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**Professor P.Sundaram Pillai's Conceptualisation of Dravidian Ideology**

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# Professor P.Sundaram Pillai's Conceptualisation of Dravidian Ideology

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**Abstract:** The term Dravidian, although a terminology of controversy among native and foreign scholars, is a compact ideology borrowed and used by the European Dravidologists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century from early Indian history and literature. Bishop Robert Caldwell put forward some ideas and theoretical framework to the term 'Dravidian'. Professor P.Sundaram Pillai (1885-1897) was one of the first non-Brahmin native scholars to propagate the ideas concerning remote antiquity, and cultural self-respect and identity of the Dravidians. His writings Nutrogai Vilakkam (1888), Some early Sovereigns of Travancore (1894). Some Milestones in the History of Tamil Literature, The age of Gnanasambandar (1895) and his famous drama Manonmaniyam (1891) tried to unravel and establish the historical antiquity of the Dravidian civilization. The present paper is an attempt to explore and analyse the conceptualization of Dravidian ideology by P. Sundaram Pillai.

**Keywords:** Dravidian, Dravidology, P.Sundaram Pillai, Robert Caldwell, Dravida Munnetta Kazhagam

## **Introduction**

The term Dravidian<sup>1</sup>, although a terminology of controversy among native and foreign scholars, is a compact ideology borrowed and used by the European Dravidologists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century from early Indian history and literature and popularised by Bishop Robert Caldwell and conceptualised by Prof.P.Sundaram Pillai, the author of the world renowned Tamil play Manonmaniyam. The term, not an invention of the European Dravidologists has a hoary antiquity buried deep in Indian history and literature. It had been used in variant forms as Damila, Tramila, Timili, Dravida, Dravidi and Dravidian in early North Indian and Deccani literature, inscriptions and grammatical works. When the European Indologists and Dravidologists discovered the antiquity of India, they distinguished and differentiated two racial and linguistic groups dominating the life of the Indian sub-continent. They called them the Aryan (North Indian) and the Dravidian (South Indian). Bishop Robert Caldwell the author of the famous History of Tinnevely, the Tinnevely Shanars and his magnum opus A Comparative Grammar of Dravidian or South Indian Family of languages, for the first time, read a linguistic meaning in to the term and popularised it throughout the