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EARLY AGITATIONS AGAINST BRITISH RULE

**HISTORY, CULTURE, HERITAGE AND SOCIO – POLITICAL
MOVEMENTS IN TAMIL NADU**

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Introduction

- After defeating the French and their Indian allies in the three Carnatic Wars, the East India Company began to consolidate and extend its power and influence.
- However, local kings and feudal chieftains resisted this.

Resistance Of Regional Powers Against The British

Palayams and Palayakkarars

- The word “palayam” means a **domain, a military camp, or a little kingdom**.
- **Palayakkarars** (Poligar is how the British referred to them) in **Tamil** refers to the holder of a **little kingdom** as a feudatory to a greater sovereign.

Eastern and Western Palayams

- Among the **72 Palayakkarars**, created by the **Nayak rulers**, there were **two blocs**, namely the **prominent eastern** and the **western Palayams**.
- The **eastern Palayams** were **Sattur, Nagalapuram, Ettayapuram, and Panchalamkurichi**.

Palayakkarars' Revolt 1755-1801

Revolt of Puli Thevar 1755–176

- In **March 1755 Mahfuzkhan** (brother of the Nawab of Arcot) was sent with a contingent of the Company army under **Colonel Heron to Tirunelveli**.

Yusuf Khan and Puli Thevar

- The organized resistance of the palayakkarars under Puli Tevar gave an opportunity to the English to interfere directly in the affairs of Tirunelveli.
- Aided by the **Raja of Travancore**, from **1756 to 1763**, the palayakkarars of Tirunelveli led by Puli Tevar were in a constant state of rebellion against the Nawab's authority.

Rebellion of Veerapandya Kattabomman 1790-1799

- **Veerapandya Kattabomman** became the **Palayakkarar of Panchalamkurichi** at the age of **thirty** on the death of his father, **Jagavira Pandya Kattabomman**.
- The Company's administrators, **James London and Colin Jackson**, had considered him a man of peaceful disposition.
- However, soon several events led to conflicts between Veerapandya Kattabomman and the East India Company.

The Siege of Panchalamkurichi

- In **May 1799**, **Lord Wellesley** issued orders from Madras for the advance of forces from Tiruchirappalli, Thanjavur and Madurai to Tirunelveli.
- **Major Bannerman** commanded the troops.

Kattabomman and the Confederacy of Palayakkarars

- In the meantime, **Marudhu Pandiyar of Sivagangai** formed the **South Indian Confederacy of rebels against the British**, with the neighbouring palayakkars like **Gopala Nayak of Dindigul and Yadul Nayak of Aanamalai**.

The Marudhu Brothers

- **Periya Marudhu or Vella Marudhu (1748–1801)** and his younger brother **Chinna Marudhu (1753-1801)** were able generals of Muthu Vadugar of Sivagangai.
- After Muthu Vadugar's death in the **Kalaiyar Kovil battle** **Marudhu** brothers assisted in restoring the throne to **Velunachiyar**.

Rebellion of Marudhu Brothers (1800–1801)

- Despite the suppression of **Kattabomman's revolt in 1799**, rebellion broke out again in **1800**.
- The uprising, which broke out in Coimbatore in **June 1800**, soon spread to Ramanathapuram and Madurai.
- The Palayakars of Coimbatore, Sathyamangalam and Tarapuram were caught and hanged.

Vellore Revolt 1806

- Before reducing all palayakkarars of south Tamilnadu into submission the East India Company had acquired the revenue districts of Salem, Dindigul at the **conclusion of the war with Tipu in 1792.**
- According to this **Treaty of 1801**, the Nawab was to cede the districts of North Arcot, South Arcot, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai and Tirunelveli to the Company and transfer all the administrative powers to it.

Outbreak of the Revolt

- On **10 July 1806**, in the early hours, **guns were booming** and the Indian sepoy of the **1st and 23rd regiments** raised their standard of revolt.
- **Colonel Fancourt**, who commanded the garrison, was the **first victim.**