



**KONGU NADU TERRITORY SUPERIMPOSED
 ON PRESENT TAMIL NADU DISTRICTS**



Dr. Ponnarasu S.

French Institute of Pondicherry/Pondicherry University

Documents, Rituals

and the Lineage of Authority:

**the Legacy of the Palaiyakkarar (territorial governor)
 among the Tamils of South India**



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The title *palaiyakkarar* designated by the Vijayanagara Empire in 14th century is still held by some families in villages in a part of south India. The title refers to territory, *palaiyam* or armed camps. The families of the *palaiyakkarar* often hold archival sources authenticating these titles and their corresponding territory. These sources include a variety of documents such as the family genealogy, inscriptions in stone and copper, letters of ordinance; to name a few. Such sources are reproduced with every change to the larger power structure recording the validation and continuity of authority. Since independence and, democracy taking over the larger political structure in India, the continuity in validation of these titles has been stalled in the absence of favourable ordinance. This paper argues that such sources continue to vouch for the lineage of authority and authenticate its continuity in collective memory brought about through not only the display of the sources but more importantly the practice of its contents.

