Chapter VIII

RESISTANCE MOVEMENT AND ITS VIOLENT END
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Through military operations and political settlements the English East India Company reduced the Tamil Country to unity. With the annexation of Kongu Nadu, Thanjavur and the Carnatic the imperial order replaced the dual system of control. In 1799 the company, despite the dual authority shared with the Nawab, waged military operation against the poligars. But it was of limited scope, for its rights came into conflict with those of the sovereign and it was confined to parts of Ramnad and Tirunelveli. However, in consequence of the settlement of the Carnatic Tready of 1801 the British gained complet jurisdiction over the poligars and found themselves free to deal with these powers as they wanted.

The Company’s administration looked upon the poligari system as essentially feudal and opposed to the central authority and its existence as detrimental to its interests. Still, such a view was not shared by all the administrators. For instance, B. Hurdis, Collector of Salem, in his report to the Board of Revenue dated 4th May 1797 observed: “..the character of the poligars, I do not conceive to be fairly understood. The Europeans have received their impression from the amuls of the Nawab of the Carnatic and have enquired no further. As they have been plundered by the administration, they have deemed it essential to plunder others; this does not show their character but their act. The poligars are called refractory and detachments moved against them to overcome their resistance by terror and when
it is satisfied in its full extent, the instrument by which it was enforced was withdrawn. However, no attempt was made to win their confidence; we understand from the official papers that demands were made for tribute, we hear the demands were refused and we hear that fire and sword exacted, what was refused.¹ In comparison with the British system many of the inhabitants found the poligari system more beneficial.² In 1799 the inhabitants of Rajapalayam in Tirunelveli represented to the Madras Council that when the poligars exercised their jurisdiction over them, they treated them with respect and extended assistance and protection. They helped in the settlement of disputes between the inhabitants and public servants and obtained for the ryots the circar's permission for the cultivation of public lands. If the administration in its demand exceeded the terms of the revenue settlement, the poligars intervened on behalf of the inhabitants and forced the circar to do justice.³

In fact many of the inhabitants considered the poligars as guardians of public welfare. This was because these chieftains enforced police authority,

¹. Board of Revenue, proceedings, 7 June 1797, vol.178, pp.2924.

². After the acquisition of territories, the Company greatly increased the taxes in Dindigul by 25 percent Gudalur 96 percent, Kambum 11 percent to 93⁴⁄₄ percent over Tipu's assessments. Nowonder the people considered these revisions as oppressive. (general Report to the Board of Revenue, 1 October 1797, Vol.2, p.13).

undertook protection of private property against robbery, paid compensation for losses through theft, administered justice, founded villages, conducted religious festivals, maintained temples, promoted cultivation and contributed to charities. These factors created and promoted a bond of local affinity between the poligars and the inhabitants. Inspite of this and in disregard their status in traditional society, the British forces engaged them in a long series of campaigns for more than half a century, executed many of them and annexed their estates. In 1799 the British administration asserted that the power of the poligars was annihilated to such an extent that they were deprived of the power of resistance. This was because their forts were dismantled, their armed establishments were disbanded and their resources were taken over. Yet the Company found it not possible to curb resistance against its authority.

In subsequent periods headmen of the villages, the broken ranks of the rebel powers and the emissaries of the French Directory joined together in organising opposition to British imperialism. At different places the opposing forces organised regional leagues to apearhead astruggle agaisnt the British. Marudu

4.K.Rajayyan, Administration and Society in the Carnatic, pp.93-94.


6.K.Rajayyan in his work South Indian Rebellian the first War of Independence (chapter 4) has discussed the details, which appear relevant for reference.
Pandyan, a minister in the service of Sivaganga, sent his emissaries on missions to Ramnad, Kallar Nadu and Tirunelveli, won the support of discontented headmen and chiefs. This led to the formation of a Ramnad League. Meanwhile the alliance system of the poligars, that was formed by the rebels of Tirunelveli, maintained its association with different rebel groups to work out the escape of the chiefs who were imprisoned at Palayamkottai. While Gopala Nayak of Virupakshi in Palani organised a rebel group in Dindigul, Kerala Varma in Malabar, Krishnappa Nayak in Karnataka and Dhondia Waug in Shimoga created their own alliance systems. The records of the Company indicate that the headmen of the villages in Kongu Nadu and the emissaries of the French Directory went on missions to the centres of disaffection and kept the rebel groups in contact with each other. Much because of their effort, representatives of the rebel leagues held a conspiracy, presided over by Gopala Nayak, Poligar of Virupakshi, in his fort by the end of April 1800. In this conspiracy the rebel powers decided to launch a general offensive against the British with the storming of Coimbatore. The possession of Coimbatore appeared as a strategic necessity so as to provide a vital link to the rebels operating in the Tamil country and those in the Karnataka region. June 3, 1800 was decided upon for capturing Coimbatore, for the Mohammadan sepoys

stationed by the Company to guard this fort, were expected to be busy with Muharram Feast. The rebels decided to destroy the exhausted regiment late in that night, when it would go on a procession around the town and occupy the fort.\(^8\) Accordingly, armed columns on June 3, 1800 took up their positions in the vicinity of Coimbatore. However, the Tahsildar of the area received information about the rebel design and passed it on to Lieutenant Colonel Macalister, stationed in the fort. Thereupon, parties went in search of the hiding rebels. Among the suspects who were brought to trial, forty two insurgents were executed publicity at different centers of disaffection. This marked a serious blow to rebel strategy.\(^9\) Despite the failure of the projected assault on Coimbatore, the rebel parties worked out the escape of the rebels, who were imprisoned at Palayamkottai and waged a determined struggle against the British forces.

**Escape of Poligar Prisoners**

The relatives of Kattabomman, seventeen in number, condemned for perpetual imprisonment, were confined in a small enclosure in the Fort of Palayamkottai. Rebels of consequence, they were kept in iron, rigidly guarded. Three of them died in ordeal, while the rest languished in prison. However on the 2nd of February 1801 by a clever strategem they made their escape. Among the escaped prisoners

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8.K.Rajayyan in his work *South Indian Rebellion* pp.129-130.

9.Ibid., pp.134-142.
were Sevatish and Kumaraswami Nayak, also Called Oomathurai, the brothers of Kattabomman. After the failure of an attempt made by Marudu Pandyan to work out the release of the prisoners, Oomathurai entered into a correspondence with the rebels of Panjalamkurachi. Potti Pakada, a servant employed for the collection of firewood for the prisoners, carried his letters written on palmyra leaves to the rebels, who met him in the nearby jungles. Through the exchange of letters the strategy was worked out. Accordingly, in January 1801 a party of rebels numbering about 200 disguised as pilgrims going to Tiruchendur Temple started from Panjalamkurichi. Playing 'Kavadi' blowing the conch shell, distributing holy ashes, receiving offerings and chanting spells, all reached Palayamkottai. On hearing the chanting of spells, the prisoners to their relief understood that the relieving party had arrived. As sellers of plantain leaves, fruits and firewood, the party now approached the gate of the fort. Oomathurai in the mean time won the sympathy of the wife of the superintendent of the fort and secured permission to perform the ceremonies for the dead. He offered to purchase the fruits, leaves and firewood for the same. The prices were settled and all the people were permitted to carry the loads into the fort. They excised no suspicion but they kept arms concealed inside the loads.

10. Kavadi is a wooden frame carrying the image or the weapon of Lord Subramania and taken on the devotee’s shoulders to the shrine of the deity.
At the right moment the prisoners privately sent away their women, who were allowed to stay at liberty within the fort. Large parties of insurgents, armed with country weapons lay in wait. They brought a few horses to provide quick means of escape to their imprisoned leaders. At the appointed hour soon after sun set on the 2nd of February 1801, the prisoners sprung forward. They disarmed the sentinels, overpowered the guard and got safely off. The quickness of the assault and the war cry raised by them took the troops by complete surprise. Jointed by more columns of armed men on their way, the fugitives moved rapidly to the Vallanad Hills, near Panjalamkurchi. The rebels annihilated the authority of the English, reoccupied Panjalamkurichi and proclaimed Sevathiah as the poligar.

With the escape of rebels, pillaging parties surprised and subdued British military posts and released the prisoners. Before the end of February they occupied all the territories extending from Panajlamkurichi to Srivaikuntam and Alwar Tirunagiri. They converted the palayams of Kulattoor, Kadalkudi, Nagalapuram, Kolarpatti and Yezhayirampannai into their strongholds and reconstructed the demolished forts. In March the insurgents marched to Tutukudi, upon which the garrison surrendered. They permitted Edward Ormsley, the English commander of the fort, to take away his properties and to go away in safety. They imprisoned Baggot, the Master Attendent but as the prisoner’s wife

followed the rebels and appealed to their chief for his safety, they released him from custody and restored to him his properties. After the fall of Tutukudi, the rebels made irruption into Ramnad and made preparations in Vallanad hills to capture Tirunelveli.  

Colin Mecaulay, the Company's commanding officer at Palayamkottai, issued a proclamation warning the people of exemplary punishment if they were found in arms of rendering aid to the rebels. He sent express directions to the poligars of amicable disposition like those of Sivagiri and Ettayapuam to remain on their guard and to convey information about the rebel movements. In February 1801 Macaulay launched operations against the rebels. Mobilishing the whole disposable force of the province, he marched to Sankaranainarkoil, then to Kayattar and reached Kadayanallur, six miles short of Panjalamkurichi. As the troops pitched their camp and prepared for a hearty meal after a tedious march, they found their camp suddenly attacked on all sides. Advancing under cover of a deep ravine, the armed men made a simultaneous attack from different directions. The British troops killed forty of the rebels and then formed into a square with guns at angles and baggage in the centre remaining in their position the whole night, subjected to repeated alarms. The next day, the forces encamped near

12. Ibid., 17 February 1801, Vol.279, pp.880 and 1616.

Panjalamkurichi. To their astonishment they found the demolished fort “raised as it were by magic in six days” and every part of it was well manned by thousands of armed men. 14 The rebels foiled an attempt to capture the Pagoda of Ottapidaram and boldly appeared on the rear and flank of the forces. Macaulay for fear that his column would be cut off by rebels both from Panjalamkurichi and Vallanad hills, retreated under the guise of preparing for an attack. As soon as the rebels understood their mistake, they overtook the troops with shouts and screams. In the clash that ensued the rebels lost 110 men. Still followed by them, after a severe march that lasted all the night the forces reached Palayamkottai on 10th February, Meanwhile Captain Hazard reinforced by a detail from Madurai attacked Kadalkudi, but was defeated. On 19th March the rebels directed all their effort for the reduction of the Company’s post at Srivaikuntam, overwhlemed a body of troops led by Major Sheppard and took the post. 15

While the Company’s forces were suffering reverses in different quarters, fresh troops poured into Tirunelveli under the direction of General Brathwaite, the Commander-in-chief of the forces of Fort St.George. Macaulay assembled these forces at Kayattar. Assuming the command of the forces, he reached

Pusuvanthanai situated near Panjalamkurichi on the 30th of March. At this place the troops of Ettayapuram joined the English forces. Soon afterwards, the forces found themselves surrounded by a formidable phalanx of insurgents. Macaulay charged them and killed ninety six of these “brave but unskilful pedestrians”.16 The rest of them effected their escape through a nearby wood. On the 31st March Macaulay concentrated his forces on the north west angle of the Fort, throwing out the cavalry to the south and the troops of Ettayapuram to the east. When the preparations were completed, the heavy guns commenced a sharp fire. At 3 p.m. the breach seemed perfectly practicable. The European details, supported by native infantry, moved forward to the breach “under the heaviest fire imaginable”. But the gallant assault of the assailants did not dissuade the insurgents from their determination to resist. With intrepid firmness they engaged the assailants in a fierce encounter. They either picked or shot dead all the soldiers, who pressed their way to the breach. Repeated attempts were made to surmount the breach, but all ended in fiasco. The troops of Ettayapuram who attacked the east wall of the rebel stronghold sheered the fate of their allies.17 Thus, the British troops, as


Governor Clive himself admitted: "after sustaining an unequal conflicts, against a superior force, with unshakable bravery and discipline, were repulsed with heavy loss.\(^{18}\)

**Reaction in Dindigul and Coimbatore:**

In Dindigul and Coimbatore the poligars took the lead in organising the rebellion. Allied with the rebels of Malabar, Mysore, Sivaganga and Tirunelveli the resistance movements in this region formed link between the rebels of the north and of the south. The rebel chieftains assembled not only their peons but also all the inhabitants to take arms against the English.\(^{19}\)

When the forces that were encamped in Dindigul were withdrawn for the suppression of a rebellion in Malabar, the armed men of Virupakshi under the leadership of Gopala Nayak rose in rebellion. The escapee of the rebels who were imprisoned at Palayamkottai and the subsequent rising in Tirunelveli in February 1801, gave encouragement to the rebels of Dindigul and Coimbatore.\(^{20}\) The poligars of Dhili, Mangalam, Periapally, Chenchode, Julipatty, Tondamattoor and


\(^{19}\) Madras Council, Military Consultations, 23 May 1801, Vol.283, p.3500.

Somandory soon joined the insurrection. All threw of their allegiance to the English and made incursions into the territories of the company.\textsuperscript{21}

The administration took speedy measures to isolate the rebels from those of northern and southern powers and to suppress them. The success of British arms in Malabar and Wynad enabled the Company to expedite the military operations. Lieutenant Colonel Innes, assuming the command of a detachment from Malabar, attacked the rebels’ posts from the north. On 21st March, 1801, he defeated Gopala Nayak and occupied Virupakshi. After posting a body of troops for the defence of Virupakshi, the British troops, took Dhili without much opposition. Theses reverses forced the rebels to flee to the jungles. Descending from the hills, they made incursions into the territories of the Company.\textsuperscript{22} But Innes marching through a close jungle west of Anamalaikottai attacked the rebel strongholds. The insurgents pulled down huge stones on the advancing troops and inflicted losses. Yet on 13th April, Innes won a signal success over the united forces of Virupakshi and Delhi.\textsuperscript{23} The rebels, determined as they were made a second attempt to establish themselves and raised barriers on the hills. On the 20th April Innes moved against them through a thick forced for about eight miles and

\textsuperscript{21} Madras Council, Military Consultations, 22 May 1801, Vol.283, pp.3500-3504.

\textsuperscript{22} Madras Council, Secret Despatches to England, 1 April 1801, Vol.2, pp.78-80.

\textsuperscript{23} Madras Council, Revenue Consultations, 23 April 1801, Vol.109, pp.851-855.
arrived at Attoor. He captured the barriers that were held by the rebels and dispersed them. Thereupon the fugitives led by Muthu Vella Nayak, son of Gopala Nayak, evacuated the terrain and joined the rebel camps in Sivaganga and Ramnad. While the Poligar of Dhili escaped to the western hills, where he died, Gopala Nayak of Virupakshi fell into the custody of advancing troops. The rebellion in Dindigul was suppressed and fifteen rebels of note including the poligars of Virupakshi and Jellipatti were hanged to death.

**Capture of Panjalamkurichi**

After the failure of a determined attempt on Panjalamkurichi, the attacking forces instituted a blockade. There followed skirmishes day after day. While the blockade was on, the Madras Council rushed reinforcements from fort St.George, St. Thomas Mount, Arcot, Malabar and Tiruchirapalli to the south. He entrusted the command of the grand army with Lieutenant Colonel Agnew, the Adjutant General and an officer well qualified by his gallantly, integrity and experience, for the task.

On 23rd May Agnew commanded the army from Kovilpatti to Panjalamkurichi. The 53 day blockade ended and a regular siege began. The


troops opened fire at the bastion of the south west angle of the citadel. On 24th a breach being effected, an attack was ordered. Columns moved forward, supported by the field pieces, while the big batteries by a heavy fire covered the advance. Notwithstanding the formidable array, the rebels did not shrink back, but received the enemy with renewed vigour. Armed with musquetry and pikes, the rebels kept up a heavy fire on parties, while others sallying forth from the broken bastions engaged the approaching troops. An the storming arduous contest ensued, in which both the parties suffered heavy loss. Their heroic resistance continued till all of them who gathered on the breach fell dead or wounded. The British troops emerged triumphant. Shortly after the decisive hour, the rest of the rebels numbering about 3000 assembled on the eastern sector of the fort. They rushed rapidly in an eastern and northern direction; soon forming into two columns and retreated, 'beset but not dismayed'. The English cavalry supported by the troops of Ettayapuram attacked the rebel columns in flank and rear and killed about 600. Four hundred and fifty of the dead insurgents were found inside the fort. Those who were killed in former occasions were found deposed outside the east face. The rebels, whom Agnew took prisoners, were executed on the 24th May, near the fallen fort.\(^{27}\)

As a result of this victory, British forces took the fort of Panajalamkurichi for

\(^{27}\) Madras Council, Military Consultations, 2 June 1801, Vol.284, pp.4220-4229.
the first time by storm. Therupon the rebels evacuated their centres at Vallanad, Tutukudi and Kadalkudi. The mass of the insurgents fled to the north, while the rest of them scattered themselves in various parts of Tirunelveli. Dalaway Pillai, a chief associate of the rebels of Panajalamkurichi, fled to Nanguneri where he organised a rebellion but Lusington suppressed it in October 1801.28

Spread of the Rebellion to Sivaganga

The rebels of Tirunelveli were allied with the disaffected inhabitants of the region northward. As the fugitives escaped to Sivaganga, the rebel forces joined them in strength. In May 1801 the Marudu brothers, Vella Marudu and his more influential brother Chinna Marudu, who served as ministers of the estate uniting themselves with the disaffected chieftains, assembled a formidable force. They equipped their armed men with all available weapons and trusted themselves on the jungle recesses.29 The pagodas of Kalayarkoil located in the heart of the Sivaganga forest become the rallying point of the insurgents, obviously because they attached a religious significance to their struggle. From the sheltered posts in the jungles, the rebel forces laid waste the neighbouring districts in defiance of British authority.30

28. K. Rajayyan, South Indian Rebellion, pp. 80-89.


From Sivaganga the rebellion spread to the adjoining territories. In May 1801 the rebels seized the fort of Tirupatore and occupied Natham and Melur held by the Company’s forces.\textsuperscript{31} They proclaimed Muthu Karuppa Tevar as the Rajah of Ramnad. Led by the Rajah, the armed inhabitants occupied the Company’s post at Kamudi. At this place the fugitives from Tirunelveli, led by Oomathurai, joined the rebels of Ramnad. Reinforced by these rebels, armed men took Palamanerri and captured Company’s garrison at Tiruchuzhi on 16th July. Melappan, leading the rebels souhtward, freed the southern parts of Ramnad from British control while Puttur, another rebel chief, occupied thenorthern territories of Ramnad.\textsuperscript{32} The success of the rebels in Ramnad greatly contributed to the strength of the struggle. The country being famine striken, the people joined the rising in large bodies. Besides, it secured for the rebels the command of the sea coast.

They employed boats in the Bay of Tondy and obtained supplies of grain, arms and ammunition.\textsuperscript{33} Oomathurai, after his recovery, led the rebels to Palaynad, where he established himself. In July the Kallar tribes of Annoor rose in revolt,

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 1 June 1801, p.2820.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 21 June 1801, Vol.285, p.4603.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 20 October 1801, Vol.288, p.6934.
taking possession of the western part of Madurai. A large body of the rebels marched to the Fort of Madurai, but finding it well defended, retreated to Kadaracoil.34

In the mean time rebel forces under the command of Shevata Tambi, the son of Chinna Marudu, marched to Thanjavur where the inhabitants rallied to the standard of revolt. The rebels occupied the subah of Pattukottai. Establishing their posts at Arandangy and Audiarukudi, they advanced as far as Mangudy. They remained in force in the Kaveri delta till the British operations in other quarters put them on the defensive.35

The renewed struggle on such a widespread and violent proportion took the Company’s administration by surprise. The outbreaks were connected with the Political designs of the rebels in different areas of South India.36 Though it was feudal in content, the common people of different areas swelled the rebel ranks. The unity of purpose rendered their resistance determined. The guerrilla tactics employed by the rebels were calculated to harass the attacking forces.

34. Ibid., 7 July 1801, Vol.281, pp.5051-5053.


36. K.Rajayyan in his work South Indian Rebellion, The first War of Independence, 1800-1801 has established that this rebellion in the Tamil Country was not an isolated developments. On the other han it was the outcome of a concerted move, made by the rebel powers of different regions of the peninsula.
However, the Company found it possible to combat the hostile combination. This was because it controlled the communication system, received the support of local rulers and possessed well equipped forces.\(^{37}\)

In a bid to overcome the odds, the English gained the support of the princes, particularly the Tondaiman of Pudukkottai and the Rajah of Thanjavur and rushed in reinforcements, brought from Bengal and Malaya. They resumed operations on a large scale in May 1801. Agnew in consequence of his success in capturing a number of rebel strongholds, checked the rising tempo of rebellion in Ramnad and relieved Madurai Fort from threat of assault. A force under the command of Major James Graham marched from Tiruppuvanam to Madurai. The rebels in considerable strength attacked Graham, but another detachment under Major Sheppard reached to his rescue.\(^{38}\) On the 11th of June the detachment of Agnew marching through Manamadurai and Parthibanur, reoccupied Paramagudi. The armed bodies hovered round the English troops throughout their march. They cut a party to pieces at Tiruppachetty and pressed vigorously on British lines; but withdrew after a clash in which seventy of them died. On the 10th near Manamadurai columns of rebels lined behind high banks, water-courses and jungles on the opposite bank of river Palamaneri. They made a dash across the


river and charged the British troops with pikes. In the clashes that followed both sides suffered considerable losses. Still the forces continued their advance and reached Ramnad on the 14th of June.  

Leaving Ramnad, Agnew reached Madurai on the 9th of July. On the 24th he stormed the rebel stronghold of Tirupatore and waited for the arrival of a detachment, led by Colonel Innes from Malabar. After suppressing the rebels of Dindigul, Innes advanced towards Madurai. Reinforced, he attacked Piranmalai on the 18th of June, but was defeated. Retreating to Natham, he marched to Manapacherry on the 4th of July. But the Columns led by the Mardu brothers pressed vigorously on his troops, again forcing his retreat to Natham. Subsequently taking the route through Piranmalai, Innes on the 25th arrived at Satturusamharakkottai. The next day, while he was marching to Tirupatore through a thick wood, the rebels again attacked him using rockets, but was rescued by Agnew. The combined forces of Agnew and Innes now reduced Okkur and attacked Siruwayal, the headquarters of the rebels of Sivaganga. After a futile resistance, the insurgents retired to the jungles.


40. Ibid., 4 August 1801, Vol. 286, p.5367.

forces of Kalayarkoil. Driven to desperation, the rebels fought for every inch of land. Though the English succeeded in beating off the crowds every hour, they found themselves completely and constantly surrounded by hordes. As no alternative presented itself, Agnew retreated to Siruwayal and abandoned his project of advancing to Kalayarkoil from that direction.42

However the Company's troops gained more victories in Ramnad and Thanjavur. Captain Blackburne, with the assistance of the Rajah of Thanjaur, reoccupied the southern bank of the Kaveri. A detachment commanded by Lieutenant Maclean routed the rebels led by Puttur at Worior. In September Blackburne drove the insurgents from Arandangy and desolated the villages of Terboinad. He proceeded within twenty miles of Sirwayal, then advancing eastward, detached the forces to join Maclean in Ramnad. The rebels about 3000 strong, led by Oomaithurai, marched to attack Maclean's troops, but finding the task risky, retreated. Blackburne reached Karaikudi in October and captured the rebels strongholds in the jungles of Singampinary.43 Mean while Macaulay directed his operations against the armed men the southern region of Ramnad. Lieutenant Miller, whom he detached to Kamudi, won a victory over the rebels on

13th August. On 27th August Macaulay, supported by the troops of Ettayapuram routed the rebels led by Melappan at Abiramam. The forces under Martins and Miller dispersed a body of insurgents, who assembled near the fort of Ramnad. In September Macaulay marched to the west to assist Agnew for suppressing of the rebels of Sivaganga.

The Madras council had long been contemplating upon the tactics to divide the united force of the rebels into opposite camps. Failing to turn the Marudu brothers against each other, it found Padamattur Woya Tevar, a member of the royal house, as its candidate to the rajahship of Sivaganga. Agnew proclaimed him as the Rajah of Sivaganga at Cholapuram with the display of every mark of respect and splendour. This had the decisive effect on the rebels. The inhabitants of Nalukottai, Okkur, Erekur, Pattimangalm and Paghenery soon paid homage to the new ruler. Thus the Company's administration divided the insurgents into two camps of opposing interests - that of Vengum Peria Wodia Tevar and Padmattu Woya Tevar. This development weakened the resistance movement.


47. Ibid., 20 October 1801, Vol. 288, p. 6845 and 6908
Battle of Kalayarkoil

Supported by the rival ruler of Sivaganga, Agnew began a second offensive against Kalayarkoil. A detachment occupied Piranmalai on 18th of September; while another reduced Nandikkottai to submission. By the end of September Agnew, marching through Vanimkudi and Collumbum took Muthur situated on the western side of Kalayarkoil. In the midnight of 30th September he sent a detachment under Lieutenant Colonel Spray, another under Sheppard and a third under Innes against Kalayarkoil. In the mean time, Blackburne pressed the rebels from the south. The dawn of 1st October witnessed the simultaneous approach of the British forces from different directions against the pagoda of Kalayarkoil. The insurgents, though taken by surprise, fought with determination; but were routed. Spray took possession of the pagoda of Kalayarkoil a handsome building surrounded by a stone wall, 18 feet in height. This marked the end of the revolt in Sivaganga. Soon after this decisive event, a body of rebels led by Sevathiah, Oomaithurai and Muthuvail Nayak, son of the Poligar of Virupakshi, marched in a northern direction through Tirupatore. The Marudu brothers with their selected followers took shelter in the jungles of Singampunari.49

49. Ibid., 20 October 1801, Vol. 288, pp.6844-6895
Rebel Reverses in Dindigul

However, in October 1801 with the arrival of rebels from the south rebellion broke out again. Soon after the fall of Kalayarkoil, a body of their armed men numbering about 600 led by Oomaithurai, Sevathiah and Muhtu Vella Nayak fled to Dindigul. A force was despatched to intercept their march, but did not succeed.\(^{50}\) The fugitives carried with them neither ammunition nor provisions, After a long march, they made good their way to the hills of Virupakshi.\(^{51}\)

Soon after the arrival of the fugitives, the people of the neighbouring country flocked together and rose in arms. The inhabitants of Chetrampatty and the adjoining territory joined the rebels in large number. Alarming reports reached the English camps that the strength of the insurgents was becoming more and more formidable. The inhabitants reconstructed barries especially the Great Stone Carmon Dhilli Barrier and embarked upon depredations into the Company's territories.\(^{52}\) They attacked the troops stationed at Chetrampatty and forced them to retreat to Iagoody. A force under the command of Jones marched against the rebels but it was also forced to retreat.\(^{53}\)

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50. Ibid., 20 October 1801, Vol.2888, pp.6891-6895
51. Ibid., 1 December 1801, Vol.289, p.7212.
52. Ibid., 27 October 1801, Vol. 288, pp.6896-6905
53. Ibid., 1 December 1801, Vol. 288, p.1708
On 12th October Innes recommenced military operations on a large scale. The rebels under the leadership of Oomaithurai engaged the English army on the plain of Virupakshi but were defeated and dispersed. They made another stand at Chetrampatty but again suffered reverse. The Company’s detachment followed up their victories by a close pursuit of the rebels. Innes, marching through a thick wood, occupied Cowdhilli, a rock commanding the view of Cormen Dhili Barriers and moved ahead. A body of the insurgents led by Oomaithurai after descending from the hills again moved to the valley of Dindigul. Major Burrows, whom Innes sent against them, drove the rebels up to Vettilagundu for about fifty one miles. As the country seemed unfavourable for charging the insurgents, Burrows sent parties in pursuit. After a fierce encounter, Oomaithurai with sixty five of his followers, fell under the custody of the English. Doraiswamy, who was at large, was taken a prisoner from a place near Madurai. Sevethiah and Oomaithurai were brought to Panjalamkurichi, where they were beheaded. The fall of Oomaithurai marked the end of the Rebellion which began with the revolt of his brother Kattabomman.

56. Ibid., 1 December 1801, Vol.289, p.7615
57. Ibid., 1 December 1801, Vol. 289, p.7726.
Muthu Vella Nayak also graced gallows.\textsuperscript{58} The handsome youth of Doraiswamy evoked the compassion of Agnew and Governor Clive; hence his life was spared. However seventy three principal rebels including Doraiswamy were banished to the Prince of Wales Island, Penang.

\textit{Reconstruction of British Authority}

With the suppression of the insurrection the Madras Council concentrated his attention on measures aimed at the consolidation of British authority on a stable foundation. By his proclamation of 1st December 1801, the Governor clive expressed his deep regret that the Desperate resistance offered to British troops was attended with so much loss of life and material he announced a general amnesty to the people and their chieftains in order to relieve them from any further solicitude and apprehension.\textsuperscript{59} Lord Clive assured the people that the British Government would honour the rights of property and life, religious usages and customs of the people. He announced his intention of reorganising the administration of the country on a permanent basis; but respecting the traditions of the people. The Governor declared his decision that a permanent assessment of revenue would be instituted on principles of zamindari tenure by which hereditary rights would be granted to the poligars on their estates. He explained that the

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 1 December 1801, Vol. 289, p.7740

permanent assessment would secure to the chieftains the possession of land under the operation of limited and definite laws, which would restrain the servants of the Company from unnecessary interference. By this proclamation, Lord Clive sought to conciliate the chieftains and the people. In 1799 he confiscated the estates of the rebel chieftains, but by his proclamation of 1801 he assured them that they would be granted hereditary rights on their lands. The British offer that the Company would respect the rights and customs of the people and that it would free them from unnecessary interference by the English servants, was indeed an inducement to the rebels to return to the cultivation of the arts of peace.

The same time Lord Clive rewarded the allies for their service and restored the possessions to the chiefs. He conveyed his feelings of pride and satisfaction to the friendly cheiftains in their strady attachment with the Company and guaranteed to them of augmented security, favour and wealth. True to his promise, he ceded a strip of territory called Kelanelly from Tanjore to the Tondaiman of Pudukkottai. The Governor also conciliated the rebel chieftains. In 1802 he restored the estate of Ramagiri to Vengiri Nayak, who appeared as the rightful claimant. In 1803 he restored the zamindary of Sapatore to Warra Kannaiah Nayak, the son of the rebel


poligar Kannaiah Nayak. Besides, he ordered the restoration of the zamindary of Ramnad to Mungul Eshwar Nauchayar, the sister of the deceased Rajah. However, Lord Clive did not restore the palayams which were sequestered in 1799 to the families of the rebel cheiftains. On the other hand he declared them as havelly or public lands and in a spirit of vengeance ordered the name of Panjalamkurichi to be expunged from all public records. The name ‘Panjalamkurichi’ being associated with the humiliating reverses of the English, the Governor ablated the very name of that rebel stronghold.\(^63\)

Further, Lord Clive sought to improve the government of the southern provinces by eradicating the system of rapine and oppression that crept into the administration. He understood that one of the sources of the misery of the people was a system of exaction, practised by the European adventurers who claimed protection from the Company. The Governor withdrew by a proclamation the protection which they claimed. He placed under restraint those who were engaged in coercion of the inhabitants. These measures removed a form of oppression which endangered the foundations of public security.\(^64\)

In addition, Lord Clive disarmed the chieftains and their armed inhabitants. By a proclamation he directed the people to surrender their fire-arms.

\(^63\) Ibid., 9 May 1803, Vol. 7, pp.528-530 and 538-540.

This resolution for disarming the inhabitants was tempered with every practicable degree of attention to the hereditary customs of the chieftains. Thus the Governor allowed the chieftains to retain a certain number of peons carrying pikes in order to enable them to maintain those ceremonies of state, to which they had been accustomed. Besides, he ordered the payment of compensation for the loss of firearms surrendered by the inhabitants. On a comparison with the situation in 1799 these measures appeared conciliatory; for in 1799 Lord Clive refused compensation for the loss of the personal property of the people. He also ordered the destruction of the forts of the poligars and instituted periodical inspection of the palayams to prevent the reconstruction of demolished forts.65

The company carried out these measures successfully taking advantage of the favourable circumstances. In 1799 similar measures did not meet with success on account of the divided system of control of the country by the Nawab and the Company and the inadequacy of military strength to coerce the powerful poligars. But in 1801 these obstacles no more existed and hence it could effectively disarm the country and reconstruct the administration.