PREFACE

The Tamil Country: Transition from Feudalism to Imperialism 1751 to 1816 is the outcome of the research work carried out by me under the supervision, effective and scholarly guidance of Dr. B. Maria John, Reader in History, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli.

The year 1751 represented a turning point in the history of the relation between the central authority represented by the Nawab of Arcot and the Feudal interests represented by the Poligars and Zamindars. Threatened by common foes, the Nawab and the English East India Company forged a close alliance. After their combined victory over the French and the Nevayets, they directed their attention against the auxiliary powers. The Nawab supported by the British, occupied Vellore, Tanjore, Sivaganga and Ramnad, but gained no significant victory over the Poligars. The Madras Government of the English East India Company thereupon proceeded against these powers on their own under what were called ‘assignment’ and ‘assumption’ of revenue authority over the Carnatic. In 1792 the Company through a settlement with the Nawab, brought the poligars under its direct authority and launched against them a series of expeditions.

The auxiliary powers reacted to the emerging situation that threatened their survival. They formed alliances among themselves and sought the support of the
french as well as Mysore. As a result there broke out military operations on a large scale. Between 1792 and 1806 they were suppressed and brought under the authority of the British. 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.

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