothing less than to get possession of the city of Madura”. The Nawab of the Carnatic and the Madras Council were naturally perturbed over these developments. The Madras Council thereupon decided to supersede Mahfuz Khan by one their commanders. At first the Nawab was also amenable to the supersession; but soon he changed his mind on hearing that Mahfuz Khan had won a great victory over the rebel forces, which included a large contingent of Travancoreans, near Tirunelveli (March, 1756). Moodemiah was killed in the battle.100

But the Madras Council at last prevailed upon the Nawab to recognise Yusuf Khan as the commander of the Southern forces. Yusuf Khan was instructed to make terms with the King of Travancore, on his arrival at Tirunelveli. When he reached Tirunelveli, he found that Mahfuz Khan, in spite of his victory, was unable even to pay his troops, owing to the widespread depredations of the poligars and the Travancoreans.101 Mahfuz Khan in his turn, now turned a rebel, over his supersession, but was decisively defeated at Gangaikondan (December, 1756).

Mahfuz Khan presently started negotiations with the King of Travancore “for assistance, with the proper of Callikad and all the other districts to which the King

100 Anj. Fact. Records, MS Diaries, Vol. V.C, F. No. 372
101 Hill, S.C., Yusuf Khan, the Rebel Commandant. p. 53.
had ever made any pretension and more.”

In November, 1756, ‘Tetarapa Moodillee’, the new Renter of the Southern districts, reported to the Madras Council that “the people of Nanzenat, alias the King of Travancore’s men, they having ventured to take possession of the districts according to Maphuz khans Phirmaund, advanced and possessed themselves of all the villages beginning from Viziapetty excepting Callicad and, acted there as they thought fit.”

In March, 1757, the Renter reported that “the people belonging to the King of Travancore not keeping themselves to the bounds of Panakudy, which they had unjustly possessed, advanced further as far as Walleywore (Vallioor) and moreover are committing disturbances in the country.”

In June, 1757, the ‘Moodillee’ further reported that the King of Travancore had taken possession of the whole of the Kalakkad country and “seized all the paddy which was made over to Savacars and sending it to his country and that a body of 2,000 men with two guns belonging to him are now arrived at Calacad.”

The King of Travancore now proposed to the Madras Council that he was willing “to settle all his differences in an equitable manner according to the old regulation of limits” and “pay the tribute as formerly Thereupon the President of the Madras Council requested the ‘Moodillee’ “to make a proper enquiry and

103 Ibid., p. 237
acquaint me what district he ought to enjoy and what he ought to pay”106. The ‘Moodillee’ reported that the King of Travancore was in possession of Kalakkad, Thirukurunkudi, Panakudy, Vijayappetti and Vijayanarayanam districts in the Tirunelveli country, yielding a revenue of three lakhs of rupees.107 The ‘Moodillee’ further observed that the Travancore King occupied these districts only when the Nawab’s troops were engaged elsewhere and that “the said King never enjoyed the said districts even in the time of the Jentue Kings of Trichinopoly”.

On further representation by the King of Travancore, the Madras Council decided to adjust the matter in an amicable manner. For the purpose, the King was requested to send “a proper person well acquainted with all the particulars and fully empowered to settle the business.”108 The overriding consideration with the Council for the peaceful settlement of the dispute was the fear that if it was not amicably settled, it would involve the English factory at Anjengo in trouble and put an entire stop to the Company’s trade on the coast.109 Accordingly the King of Travancore sent in August, 1757, one ‘Ganua Sastrigaley’ to Madras with “full authority and power to adjust this affair”. In the letter of authorisation, the King of Travancore laid claim to the districts of Kalakkad, Nanganiachier, Vijayapetti, Dharapuram, Panakudi, Valliyur, Tirukkanamkudi and Vijayanarayanam, which he had possessed from ancient times. He also expressed his preparedness to pay the

108 Mathilakam Records, C. 954, Olas. 227, 254 and 824
109 Ibid., C. 2600, 0.1
customary tribute to the ‘Aramanai’.  

110 But it appears that the Sastrikal, on his way to Madras, was imprisoned by Kattabomma Nayak “on account of a demand he had on the King”, 111 somehow the Sastrikal made his escape in December, 1757, and returned to Travancore. No other embassy seems to have been sent. In the meantime, the King fell seriously ill and the matter was not pursued further. 112

The credit of the expansion of Venad beyond Tirunelveli is purely the work of Marthanda Varma. Since then the small principality, Venad had grown to such an extensive position that the Venad Kingdom came to be known as Travancore.

110 Mathilakam Records, C. 934, 0.1816
111 Ibid., C. 1139, 0.848
112 Ibid, C. 915, 0.85 and C. 1005, Olas. 1043-45