



PEOPLE'S REVOLT

Good Morning

Dear Students I am very happy to meet you

Today we learn about – *Early revolts of South India, The South Indian Rebellion*

Learning Objectives

- To know the Palayakkarar (Poligar) system in Tamil Nadu
- To understand the role of PuliThevar and Kattabomman in the anti-British uprising
- To know about the South Indian Rebellion
- To know the causes and effects of Vellore Mutiny
- To understand the causes and impacts of Revolt of 1857

Introduction

The establishment of political and economic dominance by the British over many parts of India after the Battle of Plassey, 1757 disrupted the political, social and economic order of the country. This led to the divesting many landlords and chieftains of their power and estates. Naturally, many of them revolted against the British. The English assumed the right of collecting the annual tribute from the Palayakkarar. The first resistance to the British was offered by the Pulithevar. Since then there had been rebellions by Palayakkarar such as the Veerapandiya Kattabomman, Oomathurai, Marudu brothers and Dheeran Chinnamalai.

Origin of Palayam

- The Vijayanagar rulers appointed Nayaks in their provinces. The Nayak of Madurai in turn appointed Palayakkarar.
- Viswanatha became the Nayak of Madurai in 1529.
- He noticed that he could not control the chieftain who wanted more powers in their provinces.
- So with the consultation of his minister Ariyanatha Mudaliyar, Viswanatha instituted Palayakkarar system in 1529.
- The whole country was divided into 72 Palayams and each one was put under a Palayakkarar.
- Palayakkarar was the holder of a territory or a Palayam.
- These Palayams were held in military tenure and extended their full co-operation to be need of the Nayaks.
- The Palayakkarars collected taxes, of which one third was given to the Nayak of Madurai another one third for the expenditure of the army and rest was kept for themselves.



Early revolts of South India

Revolt of the Palayakkars

- During the 17th and 18th centuries the Palayakkarars played a vital role in the politics of Tamil Nadu.
- They regarded themselves as independent. Among the Palayakkarars, there were two blocs, namely the Eastern and the Western blocs.
- The Eastern Palayams were the Nayaks ruled under the control of Kattabomman and the Western palayams were the Maravas ruled under the control of Pulithevan.
- These two palayakkarars refused to pay the kist (tribute) to the English and rebelled.
- The early struggle between the Palayakkarars and the East India Company had a strong political dimension.
- By the Carnatic treaty of 1792, consolidated the English power over the Palayakkarars.
- The English got the right to collect taxes.
- The result was the outbreak of the revolt of Palayakkarars.

Pulithevar

- Pulithevar was the pioneer in Tamil Nadu, to protest against the English rule in India.
- He was the Palayakkarar of the Nerkattumseval, near Tirunelveli. During his tenure he refused to pay the tribute neither to Mohammed Ali, the Nawab of Arcot nor to the English.
- Further he started opposing them. Hence, the forces of the Nawab of Arcot and the English attacked Pulithevar.
- But the combined forces were defeated by Pulithevar at Tirunelveli.
- Pulithevar was the first Indian king to have fought and defeated the British in India.
- After this victory Pulithevan attempted to form a league of the Palayakkarars to oppose the British and the Nawab.
- In 1759, Nerkattumseval was attacked by the forces of Nawab of Arcot under the leadership of Yusuf Khan.
- Pulithevar was defeated at Anthanallur and the Nawabs forces captured Nerkattumseval in 1761.
- Pulithevar who lived in exile recaptured Nerkattumseval in 1764. Later, he was defeated by Captain Campell in 1767.
- Pulithevar escaped and died in exile without fulfilling his purpose, although his courageous trail of a struggle for independence in the history of South India.



Virapandya Kattabomman



Virapandya Kattabomman

- The Ancestors of Kattabomman belonged to Andhra. They migrated to Tamil country during the 11th century.
- As a feudatory under Pandyas, Jagaveerapandiaya Kattabomman ruled Virapandyapuram.
- Panchalankurichi was its capital.
- He later became a Poligar during the rule of Nayaks.
- He was succeeded by his son Veerapandya Kattabomman.
- His wife was Jakkammal and his brothers were Oomathurai and Sevathaiah.

Nawab of Arcot

- After the decline of the Vijayanagar empire, the mughals established their supremacy in the south.
- The Nawabs acted as their representatives in Karnataka. Panchalamkuruchi palayam was acted as an ally to the Nawab of Arcot.
- Hence it paid tribute to the Nawabs.
- But in 1792, the political condition had completely changed. Based on the Carnatic treaty of 1792, the company gained the right to collect taxes from Panchalamkuruchi.
- The collection of tribute was the main cause for the rivalry between the English and Kattabomman.

Kattabomman met Jackson

- In 1798, Colin Jackson, the collector of Ramanathapuram wrote letters to Kattabomman asking him to pay the tribute arrears.
- But Kattabomman replied that he was not in a position to remit the tribute due to the famine in the country.
- Colin Jackson got angry and decided to send an expedition to punish Kattabomman.
- However, the Madras government directed the collector to summon the Palayakkarar at Ramanathapuram and hold a discussion.



- In 1798, Kattabomman and his minister Siva Subramaniam met the Collector at Ramanathapuram.
- Upon a verification of accounts, Colin Jackson was convinced that Kattabomman had cleared most of the arrears leaving only 1080 pagodas as balance.
- During this interview Kattabomman and his Minister, Sivasubramaniam, had to stand before the arrogant collector for three hours.
- The Collector insulted them and tried to arrest Kattabomman and his minister. Kattabomman tried to escape with his minister.
- Oomathurai suddenly entered the fort with his men and helped the escape of Kattabomman. But unfortunately Sivasubramaniam was taken as prisoner.

Edward Clive and Kattabomman

- After his return to Panchalamkuruchi, Kattabomman wrote a letter to the Madras Council narrating the behaviour of the Collector Colin Jackson.
- Edward Clive, the Governor of Madras Council ordered Kattabomman to surrender.
- The Madras Council directed Kattabomman to appear before a Committee. Meanwhile, Edward Clive dismissed the Collector for his misbehaviour and released SivaSubramania.
- Kattabomman appeared before the Committee, and found Kattabomman was not guilty.
- S.R. Lushington was appointed collector in the place of Colin Jackson, who was eventually dismissed from service.

The confederacy of Palayakkarars

- During that time, Marudu Pandyan of Sivaganga formed the South Indian Confederacy of rebels against the British, along with the neighbouring Palayakkarars.
- This confederacy declared a proclamation which came to be known as Tiruchirappalli Proclamation.
- Kattabomman was interested in this confederacy. He tried to establish his influence over Sivagiri, who refused to join with alliance of the rebels.
- Kattabomman advanced towards Sivagiri. But the Palayakkar of Sivagiri was a tributary to the Company.
- So the Company considered the expedition of Kattabomman as a challenge to their authority.
- So the Company ordered the army to march to Panchalamkuruchi.



Fall of Panchalamkuruchi

- Major Bannerman moved his army to Panchalamkuruchi on 5th September.
- They cut off all the communications to the Fort. In a clash at Kallarpatti, Siva Subramaniam was taken as a prisoner.
- Kattabomman escaped to Pudukottai. Vijaya Rangunatha Tondaiman, Raja of Pudukottai, captured Kattabomman from the jungles of Kalapore and handed over to the Company.
- After the fall of Panchalamkuruchi, Bannerman brought the prisoners to an assembly of the Palayakkarars and after trial sentenced them to death.
- Sivasubramania was executed at Nagalapuram.
- On the 16th October ViraPandya Kattabomman was tried before an assembly of Palayakkarar, summoned at Kayathar.
- On 17th October 1799, Kattabomman was hanged at the fort of Kayathar.
- Kattabomman's heroic deeds were the subject of many folk ballads which kept his memory alive among the people.

Velu Nachiyar



Velu Nachiyar

- Velu Nachiyar was a queen of Sivagangai.
- At the age of 16, she was married to Muthu Vaduganathar, the Raja of Sivagangai.
- In 1772, the Nawab of Arcot and the British troops invaded Sivagangai.
- They killed Muthu Vaduganathar in Kalaiyar Koil battle.
- Velu Nachiyar escaped with her daughter Vellachi Nachiyar and lived under the protection of Gopala Nayaker at Virupachi near Dindigul.
- During this period she organised an army and employed her intelligent agents to find where the British stored their ammunition.
- She arranged a suicide attack by a faithful follower Kuyili, a commander of Velu Nachiar.
- She recaptured Sivagangai and was again crowned as queen with the help of Marudu brothers.



- She was the first queen to fight against the British colonial power in India.
- She is known by Tamils as Veeramangai and also known as ‘Jhansi Rani of South India’.

Marudu Brothers



Marudu Brothers

- Marudu brothers were the sons of Mookiah Palaniappan and Ponnathal.
- The elder brother was called Periya Marudu (Vella Marudhu) and the younger brother Chinna Marudu.
- Chinna Marudu was more popular and was called Marudu Pandiyan. Chinna Marudu served under Muthu Vaduganatha Peria Udaya Devar (1750-1772) of Sivaganga.
- In 1772 the Nawab of Arcot laid seige of Sivaganga and captured it. Muthu Vaduganatha Peria Udaya Devar, died in battle.
- However after a few months Sivaganga was re-captured by Marudu Brothers and Periya Marudu was enthroned as the ruler. Chinna Marudu acted as his adviser.
- Due to the terrorist activities against British, he was called as “Lion of Sivaganga”.
- In the later half of the eighteenth century the rebellion against the British was carried by Marudu Brothers in South India.

Causes for the conflict

Kattabomman was hanged to death and his brother Umaithurai and others fled to Sivaganga, where Marudu Pandya gave protection to them. The merchants of Sivaganga did not like the interference of the company in their internal politics. The company waged war against Sivaganga for these two causes.



The South Indian Rebellion (1800-1801)

- In February 1801 the brothers of Kattabomman, Oomathurai and Sevathaiah escaped from Palayamkottai prison and reached Kamudhi. Chinna Marudu took them to Siruvayal, his capital.
- They reconstructed their ancestral fort at Panchalamkurichi.
- The British troops under Conlin Macaulay retook the fort in April and the Palayakkarar brothers sought shelter in Sivaganga.
- The English demanded Marudu Pandyas to hand over the fugitives, the latter refused. Conlonel Agnew and Colonel Innes marched against them.
- The Palayakkarar War assumed a much broader character than its predecessor.
- It was directed by a confederacy consisting of Marudu Pandiar of Sivaganga, Gopala Nayak of Dindugal, Kerala Varma of Malabar and Krishnappa Nayak and Dhoondaji of Mysore.
- The English declared war against the confederacy.

The Tiruchirappalli Proclamation (1801)

- The Marudu Pandyas issued a proclamation of Independence called Tiruchirappalli Proclamation in June 1801.
- The Proclamation of 1801 was the first call to the Indians to unite against the British.
- A copy of the proclamation was pasted on the walls of the Nawab's palace in the fort of Tiruchi and another copy was placed on the walls of the Vaishnava temple at Srirangam.
- Thus Marudu brothers spread the spirit of opposition against the English everywhere.
- As a result many Palayakkarars of Tamil Nadu went on a rally to fight against the English.
- Chinna Marudu collected nearly 20,000 men to challenge the English army.
- British reinforcements were rushed from Bengal, Ceylon and Malaya.
- The rajas of Pudukkottai, Ettayapuram and Thanjavur stood by the British.
- Divide and rule policy followed by the English spilt the forces of the Palayakkarars.

English annexed Sivagangai

- In May 1801, English attacked the rebels in Thanjavur and Tiruchi areas. The rebels went to Piranmalai and Kalayarkoil.
- They were again defeated by the forces of the English.
- In the end, the superior military strength and the able commanders of the British army won the battle.



- The rebellion failed and English annexed Sivagangai in 1801.
- The Marudu brothers were executed in the Fort of Tirupathur in Ramanathapuram District on 24 October 1801.
- Oomathurai and Sevathaiah was captured and beheaded at Panchalamkuruchi on 16 November 1801.
- Seventy three rebels were sentenced to Penang in Malaya, then called the Prince of Wales Island.
- Though they fell before the English, they were the pioneers in sowing the seeds of nationalism in the land of Tamil.
- Thus the South Indian Rebellion is a land mark in the history of Tamil Nadu.
- Although the 1800-1801 rebellion was to be categorized in the British records as the Second Palayakkarar War.
- Under the terms of the Karnataka Treaty on 31 July 1801, the British assumed direct control over Tamil Nadu.
- The Palayakkarar system was abolished.