CHAPTER I

Introduction

National leaders like Motilal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Sardar Vallabhai Patel and so on have contributed substantially for the attainment of independence for India from the British. The application of the new concept of Non-Violence introduced by Mahatma Gandhi in the independence struggle received the attraction of many in India and abroad. The mighty power of the British had to face the tactics of Non-Violence policy advocated by Mahatma Gandhi. The partition of India planned by the British brought about untold misery to the inhabitants of India and Pakistan. However, the urge for getting freed from the colonial power persisted in India and was taken seriously by those residing in the Portuguese and French colonies. But the freedom enjoyed by those of independent India enthused the subjects of the French to establish their colonies in India. Active attempt for liberating these pockets from the French after the Indian Independence was started. A number of individuals came forward to organize themselves in different associations targeted towards the liberation of French pockets. However, on account of the diplomacy followed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru the French pockets in India especially Pondicherry continued to be a window for the French culture.

Therefore the present work highlights the activities of the role played by Indian National Leaders and those in the colonies. Special emphasis may be laid on astute labour and diplomacy of Pandit
Jawaharlal Nehru while looking at the role played by the people of French colonies. Attempts were made to collect information from the founders of French India Students Congress like Shatrugh Paramael, Paul Radjandassou and Antoine Vallabh Mariadassou. Late Ansari Douraisamy, late Dorai Munusamy, late R. L. Purushothama Reddiar and late S.R. Subramanian fought for the freedom movement. Similarly the communist party of Pondicherry too participated actively in the freedom movement. Late V.Subbiah and his colleagues fought for freedom under the communist banner. They published their “New Age”. Late Edouard Goubert established National Democratic Party and later renamed it as French India Socialist Party with his co-worker late Lambert Saravane.

The union territory of Pondicherry comprises four regions: Pondicherry, Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam. Pondicherry and Karaikal are situated on the east coast of Tamil Nadu covering an area of 293 sq. kms. and 160 sq. kms. respectively. Mahe is situated on the west coast, four miles south of Tellicherry, having an area of 9 sq. kms. Yanam lies on the eastern coast in the east Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh, and has an area of 30 sq. kms. The total area of the union territory is 492 sq.kms.

Pondicherry is bounded by the Bay of Bengal on the east and by previous South Arcot District, which is now called Villupuram and Cuddalore Districts respectively on the other sides. Pondicherry has a beautiful coastline and the harbour existed at the beginning of the Christian era was known as Podouke according to the famous traveller Periplus of the Erthryaean sea. Karaikal is bounded on the east by the Bay of Bengal, Mahe on the western coast at the confluence of the river Mahe with the Arabian Sea, and Yanam by the side of the river Godavari on the eastern coast.
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Gingee River, which is known as the Sankarabharani or the Varahanadi, is rising in the Gingee Taluk of the previous South Arcot District, which is now called Villupuram District. It receives the Kallae and Pombaiyar in the Villupuram Taluk of Villupuram District on the right before reaching the Pondicherry area. It covers a length of 34 kms. Before its confluence with the Bay of Bengal, at a distance of 7 kms., it branches into two. The northern branch of these outlets is called the Ariyankuppam River and the southern branch the Kilinjiyar or the Chunnambar.

Karaikal is situated on the northern bank of the river Arasalar, which falls immediately into the Bay of Bengal. Seven branches of the river Cauvery, namely Arasalar, Mudikondanar, Nandalar, Nattar, Noolar, Thirumalarajanar and Vanjiyar flow through Karaikal.

To the north of the Mahe town the river Mahe flows.

Yanam is situated on the east coast, between rivers Coringa and Godavari. The trade with India gave such a glamour to other nations, had only faintly evoked any emulation for the French. Unlike the Venetians, the Dutch and the Portuguese, there was no compelling financial need to make the French undertake any venture, that too, inspite of the fact they consumed more of the products of the east than others. A few merchants of Rouen however, sent a vessel in 1503 to the far off regions. Gouneille who commanded it, left from Houre and was attacked near the Cape of Good Hope by a tempest, which landed
him on the unknown land to which he gave the name of “South India”. However, a document, which remains of his voyage, makes this hypothesis impossible, for the details on the manners given in his report appear to be applicable more to the barbarous hordes of the Sunda Isles than to the intelligent people of the Deccan. No expedition was undertaken after this for a century, inspite of the Decrees of King Francois I in 1537 and Henry III in 1578 exhorting the people to undertake long distances.

In 1601 a society formed in France sent two ships to India. According to Pyrafld who wrote on his first voyage, this company under took to see how the land lies and find out the road to India in order to go to the good source. He had only one object namely, to see new things and acquire property. A tempest who took him to Madagascar from where he went to visit Comores. His ship wrecked at Pouladon, one of the Maldive Islands, went through Malabar, Bengal and Ceylon, was made prisoner for a long time in Goa and after 10 years of misfortune and misery, he returned to his home town in Label on 16.2.1611. A third company was formed at Honfleur to take advantage of the experience of one Flamand gerard le roy who had travelled many times to India on Dutch vessels. By Letter Patent dated 1-6-1604, the king of France granted him and his associates, a free carriage, two pieces of artillery, an exclusive privilege of fifteen years, as well as other immunities. But funds were lacking and nothing happened. Seven years later Flamand formed another company which, however, was inactive. In 1608, Surat became the seat of the office of

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1 The French Settlements in India. Texts of Important Notes Exchanged between the Governments of India and France (From 22nd March to 9th April 1954), p. 33
2 Ibid
the Director-General of the French Trading company. In 1642, the French established their first settlement in Madagascar under the direction of a company called the "Society of the east "or" the company of Madagascar" with the navy captain Rigault at its head and under the high patronage of Cardinal de Richelieu, chief and general secretary of commerce and Navy. By letters patent dated 24th June,1642, the privilege for 20 years was granted to the company in order to find colonies and commerce and take possession in the name of this most Christian Majesty. The new born conception of colonial exploitation had spread to other nations, also the Portuguese and the Dutch had their settlement in Madagascar, as well as the French. On 1654, the funds of the company (Madagascar) failed.

Even from the outset, the Royal company had chosen its agents and conducted its enterprises badly, Wasting of funds was the order of the day. Millions given by the king and the money received from France to achieve the great political ideal, went only to feed the lowest tastes. But the following year, the company sent a fleet of the ships escorted by four coastal under the orders of Marquis of Mondemerigue who was conferred the title of Admiral and Lieutenant-general of the kings. The French established their first loge at Surat in 1666 and it became the headquarters of the future settlements in India. They arrived on 10th March, 1667 and found Madagascar in ruins. They realized that prospects were bleak in Madagascar and so proceeded to Surat where they established in 1668 their first warehouse on the Indian continent. The situation in Madagascar inspired Colbert with the idea of founding a new company to extend the trade to India. Accordingly, he constituted the East India Company on the model of
those of Holland and England. It was combined with the West Indies Company which traded with America. The management was entrusted to a band of nine famous merchants with the secretary to the king’s council as the head. In the mind of Colbert also, Madagascar was an unsuitable place for obtaining merchandise. He concluded that the French should establish their trading center in India. For this purpose, he selected two persons, though not French, who had a lot of experience in the trade with India. They were Caron and Marcara Aranchi viz. The former was born in Holland of French parents and was employed in the Dutch company for a long time. The latter was a Persian with capability equal to his experience. In 1670, the French obtained from the king of Cannanore the warehouses of Tellicherry and Rajapoor on the Malabar coast. Three years later, Sher Khan Lodi, on behalf of the king of Bijapur made a offer to the French, of a place for an establishment on the soil of his Government. Francois Martin, within a span of 33 years converted it into a flourishing town of Pondicherry. This place had earlier been frequented by foreigners who carried on trade with adjoining market towns; but they never thought of colonizing the place.

The French fleet under the command of Admiral De la Haye, anchored off Trincomallee and with the permission of the King of Kandy prepared to construct a fort. But the Dutch Governor of Ceylon, Reycolf Von Goens, opposed the move first by correspondence and later, by force a part of the French fleet engaged in construction work had to capitulate. However De la Haye proceeded to Santhome, nearly 5 kilometers south of Madras and laid anchor.

3 *The French Settlements in India, op. cit, p.36*
Santhome which was previously under the occupation of the Portuguese had been recovered from them by the king of Golconda. Two men were sent by De la Haye to obtain water and fuel. They were badly treated. The Admiral than captured Santhome on 25th July, 1672. It was the first territory captured by the French in India. 12,000 moors who were helped by the Dutch with arms besieged Santhome, were retreated some time later. On hearing this news of the French victory, Sher Khan Lodi volunteered to find a place to the French in his kingdom. It was on 4th February that the first Frenchman, Bellanger de l' espinay put his foot in Pondicherry. In 1673 a factory was set up in Pondicherry and Bellanger de l' espinay was appointed as its first Director. A Sovereign Council was set up at Pondicherry by a royal edict of February. Incidentally, Santhome capitulated on 6th September 1674 and De la Haye returned to France. The Moors took back Santhome in October the same year from the Dutch who preferred it to be in the hands of the Moors rather than return it to the French in the event of peace between France and Holland being established. Francois Martin left Santhome and came to Pondicherry with sixty men in the same year. For the first time, Francois Martin seized the fort at Valdavoor on 25th September, 1676 at the instance of Sher Khan Lodi who acted on behalf of the king of Bijapur. This success was, however, short lived and posed a danger to the very existence of Pondicherry. Nazir Mohammed, the enemy of Sher Khan Lodi, became an ally of the king of Golconda, the enemy of the French at Santhome, who, in turn called for assistance from the Marathas led by Shivaji. Madame Labernadie in her book, "Le vieux Pondicherry", says that, "in order to understand the fight that seized the inhabitants of Pondicherry on hearing the news, it is necessary to know that the Marathas were a little
mercenaries, the Swiss of India, placing their cavalry at the service of the highest offerer and waging war not for preserving the town and nation which they subdue, but uniquely to loot them." The consternation at the announcement of their approach was such, that the men went to the woods with whatever precious things they possessed, and a few soldiers deserted to withdraw from Valdavoor which was least fortified. Sher Khan Lodi was subdued by the Marathas at the battle of Trivady and imprisoned. Martin sent two of his men with a few presents and a cash of 50,000 pagodas to Shivaji who not only accepted it, but issued a Firman for the safety of the French at Pondicherry, on one condition that the French should observe strict neutrality. It was in July, 1677. On 9th August 1676, the chief of the 'Loges' at Balassore obtained from the viceroy of Bengal, permission to set up ware houses at Hoogly, Dacca, Cassembazar and Balassore, The 'loges' at Hoogly was later transferred to Chandernagore in 1690. In 1693, Pondicherry district was sold by the Marathas to the Dutch who laid siege both by land and sea. It lasted from 23rd August to 8th September, 1693 when the capitulation containing 13 articles was signed. The garrison left with military honours. Francois Martin was made on parole and taken to Batavia where he was treated with high consideration. He returned to Chandernagore in February, 1694. By the 21st September 1697, Pondicherry was restored to the French in full sovereignty and they took possession of the fort on the 16th and the town on the 17th September, 1699 after paying the Dutch a sum of 16,000 pagodas as the price of the territories surrounding Pondicherry.

4 The French Settlements in India, op. cit, p.37
5 Ibid
In the convention of Nagapattinam dated 13th September, 1699, Francois Martin was appointed the commander of the fort at Pondicherry with full authority of the officers of the garrison said as regard for the wisdom and steadiness and for the such distinguished services rendered in India. Pondicherry had by that time become important, that Francois Martin had silver coins of half panamas, panamas and double panamas minted at Pondicherry in 1700. In 1701, the French set up a warehouse at Calicut. Francois Martin was appointed the first President of the Sovereign Consul and Director-General of French affairs in India. Elacourt, Chalonge, and Harden Court were appointed as the members of the Sovereign Consul. The first meeting of the sovereign council was held on September 25th 1702. Chandernagore was given the privilege to form a local council headed by the commandant. The chiefs of the settlements at Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam were appointed as members of the Sovereign Council. All official communications from Paris were first received at Pondicherry and then forwarded to the other settlements.

In 1703, Martin obtained from Nawab Davood Khan, representative of Aurangazeb, a small village of Kalapet in order to get timber from the forests surrounding it for construction of houses. He also obtained authorisation to set up a warehouse at Santhome as an alternative, in case Pondicherry was captured again. In 1706, the same Nawab ceded the village group Oulgaret, whose annual revenue amounted to nearly one thousand pagodas as well as the village groups of Murungapakkam, Olandai, Pakkamudayanpet and Karuvadikuppam.

6 Prof. M. Ramadass, Pondicherry Economy, Applied interdisciplinary Development, Research Institute, Madras, p.7
7 Ibid
Martin died at Pondicherry on the 30th December 1706. In 1706 the company minted 10,000 pagodas in gold. Aurangazeb, the Moghul Emperor, granted to the French a place at Sonaly, 5 miles from Surat and authorised them to trade in the town under the same conditions as were granted to the Dutch and the British Sonaly which was the first French port in India, near the port of Surat on the estuary of the Tapti. Two years later, Caron, the Director general of the French Trading company, abandoned Sonaly for Surat where business had better prospects. The following year, the king of Golconda authorized the French to establish a trading depot at Masulipatinam and permitted them to trade with his kingdom without paying export or import duties. This Firman was renewed successively in 1687 and in 1718. On that date, the French trade extended up to Bengal and Orissa on a royalty of 21/2% which they paid to the Moghul Empire.

Another idea underlying these expeditions was colonial expansions. The Portuguese who were the first, had come across Madagascar which they called Saint Laurent island and chose it as a center of operations due to its situation and due to the docility of its inhabitants. Madam Y.R. Gaebel in her book “Histories de Pondicherry de l’an 1000 à trois jours”, says according to the report on the excavation made by the Archaeological survey of India, the oldest civilization occupying this territory to which one can trace back, surely had close relations with a civilization which flourished in Mysore at the same epoch, same pottery – black, black and red, same habit of depositing the dead in the buried megalithic tombs or in earthen jars. These burials in the megalithic tombs or in the jars have a number of

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8 The French Settlements in India, op. cit, p.37
9 The French Settlements in India, op. cit, p.35
points in common presence of iron instruments, and of red and black pottery proving an evident relation between the two anodes of sculpture. The actual territory of the Pondicherry state was under the Andhra dynasty, which disappeared in about 236 B.C and which was replaced by the dynasty of Pallavas in the 5th up to the 8th century A.D and by that of the Cholas nearly 980 years A.D. The race which occupied and occupies this territory is Dravidian. It is proved that the Dravidians listed in India since very remote times and forms a family of independent language.

"The eminent authors Louis Renon and Jean Fillozat in their book "L' Inde classique", assure us that the Dravidians had a brilliant civilization and had traded with distant places. The port situated in the middle is sure to be Poduke or Poudoucheri. The author of the Periplus tells us that he will speak only of allotted ports. These are therefore the ports allotted by the Indian kings and that it was only in these ports they could have commercial establishments which were called "Emporium". The kings collected customs duties on goods entering and landing these emporiums. Therefore, surely two centuries after the Christian era and no doubt several centuries before this date, Poudoucheri existed already and traded with Rome and was certainly a port of relay between Rome and the countries of the far East".

On 20th May 1740, Dost Ali, Nawab of Arcot and his son Hassan were killed in the battle on the northern of Ponnayar by the Marathas. Sufdar Ali, the second son of Dost Ali and his brother – in – law Chanda Sahib entrusted their families to the French for safety. The general of the Marathas, Ragoji Bhonsle threatened the French of

10 Ibid
serious consequences. But Dumas remained firm and refused the demand. The Marathas withdrew their army and was reduced by the bullets from the French fort at Ariankuppam. For this, the Nawab of Arcot gave the French the village a groups of Archiwak and Aduvanatham.

Dupleix became the Governor of French possessions in India on 15th January, 1742. His main object was to destroy the trade of the British by capturing Madras at the first opportunity. When the war broke out on 15th March 1744 between England and France, the British seized the French ship "Favori" off Achem with a cargo worth Rs. 400,000. Not less than three tornadoes, which burst in quick succession over Pondicherry in November 1745, lay low all avenues, orchards and gardens, unleashed away several houses, drowned many men and cattle, killed even birds and flooded waist deep several parts of the town. They also captured in 1746, another ship "Pondicherry" which anchored off Tranquebar in neutral waters. The French fleet under Mahe de la Bourdonnais, assisted by the troops of the company attacked Madras on 16th September 1746 and on 21st the city surrendered and remained under the French for nearly 30 months. The British attacked Pondicherry in September 1748 by land and by sea. But they had to withdraw. On hearing this victory, the Emperor at Delhi, sent Dupleix the titles of Khan-Mansoubadar-Nabab-Mouzafar Jung Bahadur with the seal attached to these honours. In the carnatic, Chandasahib claimed the throne occupied by Anwardi Khan who had usurped the place of his family. In the Deccan, Muzaffar Jung wanted to seize the throne occupied by his uncle Nasar Jung. Both

11 The French Settlements in India, op.cit,p.38
12 Ibid
Chandasahib and Muzaffar Jung sought the help of the French in achieving their goal. On the 1st September the same year, Madras was returned to the British according to the Treaty of Aix-la-chappele (30th April 1748). Dupleix sent D' Autemil with 400 French and 200 native soldiers to the help of Chandasahib and Muzaffar Jung. The combined army defeated Anuardi Khan on 3rd August, 1749. But the second son, Johamed Ali took refuge in Trichinopoly. In exchange, England returned Louisbourg and Cape Breton in North America. The French defeated Pratab Singh, King of Tanjore on 31st December 1749 resulting in a Treaty by which the king undertook to pay Chandasahib and Muzaffar Jung Rs.7,000,000, to repay the company the trinity of Rs. 7,000 paid to him since 1738, to cede 81 villages to the French in Karaikal and to distribute a sum of Rs. 200,000 to the French troops. Bussy was sent to Gingee with an army of 250 Europeans and 1,200 sepoys. The fort was known for its impregnability situated on a steep rock. It had defied the general of Aurangazeb for three years. This fort fell to the French on 11th September, 1750 Muzaffar Jung, nephew of Nasar Jung, who was the second son of Nizam-ul-Moulk and who had succeeded to the viceroyalty of Deccan, revolted against Nasar Jung and appealed to the French for help. On 15th December, 1750 La touché left Gingee with a force of 800 Europeans and 3,000 sepoys and 10 cannons to the camp of Subabhdar whose army counted more than 25,000 men. In the battle which ensued Nasar Jung was killed and Muzaffar Jung declared Subabhdar of the deccan. In recognition of the help, Muzaffar granted to the French the following.
1. The possession of Villianur was confirmed and 36 village groups of Bahour were added to it so that the advance posts were brought upto the Ponnayar.

2. They were permitted the full enjoyment of Masulipatinam and Divy, with nearly 75 miles of land in the neighbourhood with an annual net revenue of 8 lakhs of rupees.

3. The sovereignty of the company over the district of Yanam was confirmed.

4. The territory of the French was extended from Karaikal side.

5. Dupleix was confined the title of Nawab of the carnatic, with the command of the entire coast from the river Krishna upto Cape Commorin. He was invested with the insignia of the order of the Fish, one of the best honours of the Moghul empire. He was granted in person by Muzaffar Jung, the authority to collect the revenues of the whole of the Valdavore district.

6. The pagodas minted at Pondicherry were made legal tender in the Carnatic, Masulipatinam and Golconda.

But on 14th February 1751 Muzaffar Jung was killed by treachery. Bussy who accompanied the French troops had Salabat Jung declared Subabhdar of Deccan. The new Nawab confirmed all, that was granted by his cousin.13 This moment may be regarded as the peak of French influence in India.

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13 The French Settlements in India, op. cit, p.39
The French lost Arcot in 1751 and in September the same year, their forces under Faques marched on to Trichinopoly. By that time, the English brought the Prince of Mysore on their side and concluded an alliance with Murari Rao, the Maratha chief who with his party men always placed himself at the disposal of his best payer. The French forces camped in front unable to do anything decisively. In April 1752, he retreated to Srirangam and was on the defensive and cut off from Pondicherry by the English. He surrendered with his war material and 600 European prisoners. Arcot, Chingleput, Villupuram and Trivady were occupied by the English, the entire Carnatic was taken over by Mohamed Ali.\textsuperscript{14} This created an unfavourable opinion against Dupleix and contributed in hastening his recall.

Dupleix counteracted this set back by reversing the alliances between the English and Indian princes. He dealt first with Mortiz Ali, Nawab of Vellore and brother-in-law of Chandasahib who gave Rs.50,000 and promised neutrality. He then tackled Murari Rao, who undertook to get the French and supply 4,000 cavalarymen and 2,000 footmen, on immediate payment in cash a sum of one lakh rupees and two lakhs in two months, and also a sum of Rs 1,25,000 per month for the maintenance of his troops. In 1753, Trivady and Chidambaram fell to the French. Consequently the direct communication between Cuddalore and Trichinopoly was cut, except through Tanjore. Dupleix decided to capture Trichinopoly on behalf of the Raja of Mysore. The latter promised to give Rs. 15 lakhs, Rs. 4 lakh in cash and the balance later. An army under Asiatic was sent by Dupleix. It was situated five miles south of Trichinopoly. In the meantime while Major Lawrence

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid
got the Raja of Tanjore on his side and the latter gave him 3,000 cavalrymen and 3,000 sepoys. This was another blow to the French. In token of what Bussy had done for his enthronment as Subabhdar of deccan, Salabat Jung undertook to provide for the maintenance of the French troops and in order to ensure in a definite manner the protection of the French, he ceded the revenues of the four circars or coastal provinces (Mustafanagar, Ellore, Rajamundry and Chicacole). The annual revenue amounted to 10 lakhs of rupees. He had to wage a war in the name of Salabat Jung against Ragoji Bhonsle, chief of Berar and south of the Vindhya. On 1st April, 1754, at the right of the French troops at Nagore, Ragoji negotiated with the French by effecting a payment of Rs. 5 lakhs and a peace treaty was concluded. It was in August 1754, Dupleix was relieved off his duties by Charles Robert Godehou and on the 14th October the former left for France.

Bussy conquered Gingee and returned to France in 1762, and presented the clothes of Pondicherry to Louis XV and Madame de Pompadour, who admired the texture of the clothes very much. In 1777, Bellecombe made a regulation laying down an equitable distribution of the produce of agriculture between tiller and the state. Before the arrival of the French, Pondicherry was a famous cloth center. On receiving the news of the French revolution, the French citizens of Pondicherry formed a General Assembly and set up a committee of Representatives in March 1790. At Chandernagore, the citizens on the instigation of Richemount formed a general Assembly and set up a Representative Committee in May 1790. On October 21st, the General Assembly of Pondicherry constituted a new Representative Committee consisting of 27 members, and for the first time invited the
representatives from the other French settlements in India. The National Assembly in Paris accepted the two representatives sent from Pondicherry. Therefore this was the first time that the French India was represented in the Parliament of France. It was during the revolutionary period, that a municipality was set up at Pondicherry by the general Assembly in September 1790. In April 1791, a municipality was set up at Mahe. But after the resignation of its Mayor, Boyer, the General Assembly in its meeting in July 1792 decided not to re-establish the municipality. The Assembly elected a Mayor and five members to the municipality. A number of elementary and secondary schools, colleges were also started. On October 26th, 1826 a college known as Royal college was opened and its name was changed to Colonial College towards the end of 1848. The first girls' school was started on February 12th, 1827. Ananda Ranga Pillai makes a mention of a dispute between the right hand and the left hand divisions on May 10th, 1848. There was a separate girls' central school in Pondicherry, Karaikal, Mahe, Chandernagore and Yanam. Ecoles remains were set up in rural areas and formed the basis of the educational system in the French settlements. The Calve Soupraya Chettiar college was established on May 2nd, 1877. Later, College Mahe de la Bourdonnais was started in Mahe and college Dupleix in Chandernagore. Women's education was encouraged and separate schools for girls were also started. French was the medium of instruction right from the primary school. In March 12th, 1880, the French Government enacted a Decree by which all the five settlements were divided into ten communes. The Government of France granted a sum of 5,00,000 francs towards relief for the damage caused by floods in November-December 1884. Pondicherry was divided into Pondicherry, Ozhukarai, Villianur and Bahour, Karaikal
into Karaikal Grand Aldee and Nedungadu. The other three establishment of Chandernagore, Mahe and Yanam were set up as the three independent communes. The French came to India not only to gain commercial profits and political supremacy but also to propagate their religion Christianity. Besides the Government, reformists like Bharathidasan and magazines like Puduvai Murasu took up the cause of the down trodden and worked for their uplift.

**Acquisition of the French Settlements**

The union territory of Pondicherry was left to the French more as an act of grace and represented remnants of the lost glory. It had no territorial significance for the French. The policy followed in the French settlements of India was part of the larger colonial policy followed by the French in other parts of the world. It was not so much the disappearance of the British from India in 1947 as the loss of Indo-China to France that precipitated the disappearance of French from the Indian soil. The French tried to merge Pondicherry with the British India. But the Pondichereans objected these proposals proposed by various sections of the people at that time. The people of French India as well as the independent India prepared to meet the political and constitutional struggle with the Government of France in liberating the French possessions in India in 1947. The Government of India under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru persue the policy with regard to the liberation of French in India. He was not prepared to accept any delay in the merger of their settlements. The members of the Mahajana Sabha under the leadership of I.K. Kumar, a veteran freedom fighter of

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15 A. Ramasamy, History of Pondicherry, New Delhi, 1987, p.32
16 Ibid
Mahe, fought for the freedom struggle in the Mahe region. V. Subbiah on one hand even suggested the merger of other French colonies like Karaikal, Mahe, Yanam and Chandernagore with the neighbouring free states of Indian union; it was decided not to accept anything else than complete independence. They refused for merging Pondicherry with the independent India. The French India Socialist party under Dr. Andre did not like the idea of Pondicherry. Though the French were the last European power to come to India and settled their headquarters in Pondicherry with their spheres of influence in Chandernagore, Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam, they remained in India even after 1947. On no other account there was the time lag between the handing over power by the British in 1947 and the de facto merger of the union settlements in 1954. A view is expressed by the French unlike on India, but for the folly by the then king of France in recalling that great genius Dupleix, the history of India would have been different. This view can no longer be sustained. It was due to the superior strength of the British on the sea and in India, that the French were overthrown.\textsuperscript{17} The continuance of Dupleix or his policy could not have made any appreciable difference to the fortunes of France in Indian soil, long as in the world sphere the British were the more dominant power. But the French through Dupleix, had made a signal contribution to the expansion of the British power in India. The superiority of European trained army over the Indian trained was demonstrated by the Portuguese earlier. But it was left to the genius of Dupleix, that the possibility of using Indian soldiers disciplined by Europeans to hold any territory in India was conceived. In the 16\textsuperscript{th} century the European nations began to expand their trade by

\textsuperscript{17} A. Ramasamy, op.cit.,p.33
discovering new sea routes. The Portuguese were the first to land in India. By the decision of the Pope they wanted to intervene in the dispute between the Portuguese and the Spanish to draw a line through the Ayores and assign areas west to Spain and areas on the east to Portugal, Spain had no interest in India.

Attainment of independence of India from the British in 1947 gave a boost to the residents of the French colonies to fight against the French rule. Various associations giving lead to the people became activated in the wake of Indian independence. This was the same case with the Portuguese settlements in India. The residents of the colonies whether Portuguese or French received encouragement to fight against their colonial master after 1947. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who had a wide exposure to liberal thoughts of Europe during his studies abroad cherished great appreciation for the French culture and their values. At the same time he was active in the freedom struggle against the British. Therefore, being the Prime Minister at the helm of affairs of the subcontinent of India, he had to respect the nationalist feelings of the residents of the French colony. His training in the school of Non-Violence preached and practiced by Mahatma Gandhi did not permit him to follow the path of armed confrontations with the colonial rulers. He had several compulsions from various quarters to get rid of the colonial powers. The decisions taken in the Parliament were for keeping India absolutely free from foreign rule. On the other hand there were suggestions that a referendum had to be taken to see the mind of the residents of the French colonies in India in 1954 (de facto transfer) but the treaty of cession was concluded later. Though by 1954

18 Ibid
effectively the French left India and the jurisdical surrender of their possessions in India took place only by 1962. The first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru played an important role in the liberation of the remaining parts of India which were under the Portuguese and the French. He had to take very stringent measures against the Portuguese who violated the right of the Indians and finally liberated the colonies from the Portuguese in 1961. During the process of decolonization of India at large, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru played the role as a proven and mature diplomat. He had great appreciation for the values of liberty, equality and fraternity propounded by French thinkers. At the same time, the nationalist sentiment in him prompted him to take effective steps in making every bit of India independent. Therefore he worked for the merger of French possessions into the Indian union without offending the sentiments of the French. Therefore the present study is based on the contemporary documents as well as interviews with the freedom fighters.

A short discussion on the various schools of thought regarding the national movement in India in general is attempted in the first part of this chapter to situate the freedom movement in the French settlements as to assess if it was really a mass movement or elitist movement. With a view to understand the problem of merger of the French possessions and the role of Jawaharlal Nehru in the historic perspective it is proposed to discuss socio-political and economic conditions of the French settlements on the eve of Indian independence. The details of the settlements like Chandernagore, Yanam, Pondicherry and Mahe were collected from census reports of the period preserved in the National Archives, New Delhi and Archives
in Pondicherry. Attempts were made to discuss the composition of the society and economic activities of the settlers in these colonies.

From the study of the composition of the society of the settlements and their political consciousness it will be possible to highlight the activities of the residents of the French settlements directed towards the attainment of independence from the French. The freedom-loving people of the French colonies in India took the Indian national congress which spearheaded the freedom movement in British India as a model. French India National Congress and French India Students Congress were established to give a lead to the movements towards the freedom from the French. The other parties with their ideology too came forward to guide the movements towards freedom. Leaders like V.Subbiah and Edouard Goubert started organizing movements towards freedom. Attempts have been made to examine how these different movements percolated into various sections of the common mass. It had to be checked if it was really a movement comprising of all information in this regard. The publications of the French India Students Congress preserved in the Archival repositories provide additional information. The surviving participants of the freedom struggle have their own reminiscences of the various stages of the struggle. Some of them like the Communist leader V.Subbiah have published the details of courses of struggle, which have served as an important source of information.

Intense diplomatic exchange between Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the French Government took place during the period from 1953-1963. This period includes the steps towards de facto and de jure transfers. The treaties and the articles of the transfer both de facto and
de jure preserved in the National Archives of India and the debates in the Parliament throw a lot of light on this subject. The correspondence between Jawaharlal Nehru and the French Government preserved in the Archival repositories in India contain a lot of information for the period. The pains taken by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to keep the ideals of non-violence, national integrity of the subcontinent of India and the respect for French culture and values stand out in documentations related to the theme. As decided by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the erstwhile French colonies in India remain as a window of French culture. Unlike in any other part of the world, between French citizens of Indian and foreign origin hold their proprietary rights, distinct culture and elect their representatives for the House of Deputies and French Parliament. The law and order came under the Government of India. Interactions at various levels between French citizens and Indian citizens in these colonies took place creating an atmosphere of exceptional cultural synthesis.

The conceptual frame work of the historians dealing with national movement can be classified into :-

a) Liberal School of thought

b) Marxist school of thought

c) Cambridge school of thought and

d) Subaltern school of thought.

a) Liberal School of Thought:

Tara Chand and R.C. Majumdar did the pioneering work in this field under the orders given by the Government of India. Ever since the board under Majumdar constituted in 1952 and dissolved in 1955
on account of his extreme views, he began to tie the line of extremists while Tara Chand appointed to replace Majumdar followed the path of a moderate. Both of them could be considered the earliest Indian historians to bring the whole range of the study of national movement, under consideration. They do not assign any important role to economic and political factors responsible for the attainment of independence from the English though Tara Chand tried the dialectical method to write the history of Freedom movement. Since the first volume of Tara Chand's work appeared a year before that of Majumdar, we shall discuss the views of Tara Chand first. He held a moderate view while Majumdar for obvious reasons, extremist view. Both of them fall under the Non-Marxist liberal school of thought.

**Moderate:**

Tara Chand, educated at Oxford and keeping Ranke, Acton and E.Lipson as his models, was invited by the Government of India to write the history of the Freedom movement. Once the board under the chairmanship of R.C. Majumdar was dissolved in 1955, the first volume of his work saw the limelight in 1961.\(^1\) He claims that his approach is dialectical considering the state of society before the British arrival as thesis, and the British rule as anti-thesis and finally the Freedom movement as synthesis. He agrees with Majumdar in viewing that Indian Nationalism was of recent origin since the British period of Indian history.\(^2\) The revolt of 1857 was a national revolt for Tara. Tara Chand does not qualify the foundation of Indian National Congress as a remarkable event, but refers to its foundation sharely as part of his historical narration—Regarding the communal problem in


\(^{2}\) R.C. Majumdar, *op. cit*, Vol. 4, p. 249
India, Majumdar holds the view that the Hindus and Muslims constitute two separate nations and keeping their separate identity, the Muslims remained aloof from the mainstream of Indian politics cutting at the very root of Indian Nationalism. Majumdar while dealing with the political leaders, assigns the role of the Father of Indian Nationalism to Sureindranath Banerjee and disputes the claim of Mahatma Gandhi. However, he agrees with the view that Gandhi, Subbash Chandra Bose and Jinnah dominated the political scene during the movement towards freedom. He exposes the failure of Gandhi in preserving the unity of India and depicts him as politically invalid. Gandhi is accused of having abandoned his agitation prematurely and made the British the bitterest enemy through his provocative and ill-timed strategy. He mentions that even Gandhi's own hand-picked followers rejected his own ideology. Congress was made more anti-imperial by Gandhi than was necessary which enhanced the bargaining power of the Muslims. Gandhi, according to Majumdar wrongly imported mysticism in politics and bungled the communal problem. In fact the third volume of his book was titled as "Gandhi: A study in Failure". World forces and the unrest in the Indian army made freedom possible according to Majumdar. He insists on interconnectedness of events. The anger arising from the dissolution of the board under him and the rejection of his text made him write bitterly against the Congress and its leaders setting aside the position even of Jawaharlal Nehru. He does not attach any importance to economic and social factors responsible for the attainment of freedom from the English. He viewed politics as the sole factor leading to it. He holds the view that nationalism grew first in Bengal and Sureindranath
Banerji should be considered the father of Nationalism. He considers Swadeshi movement the harbinger of true nationalism.

b) Marxist School of thought

The Marxist interpretation of the national movement serving as a counterpoise to the romantic or administrative version of Indian history. Marx brought to the study of Indian nationalism economic reasoning. He wrote a series of articles in 1853 on British rule in India and its future results. He held the view that the Indian village communities held an “isolated, stagnating, undignified and vegetative life”. He is of the opinion that the British rule shattered the entire framework of Indian society without any symptoms of reconstruction. He emphasized at not only destructive nature of the British rule, but also its regenerative character. He explained the necessity to political transformation freeing the Indians from the foreign rule. It is true his concepts of the stagnant nature of pre-colonial Indian economy and the regenerative force of the British rule were faulty, his methodology made substantial contribution to the study of Indian nationalism by preparing a balance sheet of the consequences of the British rule and attempted to forecast the future course of events. Later in modification of his earlier views, he held that the work of the destruction of the Asiatic mode of production proceeded rather slowly and India suffered distorted development and failed to develop on pure capitalist line. It was the last attempt of the effect of old order recover its departed glory” as suggested by Percival Spear earlier. Tara Chand speaks of the foundation of the Indian National Congress as the most remarkable event in the history of India. Tara Chand had a sort of fatalist approach to the partition of India though he held the view that Hindus and
Muslims represented the composite culture of India. The assumption that these two machinations of the British who wanted to perpetuate their rule in India according to Tara Chand. He mentioned that the British were really responsible for the separate electorates and instigated the Muslims to demand them. The British discovered in the Muslims a forge to fight against the Hindus and to support them. He concedes the fact that the Muslims had certain legitimate grievances which, of course, were exaggerated. He finds fault with Sri Mohammed Iqbal and Jinnah for their communal approaches. He says that some unkind fate brought Pakistan into existence. Tara Chand is of the opinion that Gandhi had played a very revolutionary role and that without him the attainment of Independence was impossible. Tara Chand offers a Non-Marxist dialectical exposition of how and why National movement grew. He is actually a representative of the erudite school of thought. His conceptual framework is intricate with internal inconsistencies according to V.N. Datta. However, he describes not only the events but also the social and institutional configuration of the freedom movement. He is a liberal historian adhering to no particular school of thought.

Bipan Chandra

Bipan Chandra’s work entitled “The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism 1880-1905” which is a study of the economic reasoning of the Indian national leadership demonstrates Dadabhai Naoroji, M.G. Ranade, R.C. Dutt, G.V. Joshi and G.K. Gokhale exposed the British exploitation of India. Though they were not theoreticians, their approach was pragmatic and their thinking was from a national

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21 V.N. Datta, Interpreting Indian Nationalism, Presidential Address, Indian History Congress, Bodh Gaya Session, p.9
view point. His work is a study of the economic elite and its ideas provided emotional drives impelling people to fight the British rule. The joint work freedom Struggle is another work anchored in Marxist ideology.\textsuperscript{22}

A.R. Desai

He claims to have used historical materialism in his work Social Background of Indian Nationalism. He gives a survey of the social and religious background of Indian Nationalism, though with his own preconceptions. The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, 1903-1918 written by Sumit Sarkar tries to show how it failed to turn out to be a mass movement.\textsuperscript{23} He gives the valid reasons for its failure. He recommends Trotsky's concept of, substituism' and Gramsci's role of 'traditional as distinct from the organic intellectuals' for the interpretation of Indian nationalism. He holds the opinion that Marxist approach still is valid and relevant for the study of National movement in India.

R. Palme Dutt

R. Palme Dutt was the first to apply systematically Marxist ideas to the study of Indian Nationalism through his work India Today. He was expelled from Oxford in October 1917 for propagating Marxist ideas, a fortnight before the Bolshevik Revolution. He applied Marxist method in analysing Indian national movement also in his work World Politics. He confirmed the British ruination of Indian economy with quantitative analysis and elaborate details. He proved that the British through scientific exploitation reduced India to an agricultural

\textsuperscript{22} A.R. Desai, Social Background of Indian Nationalism, Bombay, 1959, p.20

\textsuperscript{23} Sumit Sarkar, The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal 1903-1908, New Delhi, 1973, p.512
economy. The picture of India’s industrial development provided by the British was a sheer myth according to him. Dutt considered Gandhi made of feeble stuff who betrayed the peasantry and working classes by resorting to non-violent means—a convenient tool serving the class interest. He accused Gandhi of starving off the revolution and calling off the movement at a strategic moment when it reached heights. Dutt believed in armed rebellion for liquidating imperialism. According to him Gandhi and Tilak were responsible for communalism by mixing religion with politics. The British created the communal problem and the solution of this problem lay in the mass movement where Gandhi is said to have failed. Partition of India according to Dutt was a bourgeoisie compromise with imperialism. He holds the view that Indian independence became a reality on account of the emergence of new world forces, Britains’s weak position after the war and the discontentment in the Indian armed forces on the verge of rebellion.

**Extremist**

The Government of India interested in highlighting the activities of the national leaders, appointed in 1952 R.C. Majumdar as the director of a board to bring out the history of Freedom movement. As he could not tie the line with the Government and forget his own mournings in Bengal, the board was dissolved by the Government in 1955 with the indictment that “Bengalloomed too large” in his text on freedom movement. However, he published the work in three volumes on his own.24 This being one of the pioneering works on the history of the Freedom movement, it is considered worthwhile to bring out the salient features of his work. Majumdar rejecting the dialectical model

24 V.N. Datta, op. cit, p. 10
of Tara Chand emphasized the political account of the freedom movement. In true the ideas widely propagated by the imperialists like Herbert Risely, Valentine Chirol, John Strachey and Vincent Smith, Majumdar holds the view that Indian nationalism was of recent origin and no trace of this was in existence in the pre-British period. He shared this view with Tara Chand. Against the opinion held by the latter, Majumdar considers the Revolt of 1857 as the “first great and direct challenge to the British rule in India”. But he does not call it the “first” nor “national”, or a war of independence.25

c) Cambridge School of thought

Percival Spear after his retirement began to teach at Cambridge and influenced the evolution of Indian historiography. He maintained that there is some specific historical connection between India’s intellectual development and the west. Besides the contributions of Percival Spear and of his pupil Eric Srokes, John Gallagher’s ideas had a great influence on the evolution of the ideology of the Cambridge school regarding Indian Nationalism. Gallagher along with Robinson argued that imperial rule in Africa spread on account of the collaboration of Africans. Anil Seal, Gallagher’s student, used this concept for explaining the emergence of Nationalism in India. He stressed the conceptual system of elite rather than class. According to him the western educated elite of the presidency towns collaborated first with the British and but when the job aspirations of the elite were not satisfied, they turned anti-British. He emphatically writes that nationalism was not formed through the prompting of any class demand or as the consequence of any change in the state of economy.26

26 Perival Spear, India, Pakistan and the west, Oxford, 1952, p. 10
This is considered to be the most formidable anti-Marxist interpretation. Later Seal himself discarded the elite concept and stated that the elite concept was applicable only to the later half of the nineteenth century and suggested that the Government prepared its own destruction by fostering an intellectual elite is not relevant. He added that the structure of imperial Government could provide the clue to the way the Indian policy developed.\(^{27}\) He is of the opinion that ideology makes no sense. On the contrary, the British built their framework based on patron-client relationship operating at country, provincial and local levels and the Indians fitted in it very well. The race for influence, status and resources made the clients decide their political choices. The whole business turned on scramble for advancement, self-interest and factions which became the stuff of Indian politics. He holds the view that Congress was built out of this rabble and that congress was not an all India movement. He regards the analysis of the structure of Government and its clients as the fundamental method of explaining this complex phenomenon. C.A.Bayly considers Nationalism as a tenuous fusion of vested interests and groups which exercised their influence derived from their wealth in the field of religion. He holds that it was through the participation of the religious concerns that political activity developed in upper India. He provides an aggressive frustration model in the light of local grievances and relegated nationalist ideology to the background.\(^{28}\) Christopher John Baker regards Satyamurti and


\(^{28}\) Anil Seal, "*Imperialism and Nationalism*", Cambridge, 1968, p. 34 & 110
C.P.Ramaswami Aiyer as job hunters and Rajgopalachariar as a weathercock.29

Thus the scholars of the Cambridge school hold the general thesis that politics is a skillful game to be played for fame, status, survival, self-interest and advancement, and is not bound in any case with ideologies. Peoples were not awakened but used for material interest. Without specifically mentioning, these scholars follow the ideas of Namier who showed that in politics men were motivated by ambition, vested interests and personal grievances rather than ideas or principles. But it must be remembered that men in India were only thinking of themselves and their narrowly personal grievances in National movement. There is no revolutionary spirit without idealism, which inspires sacrifice. If ideas were of no real important it would be difficult to explain how the people could wish to be united.  

d) Subaltern school of thought

Dissatisfied with the elitism of colonialist, bourgeois-nationalist, neo-colonialist and neo-nationalist ideologies a few historians like Ranajit Guha, Shahid Amin, David Arnold, Partha Chatterjee, David Hardiman and Gyan Pandey opened up new vistas of thought giving importance to the people who constituted the vast majority of the population of India in the freedom movement. He affirms that the approaches of the historians of freedom movement till recently failed to acknowledge far less interpret the contribution made by the people on their own, that is independently of the elite to the making and the development of this nationalism.30 The group called Subaltern

29 Anil Seal, op. cit, p. 6  
30 C.A. Bayly, The Local Roots of Indian politics, Oxford, 1975, p. 7
consisted of lesser rural gentry, impoverished landlords, rich peasants and upper-middle peasants who are generally known as the "people". Therefore this school of thought worked on the involvement of the Indian people in vast numbers sometimes in hundreds of thousands of even millions, in nationalist activities and ideas. He says that parallel to the domain of elite politics there existed throughout the colonial period another domain of Indian politics in which the principal actors were not the dominant groups of the indigenous society or the colonial authorities but the Subaltern classes and the intermediate strata in town and country-the people. Thus people's history of freedom movement has begun to receive attention in the hands of the historians of Subaltern studies.

In fine, one may say that as the historiography of nationalism develops, historians would search for more and more causes for the emergence and development of national movement. No rational historian can be satisfied with a single cause. Historian's innate tendency is to deal in multiplicity of causes to explain a historical event. So, too in the case of the history of national movement, it is expected that historians should search for more causes and factors that led to the attainment of freedom. A single individual or a group of elite cannot explain the emergence of nationalist tendencies and the sufferings undergone by a galaxy of eminent leaders. Nor can we say that there was no ideology behind the untold hardships undergone by millions of people for the sake of breaking the shackles of slavery imposed by the colonial powers. Let different schools of thought

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32 Ranajit Guha, "On some aspects of the historiography of colonial India" Subaltern Studies, Vol. 11, New Delhi, Oxford University, p. 8
flourish to find out the multiplicity of factors but let us not try to close the different avenues, the scholars interested in interpreting of explaining the various facets of national movement.

As comprised this Thesis illuminates the views and actions of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in the relatively peaceful incorporation of the French territories in India into the Indian Union.