

Unit - 4

People's Revolt



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 Puli Thevar. 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