CONCLUSION
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In the evolution of a feudal system in the Tamil Country the organisation of the Nayankara system represented a significant event. By 1465 A.D. the forces of Vijayanagar Empire overran the southern region defeated the Sambuvarayas of Tondaimandalam and the Sultans Afghans of Madurai and annexed the Tamil provinces. In view of the local opposition the Emperors needed the support of chiefs, who appeared ready to serve. Then in times of war as well as in peace. Also they wanted to win over the allegiance of local chieftains and descendants of ancient ruling families for the consolidation of their authority. These considerations led them to reorganise the administration on a feudal basis and the result was the rise of the Nayankara system. However, with the decline of Vijayanagar Empire, the Nayankara system transformed itself into independent Nayak monarchies of Jinji, Thanjavur and Madurai.

As the Nayaks declined and disappeared from the political scene, the order of the Poligars emerged prominent in the feudal set up. In the three tier polity of vijayanagar the rayas, the nayaks and the poligars presented the constituents, each in its turn supporting and sustaining the other. The rayas who were emperors declined and as they declined the nayaks emerged as independent monarchies. When these monarchies went out of the slave, the poligars came to the forefront. They were in fact lesser nayaks but were called Palayakkarans or poligars, as they were holders of palayams or armed camps. If the Nayaks held possession of large
territories, the poligars held possession of different tracts of land, needed to support an armed establishment. Like the nayaks they served the rayas and subsequently the nayaks. The had to encounter a new situation as the nayaks went out power and external powers established their sway.

Under the Nayaks the country was dotted with feudal estates of the poligars. Most of them were concerned in Tirunelveli, Madurai, Rammad, Thanjavur, Tiruchirapalli, Dindugal and Coimbatore. The resources of the territories decided the political status of the respective poligars. After the decline of the vijayanagar and nayak powers, the aggressive Muslim powers gained control of the political system of the land. The poligar system too experienced the consequent vicissitudes in its fortune.

The poligars represented the feudal order in the Tamil Country. In fact the poligar combined in himself the authority of a ruler as well as the status of a subject in the local community. Accordingly, his functions included maintenance of armed men continually equipped for military service, protection of their own communities, suppression of criminals, punishment of offenders against person and property and payment of compensation in the event of their failure to restore property lost through theft. In return for the due fulfillment of these duties, the poligar was treated as the proprietor of the rent from his estate.

The poligars under the rule of the Wallajahs encountered a complicated situation created by conflicting interests. They were required to deal with the
administration of the Nawab, of the English East India Company as an ally of the Nawab and of the rival powers. Assisted by the English, the Nawab sent expeditions against the chieftains and made a limited advance towards the consolidation of his authority. But this trend could not be sustained because of opposition of the rival powers, particularly Maphuz khan and Khan Sahib. The consequent wars created terror and turmoil, yet the feudal powers found it possible to take advantage of the disorders to expand their influence. For a time Nawab instead of pursuing his policy of coercion, resorted to a policy of conciliation with a view to gaining their alliance and granted them more of rights. The rival and rebel powers sought their aid and they too gave them concessions. More of the circar villages accepted their protection and paid taxes. However, this situation did not last long for the auxiliary powers followed no uniform or common policy in relation with the new developments. Mohammad Ali on the otherhand was supported by his British ally. This let to the suppression of several poligars and the annexation of the palayams of Turiayur, Ariyalur, Wodayarpalayam, Sivaganga and Ramanathapuram. These gains were significant but the Nawab found himself more and more indebted to the English.

The Military operations of the Nawab against the feudal powers were marked by up and downs. The Madras council felt that the Nawab would collect the arrears of rent that the poligars owed to him and that he would clear his dept to the English East India Company and offer rewards. With this end to view it
extended support to military operations. But it was disappointed, for nothing much could be collected and what was collected was inadequate to meet the expenses of the expeditions. In this situation the Company found it necessary to mobilise resources for the conduct of major wars against Mysore. These required to intervention of the Company not only in the internal administration of the country but also in Nawab’s relations with the feudal powers.

The ‘assignment’ and the ‘assumption’ policies were two landmarks in the history of the British ascendancy in the Tamil Country. They were of considerable advantage to the Company when it was engaged in Major conflicts with other South Indian Powers, especially Mysore and the Martha’s. The apparently common defense system of the region, as was envisaged in the treaties, served as an instrument to force the Nawab of Arcot and the Rajah of Thanjavur to furnish their resources for the support of large-scale military operations of the English, as and when they were required. Added to these the treaties of 1787 and 1792 formulated and established a dual system of administration in the Tamil Country. The English exercised military authority and controlled foreign relations. The Nawab of the carnatic and the Rajah of Thanjavur, on the other hand, administered revenue and justice in their respective territories. The dual system infused illfeeling in the relations of the poligars with the English, as there followed a direct confrontation. The enforcement of a series of drastic reforms of the British in quick succession excited internal tension. The
Southern poligars were a race of rude warriors, habituated to arms and independence. But they found that their chieftains were either executed or condemned to a perpetual and ignominious imprisonment. This harsh treatment of a high spirited people reacted violently upon their sentiments. The Company in suppressing the poligars subverted a time honoured system of government, but without providing an effective parallel. The people were disarmed, their arms were confiscated and forts were razed to the ground. While no protection was given, the inhabitants were deprived of the means of repelling the predatory incursions of their hereditary enemies, residing in other territories and of resisting the unjust demands of the parties claiming the authority of the Nawab. They found their life subjected to constant supervision by British troops and interfered with by the Company's tax-collectors.

The wars against the feudal powers and suppression of their resistance coincided with a steady and gradual drift of the Tamil provinces to the imperial authority of the British. The wars of the poligars the influence of the sovereign as well as the auxiliary powers. As these wars were waged with the support of the Company they weakened the Nawab's influence, for they increased his public dept and ultimately contributed to foreign intervention. The poligars offered a second line of defence in the lard and when it was dismantled by the Company in the name of the sovereign, the Nawab the latter found himself isolated from his tributaries. At the same time he had no allies either among the Indian powers or
among the European powers to should him against the imperial designs of the British. Such a situation led to eclipse of local powers and replaced the system of dual control by a single authority, that of the British.

The Treaty of 1801 added a territorial extent of 17,250 square miles to the Madras Presidency. Henceforth the English were at liberty to establish a uniform system of administration for the Tamil Country. The significant benefit of the Treaty was the end of double government. Ever since the establishment of British influence in the carnatic the people laboured under a system of authority exercised by the feudal powers rulers of the land and the Company’s administration. However, the suppression of the poligars and settlement of the treaties of annexation prepared the ground for imperialist consolidation under a uniform system.

Through military operations and political settlements the English East India Company the Tamil Country to unity with the annexation of Kongu Nadu, Thanjavur and the carnatic the dual system of control came to an end. In consequence of the settlement of the Carnatic Treaty of 1801 the British gained themselves free to deal with these powers as they wanted.

The unification of the Tamil Country under British rule required the enforcement of a uniform system of administration for all regions. Accordingly the Madras Council entrusted the administration of the districts with the collectors. The system was already in operation in Dindigul and Ramnad. After the
end of the Mysore War in 1799 the Company formed three divisions. Dindigul, Baramahal and Coimbatore out of the north western acquisition from Mysore and placed each of these districts under a separate collector. With the Board of Revenue exercising control over the collectors and the collectors over the local officials, the administrative reorganisation obliterated the traditional authorities and gave a common pattern to the land of the Tamils.

The ryotwari system eliminated middle men and established direct contact between the administration and the people. The frequent towers that were undertaken enabled the English officials to learn more about the customs and habits of the people. This led to a better understanding between the rulers and the ruled. The system diffused the right of property more extensively than any other settlement. The flaws experienced in the mode of operation were more due to the persons than to the system. When the settlement was revised subsequently in 1855, in the light of the experiences it proved to be a much improved one and helped to promote the interests of the ryots. Accordingly, the ryotwari system extended to North Arcot south Arcot, Tiruchirapalli, Coimbatore, Madurai and Tirunelveli. But also in the estates which had reverted to the government overing to the failure of the Zamindars. However, in zamindari areas feudal vestiges continued to operate on a restricted dimension. Together with the reorganisation of revenue administration, the English East India Company took measures to create the needed institutions to enforce law and order. This required organisation
of law courts, police force and prison administration. It cannot be denied that the inhabitants by tradition recognised the need for justice and courts. Yet in practice they were operated in a crude form. The general tendency was to overrate the pretensions of influential people and to uphold the unequal claims of superior castes. As a result the weak and the poor sections of the society fell victims to inequality before law. In these circumstances the Company found it essential to rely upon its western traditions and practices wherever necessary for the enforcement of law and order. Through the reorganisation of traditional institutions the British consolidated and extended their authority.

In fact the reforms represented a compromise with the traditional system, for the headman of villages and kotwals of towns regained a status in the administration of law and order. Yet crimes were not controlled as expected. The police administration continued to be inefficient, corrupt and oppressive much due to the combination of revenue and police authority in the same agency. The village headmen and the tahsildars concentrated their efforts on the collection of taxes and neglected police duties. However, the police forces served the needs of imperial authority to maintain law and order and to preserve justice. Through the revenue and judicial regulations the British by 1816 destroyed the feudal authority and brought the country under a unified system. This transition was of considerable significance to the political, social and economic life of the people of the Tamil Country.