PREFACE

The object of this dissertation is to analyse the various aspects which contributed to the 'Development of Tamil Society' in the former French Indian settlements of Pondicherry and Karikal. The period covered in this study spans the years 1706-1898. While a number of works on French India have been published, no attempt has been made as yet, to seek to provide an integrated and comprehensive treatment of the areas during the period under study.

After a brief introductory chapter to set the scene for what follows, the succeeding chapters are concerned in turn with the political conditions, system of administration, social life and politics, economic conditions, religion, education and the cultural developments in the settlements. This work aims to avoid any restricted approach and to appreciate more fully the range and the wealth of activity in the region concerned. Even so, a study of this nature cannot include everything that calls for attention.

I could never have completed this work but for the help of archi-
vists, librarians and numerous other friends in three different continents. I owe a large debt of gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. K.K. Pillay, currently Director of the Institute of Traditional Cultures, Madras, who guided me through the various stages of research and writing. I also thank Dr. C.E. Ramesh, Head of the Dept. of Indian History, University of Madras for his valuable advice and encouragement.

Special thanks are due to Miss Annie Sundaram, Librarian, Romain Rolland Library, Pondicherry and Mr. Cyril F. Antony, Editor, State
Gazetteer, Pondicherry, Prof. Jean Fillizat and the staff of the French Institute of Indology, Pondicherry, for all their kind assistance. The library staff of the ‘Hindu’, the Tamil Nadu Archives and the Connemera Public Library extended all facilities and I am deeply grateful to them.

In the United States of America, I enjoyed access to the Ames library of South Asia, University of Minnesota, James Ford Bell Library and the Wilson library, University of Minnesota. In particular, my greatest gratitude is to Mr. Henry Scholberg, librarian, Ames Library of Asia for his unfailing courtesy and help. In England, I worked mainly at the India office library and the British Museum. In France most of the data was collected at the Archives Nationales and at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. To the librarians and staff of these institutions I remain deeply grateful.

The University of Madras has stipulated that a thesis should not exceed 250 pages. Thus, an attempt has been made to reconcile inevitable limitations of space with the goal of providing a reasonably comprehensive treatment of the subject.

I am thankful to the Vice-Chancellor and the Syndicate of the University of Madras for permitting me to work on this subject.

December, 1975. 

Emmanuel Divien.
ABBREVIATIONS
<table>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. A.E.F.</td>
<td>Annuaire des établissements français dans l'Inde</td>
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<td>2. A.R.P.</td>
<td>Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai (English translation)</td>
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<td>4. B.O.I.</td>
<td>Bulletin Officiel des établissements français dans l'Inde</td>
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<td>5. J.O.I.</td>
<td>Journal Officiel des établissements français dans l'Inde</td>
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<td>6. P.A.</td>
<td>Pondicherry Archives (MSS)</td>
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<td>7. T.N.A.</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu Archives</td>
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INTRODUCTION
INTRODUCTION

The social conditions of the Tamils in the former French settlements in India during the 18th & 19th centuries has not been so far treated in a comprehensive manner, by scholars either Indian or foreign. The principal object of this dissertation is to probe into the different social, cultural and intellectual changes that took place in the Tamil speaking areas, viz., Pondicherry and Karikal under the French rule. While laying emphasis on the social conditions of the people, sufficient attention has also been given to the political conditions, the system of administration and justice, development of education and the rôle of religion.

The present study commences from 1706 when François Martin, the architect of the French settlement of Pondicherry passed away, and closes with the assumption of the office of Governor by M. Rodier in 1898. The author of this thesis himself had already covered the history of the French settlements from 1664 to 1706 A.D. It was therefore felt appropriate to continue the study from that point to the close of the 19th century thus covering a period of two centuries.

1. E. Divien - 'French Pioneers in S. India, 1664 - 1706' - thesis approved for the M.Litt Degree of the University of Madras(1961) - M.P.
Many scholarly works have been written on the history of the French in India upto 1815. Most of these works deal with the political, military, administrative, economic and commercial projects of the French. Historical writing on the French in India dates mainly from the last quarter of the nineteenth century. One of the earliest works is that of H. Castermonet des Posses, 'L'Inde Française avant Dupleix', (Paris 1887). Strangely enough it was left to an English historian Col. G.E. Malleson to assess the political ideas of Dupleix in their true perspective. Malleson in his 'History of the French in India' was very sympathetic to the rôle played by Dupleix and his compatriots. About the middle of the eighteenth century, some travelogues and historical narratives of the French East India Company were published. These contemporary works prepared in the course of the eighteenth century are of general interest only, and have but little to say about the administration of the Company.

During the early part of the present century, some valuable and scholarly works were published on the activities of the French East India Company. H. Weber's -- 'La Compagnie Française des Indes' was published in 1904. This was the standard reference work on the subject for over 2. E. Divien, -- "François Martin : the Architect of the French settlement at Pondicherry" in Revue Historique de Pondichéry, Vol II. 1973.
thirty years. Weber treats the history of the French activities in the East from the reign of Henry IV of France to the close of the eighteenth century. The work is based largely on original sources and contemporary published works. He deals with the organisation of the Company in detail but gives scanty treatment to matters such as colonial administration, finances in India, administration of justice, relations of the French with the Indian rulers and the commercial activity in the colonies. Jules Sottas in 'Histoire de la Compagnie Royale des Indes Orientales' (1905) provides a general history of the Company, whilst Paul Kaeppelin in his 'La Compagnie des Indes Orientales et François Martin' (1908) deals more thoroughly with the organisation of the French East India Company.

Kaeppelin's assessment of the achievements and failures of the company in its early stages is of great importance to researchers working on this period. Marguerite V. Labernadie in her 'Le Vieux Pondichéry 1664 - 1815' (1936) gives a graphic account of the development of Pondichery and of the social life in the settlement.

The period 1742 - 1763, has received greater attention from French historians. Most of the works published deal with Dupleix, and a few on

4. Ibid., -- p. XXIX.
La Bourdonnais, Bussy and Lally. This over-emphasis on the rôle of Dupleix was partly due to the development of a 'Dupleix cult', which soon had its supporters among historians. Numerous biographies on Dupleix were published about the middle of the nineteenth century. Historians like Barhou de Penhoen and Henri Martin paid tribute to the genius of Dupleix. Most of these works were panegyrics, written in order to extol the genius and character of Dupleix. But, Cultru in his work on Dupleix was highly critical of Dupleix. This period marks the decline of the 'Dupleix cult' in France. Henceforth attempts were made to assess the contributions of Dupleix on the basis of historical records. The first such attempt was undertaken by Alfred Martineau one of the successors of Dupleix as Governor of Pondicherry after nearly one hundred and fifty years. Martineau's magnum opus, 'Dupleix et l'Inde française', is in a real sense, a comprehensive history of the French in India from 1722 - 1754. Martineau has carefully analysed the motives which prompted Dupleix to conceive the idea of a colonial empire. W.F. Dalgliesh in his monograph 'The Company of the Indies in the days of Dupleix' (1933) throws light on varied activities of the Company. The system of finance, administration of justice, and relationship between the French government and the Indian rulers are dealt

with extensively. He also deals with the company's organization between 1722 and 1754, with particular reference to its Indian activities. Virginia L. Thompson's work on "Dupleix and his Letters 1741-1754" (1933) is of considerable help to understand the mind of Dupleix and the course of events. The most important part of Dupleix's letters have been edited to enable the reader to reconstruct the events. The works of J. Jouveau Dubreuil on Dupleix and that of A. Martineau on Bussy deal mainly with the political activities. One notices that most of the writing on the period 1742 - 1753 is mainly biographical in nature.

The period from 1765 - 1816 has received scant attention from historians. Malleson in his 'Final French struggle in India and on the Indian Seas' (1878), attempted to write a comprehensive history from 1765 - 1793. S.P. Sen's, French in India, 1765 - 1815' (1958) is the first attempt to provide a comprehensive history of the French in India for the period from 1765 to 1816. Though the emphasis in this work is on the political projects, intrigues, and military activities of the

6. E. Divien, -- "Historical Writing on the French in India", in *Bibliographie des Français dans l'Inde* .. by Scholberg, H. and Divien, E.

French, the development of the commercial activities of the French settle-
ments in India has been treated adequately. A comprehensive and balanced
account of the system of administration, is given. There are also inter-
esting accounts on the diplomatic activities of various French agents in
India and on their relations with the country powers. This work based
primarily on unpublished records is highly valuable. However, it must be
admitted that there is not much information on the social structure of
the period in this work.

For the period from 1816, we have the accounts of certain tra-
vellers. Amongst the general works, mention must be made of Eugène Gibert -
'L'Inde française et l'Orient (1882)' and Georges Maurigot -- "Les Etablis-
sements français dans l'Inde et en océanie' (1887). They give an idea of
the conditions in the settlements, system of administration etc., A.
Esquer's 'Essai sur les castes dans l'Inde' (1870) furnishes much valu-
able information on the caste system in the French settlements in India.
Another useful work on the same subject is that of Charles Schoebel --
'L'Inde française; l'histoire des origines et du développement des castes
de l'Inde' (1884). Gabriel Fanotsaux in his 'Histoire des Colonies
françaises et de l'expansion de la France dans le monde' (1929) deals with the history of the development of the colonial administration and provides statistical information on the area covered.

The only Tamil speaking regions in the former French settlements in India are Pondicherry and Karikal and this study is confined to the Tamil speaking areas. The methodology adopted, is in treating the various topics in a chronological way. Thus the topical and chronological arrangement is followed. At the beginning of each topic a brief account of the conditions prevailing at the close of the 17th century is given. This background material is necessary for a proper evaluation of the social conditions in the 18th and 19th centuries. Each section of the work deals with a topic at length, and completely as far as that subject is concerned.

At the commencement of the eighteenth century the French had settlements at Pondicherry, Masulipatnam and Cauveripatnam on the Coromandel Coast. François Martin was primarily responsible for developing the town of Pondicherry into a leading commercial centre. During the
Anglo-French wars of the eighteenth century, the settlements underwent many changes. With the fall of Pondicherry in August 1793 the long drawn Anglo-French rivalry in India, which had begun since the time of Dupleix, came to a close. The territories were finally restored to the French in December 1816.

Since 1816, the French introduced various administrative reforms which had far reaching effects. Although the early French administrators were basically conservative and more concerned with the consolidation of their authority, it is nonetheless important to see French rule in India, as more than a mere system of political domination. Indeed, when analyzing social and political change, it will be more meaningful to view French colonialism as a dynamic force possessing certain inherently revolutionary tendencies which were capable of altering a society long characterized by the stability of its own social institutions and the religious beliefs.

To paint a stationary picture of the Society during these two centuries would not be proper. An attempt is made in this dissertation to trace the shifts in direction and the underlying currents responsible
for these changes. French politics in India generated some quite radical social changes in Tamil society during the nineteenth century.

The year 1881 of cardinal importance in the history of French India. 'Renunciation' (Renunciation) which opened the door for 'emancipation' granted the right to every French Indian subject, the right to renounce his personal status. All those who did so were 'renouncers' and were governed by the political and civil law as applicable to French citizens in the Colony.

This period marked the emergence of elite groups and the study analyses how one set of elites rather than another came to be the carrier of the group's demands, how processes of social change affected the relations among different groups, and what role party and government actions and politics played in affecting the solidarity and cohesion of groups.

With the advent of the Third Republic, the people of the colony were drawn into the mainstream of political life in 1871, when they elected a deputy to the National Assembly in France. The institutional
innovations that served as net works of interaction between them, and the process of culture change that resulted form part of this study.

One significant factor associated with French rule in India was western education whose importance in effecting social and political change cannot be brushed aside. In tracing out the development of Tamil society, necessary attention has been given to look into the structure of society, to its dominant values, economic, social and cultural modes and to the way in which the whole society has been the subject of change over time.

**SOURCES**

The sources for this study are as follows:

i. Official documents including the records, official publications and reports.

ii. Biographies

iii. Accounts of travellers, private diaries

iv. Contemporary writings, journals and newspapers, and

v. Secondary works.

**OFFICIAL RECORDS**

The official records and reports constitute the most important source for this work. Mention may be made here of a few of
the primary sources -- 'Almanach de Pondichéry', 'Annuaire des établisse-
ments français dans l'Inde', 'Journal officiel de l'Inde Française',
'Procès-verbaux des séances - Conseil Colonial', 'Procès-Verbaux des
séances - Conseil Général', 'Procès-Verbaux des séances - Conseil Local',
'Correspondance Générale', 'The French in India Series Military records',
'Diary and Consultation volumes' and papers on Caste disputes.

As for the main biographical works, mention has been made
earlier in this chapter. The value of the accounts of travellers for a
study of this nature cannot be exaggerated. The following are the most
important: François Martin - 'Mémoires de François Martin, fondateur de
Pondichéry (1665 - 1696). Simon de La Farelle -- 'Mémoires de Chevalier
de la Farelle sur la prise de Mahé', Jean Law, 'Etat politique de l'Inde
en 1777', the accounts of Le Gentil and Victor Jacquemont, and Buchanan's
'Journey through Mysore, Malabar and Canara'.

The 'Private Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai' (12 Vols) is of
primary importance for the 18th century. As a record the diary, though
perhaps in parts makes dull reading, is on the whole a deeply interesting,
and certainly valuable account of things historical, political and social. Ananda Ranga Pillai was Dubash to Dupleix. Thanks to the diary which he kept faithfully for twenty-five years (1736 - 1761), we have an almost Pepysian record of the life of the settlement of Pondicherry. We can find in it occasional glimpses of the attitude of an important Hindu toward his French masters and toward his own society.

**Jesuit Letters.** The 'Lettres édifiantes et curieuses' are in the nature of letters and annual reports, sent by the Jesuit missionaries in South India to their superiors in Europe. Though mainly and professedly religious, they throw a flood of light on the political and social conditions, because society as a whole attracted the attention of the missionaries. As has been rightly remarked by John Lockman, the Jesuits by their education, their extensive learning, the pains they took to acquire the languages such as Sanskrit, Tamil, and Malayalam, and their long residence among the people, were fit to understand the people much better than those travellers, who mostly confined their contacts to the ports, and whose only aim was commerce. The value of the Jesuit letters also

lies in the fact, that the Jesuits, being foreigners, took notice of things, which a native of the country would pass over as too obvious and too familiar to be described.

The nephew of Ananda Ranga Pillai, Thiruvengadam Pillai continued the work of Ananda Ranga from 1762 to 1799. This is in three volumes (manuscript) and available at the Tamil Nadu Archives and Pondicherry archives. Abbé Dubois' work on 'Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies' is of primary importance. He was a close and careful observer of men and things and his accounts are, therefore, of immense value. The work made its appearance in the early years of the nineteenth century. His work mainly deals with social customs and incidentally he discusses the general condition of the people.

Captain Vaisseau Cordier's -- 'Historique et Statistique de Karikal' is primarily an historical account of Karikal from 1739 until December 1824. The text is supplemented by several documents on

the territory, and the physical description of the settlement and the inventory of its natural resources are as a whole remarkable. Capt. Cordier served as Administrator of the settlement of Karikal.

To form an objective opinion of the social conditions, a number of contemporary books, journals and contemporary newspapers were consulted. A number of secondary sources have also been consulted for the proper understanding and treatment of the subject. There are certain limitations to this study, mainly, the paucity of Tamil source materials and the lack of statistical data on the various castes during the latter half of the nineteenth century.