

REPORTS OF SEMINAR

ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

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REPORT OF SEMINARS

A seminar was conducted under the auspices of the Institute at 4-15 P.M. on Monday, the 20th April 1981 in Room No. 17, University Departmental Buildings, on "ARCHIVES AND HISTORY". The following is a report of the seminar.

Chairman: Dr. K. K. Pillay, M.A., D.Litt., D.Phil (Oxon), Director, Institute of Traditional Cultures.

Leader: Thiru S. Singarajan, M.A., M.Litt., Director of Archives.

The Chairman introduced the leader and called upon him to speak:

a. Documentary Evidence

Thiru S. Singarajan: It is generally said that "the action of a Statesman is anticipatory, the solution of a politician is temporary, the description of a poet is imaginary but the verdict of an historian is declaratory". It is the documentary evidence or reference to the record, whether Archival or non Archival which naturally offers the authenticity to their declaration.

Archival collections may be private or public; they serve as the richest source for documentation. It is well known that it is the temple records which had helped in the reconstruction of the history of South India in the ancient, mediaeval or modern period of Indian history to a large extent. The Work of Dr. K. K. Pillay on Suchindram temple stands as a model to bring out specifically Local history. It must be known that the elaborate description of the practice of "Kaimukke" reveals how chastity of women are safeguarded in the Indian Society. These materials are preserved only on the plea of historians to consult them and reproduce them as proof of their findings.

Thus, if the archival collections are preserved for centuries in every country today and not destroyed, it is primarily the historians who are responsible for it. It is worthwhile to mention that without proper documentation there cannot be any authentic history. No doubt, Archives serve the primary purpose of supplying evidence to Government during the period of their currency. But more important they supply the basic material for historical research.

The Indian Historical Records Commission of late has laid emphasis on records available with mutts, churches, mosques or temples and the private collections in the hands of freedom fighters and public men as one of the primary source materials and considered as a corrective to the public records in Government custody. They are complementary and at the same time offer corroborative evidence to the official version of history. Large collections of private papers are nowadays handed over to the National Archives of India. There are Regional Committees for Survey of Historical Records in every State, who list and publish the existence of private records in the National Register of Records. Tamil Nadu Archives have also acquired many valuable collections and listed records in private custody. We have the additional source of the contemporary and oral evidence furnished by statesmen, politicians, social reformers and freedom fighters, which are conveniently utilised by foreign researchers in their dissertations.

A study of the revolutions in Europe would tell us clearly that history is a record of struggle of humanity in the social, political, economic, industrial, agricultural, educational or scientific fields. It is a struggle for the realisation of the rights of the people; it is a struggle for the rights and liberties of the people; rights, whether they are public or private. The Magna Carta, 1215, the Petition of Rights, 1642, the Bill of Rights, 1688, the Declaration of Rights, 1776 by the colonies which formed the United States of America, the Declaration of Rights of Man in France, 1789, the Rights of the Working Class in Russia after the October Revolution of 1917, the

Human rights in the United Nation's Charter, the Fundamental Rights enshrined in the Indian Constitution are some of the documents which would illustrate this. Revolutions themselves are exported from one country to another in the order stated above. After independence India is undergoing many silent revolutions as from 1909-1935 in every sphere of human activity and historians take a note of the emergence of the rights of the people involved. Centuries have passed by but the writings of Voltaire, Rousseau or Karl Marx still remain potent factors as their philosophies have been based on historical material.

**b. The birth of Madras as the commercial capital of
East India company**

Tamil Nadu Archives is one of the richest store house of such historical information from 1649 when Francis Day landed in Madras. The name Chennapaṭṭinam has been derived from Chennappa Naick, Raja of Chandragiri, an obscure successor of the Raja of Vijayanagar on whose behalf the Firman dt. 22nd July 1649 was granted to Francis Day. By this grant, English gained $3\frac{1}{2}$ square miles of territory on the sandy beach on the Marina for £5000 of annual quit rent. But it is from this dreary waste that the English built up an Indian Empire. Madras was declared as the commercial capital of the East India Company for all its trade between Bantang and Java in the East upto Maritus in the Middle East. Before long it developed into the political capital of the East India Company. It must be remembered that Clive with 300 Sepoys proceeded to Bengal from Madras. By the beginning of the 19th century Britain has laid the foundation for a mighty empire in the East, an empire to supplement loss of America where its principles of colonisation underwent a great eclipse. Madras remained the intellectual capital of India, though the political capital of the country was shifted to Bengal and later to Delhi. Madras is on the Coramandel coast and the word Coramandel, according to historians refers either to Chozhamaṇḍalam or Korakaimaṇḍalam. The name Madras marred our vision. The English ruled over the country for more than 300 years,

The Chief subjects of topical interest of the British Rule may be mentioned under the following heads :

- a. Birth of Commercial activities of the East India Company in India with particular reference to Madras, 1649-1754.
- b.(i) Growth and development of Madras as the Commercial Capital of the East India Company, 1754-1802.
(ii) Resistance of the Local populations (iii) Commercial exploitation (iv) The Dubesis (v) The Nababs (vi) Life of the People in the 17th century (vii) Changing manners and customs.
- c. The conflict of the English with Rival companies, 1700-1800
- d. English and Native powers, 1750-1802
- e. The Poligar Rebellion, 1758-1802
- f. Defeat of Tippu, 1799
- g. Permanent Settlement, 1802
- h. Ryotwari and Munro, 1820-1840
- i. (i) Dalhousie and the Doctrine of lapse, 1848-1858
(ii) Administration Reforms on the eve of the "Indian Mutiny".
- j. South Indian and "the Great Rebellion", 1857.
- k. Crown taking over responsibility, 1858.
- l. (i) The Indian Councils' Act, 1861. (ii) The Birth of an Independent Judiciary, 1861.
- m. Birth of Congress, 1884.
- n. Tilak and Swaraj, 1904-1909.
- o. The Councils' Act of 1909.
- p. Mrs. Annie Besant and the Home Rule Movement, 1914-1919.
- q. Dyarchy, 1919.
- r. Act of 1935 and the Communal Award, 1934-1935.

- s. The independent movements of the Congress, 1919-1947.
- t. Transfer of power and partition of the country, 1942-1947.
- u. National reconstruction programme in India, 1947-1981.
- c. **Classification of the Pre-Mutiny Records in Tamil Nadu Archives.**

The Pre-Mutiny records admit broadly the following classification :

1. Consultations, 1672, 2. General Letters 3. Country Correspondences, 1753-1829 4. Special Correspondence and Minutes 5. Special Consultations 6. Consultations and Correspondence connected with outstations 7. Negotiations with Foreign Powers and Treaties 8. Committees on Finance 9. Committees and Proceedings as regards individuals 10. Miscellaneous Letters 11. Reports 12. Journals and Narratives 1757 13. Political Intelligence 14. Law, Justice and Police 15. Records respecting establishments 16. Cowle Books, Registers of grants, Land Customs etc. 17. Returns 18. Memorials and Petitions 19. Covenants and Oaths 20. General Standing Orders 21. Gazettes and Newspapers.

The Consultations comprise a full record of the formal consultations of the President and Council at Madras from the year 1672. The early proceedings are in the nature of chronicles. At that time all the events of the colony, commercial, political and administrative were recorded in the same series, though in later years some of the miscellaneous matters came to be recorded separately. The general Letters are letters interchanged between the Government of Madras and the Board of Directors in England. Those "to England" contain full information respecting the affairs of this Presidency and those "from England" contain the instructions of the Board of Directors and its approval or non-approval of the Government Proceedings. They are invested with considerable interest, besides possessing high literary value. The 'Country Correspondence' comprises the whole of the correspondence which passed between the Military and Political Departments with the native powers from

1753 to 1829 and its historical importance need not be dilated upon. The special correspondence and minutes contain correspondence with the French. The relationship with the French, Surajood Dowla, Monichand, Mir Jaffar, Omichand, Muhammad Ali and others can be gleaned from them. These special correspondence include correspondence on wars with Tippu, Land Settlement of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, Poligar wars, Mysore and Maharatta affairs, Clive's defence of his administration, private debts of the carnatic Nawab and general administration of territories seized from the Dutch. Special consultations refer to special occurrences which are of historical value. Cession of the Northern Circars, Mr. Humphrey's deportation for having published revolutionary articles in the 'Herald of India' edited by him and his escape, collision between the Government and the Supreme Court, Madras Government Bank and expeditions and mutinies, correspondence connected with outstations and negotiations with foreign powers, need no description. 'Committees and Proceedings as regards individuals' throw light on corruption, indiscipline and mischief. The Miscellaneous letters contain letters of minor importance not recorded in the Consultation. The Reports contain information on troops, zamindaries, export, secrecy, botanical reports and the like. Journals and narratives are journals of Military Proceedings and other similar records and contain accounts of Revolution in Bengal (1757), narrative of voyages and an account on the Hindus. Political intelligence, Law, Justice and Police, Cowle Books, Registers of Grants, Land Customs, Memorials and Petitions, Covenants and oaths, General Standing Orders and Gazettes and Newspapers explain themselves.

d: Non Secretariat Records in Tamil Nadu Archives

Non-Secretariat Records are a good source. Materials: The records of the Board of Revenue, District Collectors, Mayor's Court, the Dutch Records, the Persian Records, the Danish Records, the Factory Records etc. are classified as non-Secretariat records. The records of the Board and the District Collectors give a mine of detailed information about the local conditions

and the day to day administration of the district which are not obtainable among the Secretariat records. The records of the Mayor's court give valuable information on the early administration of judicial practices in Madras. The Dutch occupied Cochin and the Danish Tranquebar in the Madras Presidency. The records left by them contain good material for authentic history. The Persian records mirror the internal administration and the correspondence of the Nawab of the Carnatic during the eighteenth century and as such contain good source material. Among the books registered at the office of the Registrar of Books which are in about 17 languages, a mine of published information relating to history, sociology, religion, science and politics can be collected for those interested in any particular subject, besides providing material for the study of linguistics and the growth of contemporary literature.

e. A description of the Post Mutiny Records

The Post Mutiny Records are arranged in Departmental and chronological order. The records of each department contain information on as many subjects as the department had dealt with. It is difficult to indicate them in a short note. But the names of the Departments themselves under which the records are classed would give a broad idea of the subjects themselves.

STACK I

(Secretariat Records)

| <i>Departments</i> | <i>Years</i> | |
|-------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| | <i>From</i> | <i>To</i> |
| 1. Public | 1857 | 1975 |
| 2. Petition | 1857 | 1882 |
| 3. Military | 1857 | 1895 |
| 4. Political | 1857 | 1936 |
| 5. Ecclesiastical | 1857 | 1936 |
| 6. Education, | 1861 | 1975 |
| 7. Petition (Endt.) | 1876 | 1885 |
| 8. Medical | 1916 | 1920 |
| 9. Home (Miscellaneous) | 1916 | 1921 |
| 10. Revenue (Spl. War) | 1919 | 1920 |
| 11. Public Health | 1921 | 1975 |

| | | |
|---|------|------|
| 12. Public (R.D.P.) | 1957 | 1959 |
| 13. Rural Development and Local Administration (Rural Development) | 1959 | 1960 |

STACK II

| | | |
|---|------|------|
| 1. Revenue | 1857 | 1975 |
| 2. Separate Revenue | 1915 | 1925 |
| 3. Revenue Special | 1918 | 1920 |
| 4. Routine Revenue (R.R.) | 1949 | 1950 |
| 5. Development | 1921 | 1953 |
| 6. Industries, Labour and Co-operation | 1953 | 1975 |
| 7. Industries, Labour and Co-operation (Special) | 1956 | 1960 |
| 8. Food and Agriculture | 1946 | 1975 |
| 9. Food and Agriculture (Food Production) | 1950 | 1956 |
| 10. Firka Development | 1947 | 1950 |
| 11. Rural Welfare | 1950 | 1953 |
| 12. Law (Registration) | 1921 | 1936 |

STACK III

| | | |
|---|------|------|
| 1. Judicial | 1857 | 1922 |
| 2. Judicial (Police) | 1923 | 1925 |
| 3. Judicial | 1926 | 1928 |
| 4. Public (Police) | 1929 | 1936 |
| 5. Judicial Magisterial | 1923 | 1924 |
| 6. Law General | 1921 | 1936 |
| 7. Home | 1936 | 1975 |
| 8. Home (Passport) | 1946 | 1965 |
| 9. Legislative | 1862 | 1936 |
| 10. Legal | 1936 | 1953 |
| 11. Law | 1953 | 1975 |
| 12. Finance | 1857 | 1975 |
| 13. Finance (Pension) | 1857 | 1942 |
| 14. Legislative Council (President's Orders) | 1921 | 1936 |
| 15. Finance (Code) | 1926 | 1927 |
| 16. Finance (Book Branch) | 1901 | 1906 |

STACK IV

| | | |
|---|------|------|
| 1. Public Works | 1857 | 1975 |
| 2. Marine | 1857 | 1936 |
| 3. Railway | 1870 | 1924 |
| 4. Irrigation | 1877 | 1926 |
| 5. Finance (Local) | 1885 | 1920 |
| 6. Finance (Municipal) | 1885 | 1920 |
| 7. Local Administration | 1920 | 1959 |
| 8. Rural Development and Local Administration | 1960 | 1975 |

STACK V

(Records of Pre-Mutiny period)

| | | |
|-------------------------|------|------|
| 1. Public | 1670 | 1856 |
| 2. Military | 1752 | 1856 |
| 3. Revenue | 1774 | 1856 |
| 4. Secret | 1796 | 1850 |
| 5. Judicial | 1798 | 1856 |
| 6. Political | 1800 | 1856 |
| 7. Financial | 1811 | 1856 |
| 8. Commercial | 1815 | 1882 |
| 9. Petition | 1815 | 1882 |
| 10. Law | 1815 | 1856 |
| 11. Foreign | 1816 | 1846 |
| 12. Ecclesiastical | 1818 | 1856 |
| 13. Marine | 1838 | 1856 |
| 14. Public Works | 1843 | 1856 |
| 15. Financial (Railway) | 1853 | 1856 |

(Non Secretariat Records)

| | | |
|-----------------------|------|------|
| 16. Persian | — | — |
| 17. Dutch | 1657 | 1825 |
| 18. Danish | 1779 | 1845 |
| 19. Marathi (Modi) | — | — |
| 20. Madras Army | 1761 | 1895 |
| 21. Mayor's Court | 1689 | 1858 |
| 22. Madras Mint | 1744 | 1876 |
| 23. Coroner's Records | 1853 | 1889 |
| 24. Board of Revenue | 1786 | 1858 |

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(b) Heads of Departments: The records of the Board of Revenue are centralised in this office from 1786 down to the present with the exception of the records of the last ten years. So also are centralised the records of the Chief Conservator of Forests from 1919 down to the present with the exception of the records of the last ten years. All the records of the Board of Revenue and the Chief Conservator of Forests which are more than ten years are transferred to this office every year for permanent retention. These records are housed in Stack 6 as shown below.

STACK VI

| <i>Departments</i> | <i>Years</i> | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| | <i>From</i> | <i>To</i> |
| 1. Board of Revenue (Consultation) | 1786 | 1856 |
| 2. Land Revenue Settlement | 1857 | 1887 |
| 3. Land Revenue | 1887 | 1922 |
| 4. Revenue Settlement | 1887 | 1922 |
| 5. Separate Revenue | 1887 | 1924 |
| 6. Excise | 1925 | 1947 |
| 7. Excise (Press Series) | 1926 | 1951 |
| | and | |
| | 1954 | 1957 |
| 8. Court of Wards | 1885 | 1958 |
| 9. Commercial Taxes | 1939 | 1957 |
| 10. Food Production | 1949 | 1957 |
| 11. Inam Commissioner's Disposals | 1858 | 1954 |
| 12. Inam Deputy Collector's Disposals | 1858 | 1871 |
| 13. Irrigation Development Board | 1931 | 1956 |
| 14. Settlement of Estates | 1950 | 1956 |
| 15. Forests | 1886 | 1918 |
| 16. Chief Conservator of Forests | 1919 | 1958 |
| 17. Fodder and Grazing Committee | | |
| Proceedings | 1938 | 1956 |
| 18. Records relating to Travancore | | |
| Cochin State | 1921 | 1941 |
| 19. Custodian of Evacuee property | 1951 | 1952 |

The Chief topics of interest after Indian Independence may be mentioned under the following topics :

1. Agriculture - Technological and other improvements
2. Industries - Large Scale Industries
3. Industries - Small Scale Industries
4. State aid to Industries
5. Electricity and Roads
6. Taxation
7. Labour Welfare - Growth of
8. Labour Strikes - History of
9. Co-operation - Growth
10. Forests - Better utilisation and Administration of
11. Mineral resources of the State
12. Tenancy Reforms - History of
13. Ports and Harbours - Improvements
14. Administration - General-Red-tapism, Corruption etc.
15. Administration - Secretariat Administration
16. Social Legislation - Growth of (Notes on "The Madras Birds and Animal Sacrifices. Prohibition Act, 1950 will also come under this item).
17. Prison Reforms
18. Panchayats - Origin and development of
19. Municipalities - Origin and development of
20. Government and the Government Servants Conduct rules-Associations, Concessions etc.,
21. Administration of Justice - Defects in working
22. Forgotten Chapters in Legislation - history of official as well as Non-Official bills that never became Acts.
23. Medical-Preventive side of medicine-Public health
24. Medical-Curative side of medicine - Origin and development of
25. Indigenous medicine - A historical review
26. Sanitation - Water supply and Drainage
27. Illiteracy - Removal of
28. Education - Elementary Education - Growth of
29. Education - Secondary
30. Education - Collegiate Education - Growth of
31. Technical Education - Growth of
32. Animal Husbandry - Origin and development
33. Ryotwari system-Its introduction - Its defects
34. Famines - Policies followed - Measures suggested for tiding over them
35. Madras City-Town Planning and other improvements
36. Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments-Government Policy
37. Police Administration in the City - Growth of
38. Police Administration in the district - growth of
39. District Boards - Origin and development of
40. Communism - Its rise - Communist Party Tactics-Measure to counteract it.

This vast mine of information may be fully exploited by historians to bring to light the vicissitudes of fortunes of

South India. The historians may work to make Tamil Nadu Archives a Research Centre to re-write the history of South East Asia and the Far East Asia as well. The Institute of Traditional Culture may rise to the occasion to offer a number of fellowships to researchers to bring out our tradition and preserve our culture in the light of the archival material available in Tamil Nadu Archives.

In conclusion, the Chairman thanked the leader and other participants for their interesting speeches.

13
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