

CHAPTER II

VIZAGAPATNAM: URBAN PROCESS

AMIDIST DECLINE 1682-1724

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Vizagpatnam: Urban process amidst 'decline' 1682-1724

In his major survey of the rise and fall of the Coromandel ports, Arasaratnam is of the opinion that the ports of Masulipatnam, Peddapalli and Pulicat showed signs of regression which accelerated into their decline by the end of the seventeenth century. He attributes this decline to two major causes: 1) the rise of European companies and the forceful expulsion of Indian merchants from the open trade system and 2) the political disintegration which started with the decline of Vijayanagara in the mid seventeenth century and later to the Mughal conquest of Golconda in 1687.¹ He also stresses the diversity of Coromandel coast in which the southern Coromandel ports such as Porto Novo and Nagore displayed signs of growth while the northern Coromandel counterpart declined rapidly by the end of the seventeenth century. Consequently, he argues that no other port emerged or rose into prominence in the period between 1690-1740 on the northern Coromandel. Ports such as Ingeram, Kakinada, Coringa and Vizagapatnam are merely dismissed as mere 'feeder ports' involved in the coastal trade. Their rise, in particular of Kakinada and Vizagapatnam are attributed to the eighteenth century *per se* and are largely seen as being the products of European appropriation of Asian trade with autonomous territorial jurisdictions called fortifications.² Talking specifically of the Gingelly and Vizagapatnam coasts, Arasaratnam attributes the

¹ S. Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast, 1650-1740*, New Delhi, 1986, pp. 162-165.

² *Ibid.*

failure of these ports to various internecine wars between the tributary *raju* and *Velama* clans which was a consequence of Mughal intervention in northern Coromandel in the last decade of the seventeenth century.

Arasaratnam's analysis on the northern Coromandel has both empirical and methodological problems. Firstly, he has not paid serious attention to the English documentation on Vizagapatnam which commences roughly from the year 1682 and seemed to have relied heavily on the work of J. F. Richards on Mughal administration rather than situating trade in specific context of 1690-1724. Secondly, his methodology on the changing regional political scenario in the wake of Mughal conquest of Golconda is seriously flawed. He uncritically accepts the well known historiography of the Mughal historians and their analysis of political fragmentation as being an evidence of decay/decline in all spheres of economic activity and transposes it to the regional economy of northern Coromandel coast.³ The development of Vizagapatnam into a major port was not a product of European appropriation of Indian trade, as Arasaratnam opines, but due to the rigorous economic intervention of the local elite in the economy of Gingelly and Vizagapatnam coasts in which the European commerce was only a part of the regional dynamics.

By taking Vizagapatnam as a case study in the period between 1682-1724, this chapter firstly, contests the above

³ See, Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India 1556-1707*, Bombay, 1963, Shireen Moosvi, *The Economy of Mughal Empire, c.1595*, New Delhi, 1987., in particular. This notion extended to the regions outside Mughal empire say to south India. Thus see, J. F Richards, *Mughal Administration of Golconda*, New Delhi, 1977.

conclusions of S. Arasaratnam and to a lesser extent the work of J. F. Richard's and establishes that despite the political situation being volatile due to political flux created by the Mughal intervention and the local chiefs, the economy on the other hand displayed considerable resilience and even displayed signs of development which fostered the growth of Vizagpatnam into a major port town. Secondly, Various economic forces such as intense commercialisation of agriculture and monetisation remained intact in the local economy in spite of the imposition of imperial authority over the existing chiefdoms. It sustained itself on local agrarian production and trade which fostered urbanisation.

The expansion of the economic sub-structure was rooted through the active participation of the local chiefs in building up strong revenue resource base in agriculture and local trade.⁴ In the fast changing political environment, these people created an economic space of their own and emerged as politico-military entrepreneurs with diverse interests such as agrarian expansion, intervention in trading activities, especially grain markets to the ports of Ganjam, Vizagpatnam and Kakinada. Grain was cheap at Vizagapatnam which had its impact on the weaving economy of the region as well. The money generated through commercialisation was invested in political aggrandizement either on intra-regional conflicts or to stop the expanding Mughal empire.

⁴ C.A. Bayly for instance has studied the role of various categories of men like the local Mahajans, Mughal officials which included mansabdars, petty kings and finally the great household who participated in trade and other allied activities in the eighteenth century north India. See, C.A. Bayly, *Indian society in the age of British Expansion, The New Cambridge History of India*, Cambridge, 1991. and his earlier work, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars* Cambridge, 1988.

Unlike in Masulipatnam which was dominated by trans-oceanic Asian traders such as Mir Jumla and Madanna, the situation on the Gingelly and Vizagpatnam was quite different. Here, the trade was more localised and the mediation between the agrarian economy and trade was indirectly conducted by tributary *raju* and *velama* clans. It may be noted that the nature of entrepreneurship was markedly different from Masulipatnam, that the participation of tributary chiefs in trade was more indirect and even negligible. However, these local political elements were instrumental in creating necessary conditions which fostered trade in the ports of Vizagapatnam and Bimlipatnam. In a situation where the European commerce made considerable inroads into the local economy, it was these local chieftains who acted as sole arbitrators between the production economy and the English East India company in the eighteenth century. The term politico-military entrepreneurs is best suited to these tributary chiefs, for, their primary interest was to chalk out autonomous territorial control a process which was achieved through their intervention and collaboration in the commodity production and negotiate its partnership with European companies.

The period between 1690-1724 witnessed a massive restructuring of relationships between the Mughal officials, tributary *raju* chiefs or politico-military entrepreneurs and the European companies. The emergence of tripartite relationship between the Mughals, the politico-military entrepreneurs and the European companies became consolidated during this period. However, it must be noted that this relationship was very fluid and

it was common feature to find erratic shifting and breaking of alliances between each of the contesting parties throughout the period under study. This feature became more endemic due to constant shifts in the political equations between the Mughals and local potentates in the hinterland: the latter, at least some of them like the Pusapatis, Gajapathis, Kolindar clan of Peddapuram and the Raja of Jeypore emerged as 'proto-dynastic' figures by the second decade of the eighteenth century.

In the fluctuating political fortunes between the *raju* and *Velama* clans and the Mughal *faujdar*s on the other hand, private finance of the company to local political players became significant. However, Neither of the parties followed any clear cut rules and regulations as to whom the finance was to be provided. Financially, the English east India company emerged as the main arbitrator, while the local merchants such as jagappa and Budde Narrain mediated between the company and the local elite. In fact the company's existence at Vizagpatnam depended on its flexibility to finance the local powers. The complex financial commitments between these contesting parties; the Mughal *faujdar*s, the politico-military entrepreneurs and the English proved beneficial to the latter group which furthered weakened the Mughal system on the Coromandel. It is with this background that this chapter proposes to study the history of the port of Vizagpatnam and sees the whole period between 1680-1724 as a period of transition rather than that of decline.

The early history of the port of Vizagpatnam is not clear before the direct participation of the European companies in the

Gingelly and Vizagpatnam coast. From the extant inscriptions of Simhachalam and Annavaram, the port was mentioned as the temple town of Vishakeshwara from which it derived its name.⁵ While we are handicapped on the early history of Vizagpatnam, the systematic integration of the port into the Indian ocean network can be traced to the English commerce of the late seventeenth century. The hinterland of Vizagpatnam comprised of two major economic zones of Gingelly coast with ports of Ganjam, Gopalpur and Kalingapatnam, (now part of modern Orissa) and the ports of Bimlipatnam and Vizagpatnam in the northern Andhra coast.⁶ In the English records the port was first mentioned in the Golden *Firman* of 1634 which gave trading concessions at Bimlipatnam and Vizagpatnam to the company. The Dutch maintained a regular factory at Bimlipatnam for exporting grain and textiles for most of the seventeenth century. Vizagpatnam may have been an important outlet for coastal trade before the English settled here in 1682.

The hinterland of Vizagpatnam extended to the modern districts of Southern Orissa, Srikakulam, Vizagpatnam, Vizianagaram and to some parts of southern Madhya Pradesh. Though this formed the main hinterland of Vizagpatnam, the port itself did not achieve any position of importance but was mainly used for wood and rice to be exported to Masulipatnam and southern Coromandel. As early as 1638, the English factors

⁵ See, *Simhavhalam and Annavaram Inscriptions*, Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Andhra Pradesh. Arudra, *Sumatra Andhra Sahityamu, Kumpini Yugamu*, Hyderabad, 1978.

⁶ See, Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*, p.11-12.

reported that the port can be used for repairing of the ships as the place had abundant wood which came from the nearby forests.⁷

In 1684, a grant was given by Abul Hasan Tana Shah to Richard Brown, the chief of Vizagpatnam, for a custom free permission to trade in the ports of Ganjam, Sonapuram, Poonde Barra, Kalingapatnam, Collipalli, Conaraa, Bimlipatnam, Walteroo, Madacca, Vatuda, Pentakota and Vizagpatnam.⁸ On the eve of the Mughal conquest, the English negotiated for a permanent fortification at Vizagpatnam. But as the trade grew in Vizagpatnam and Bimlipatnam, most of the smaller ports of Orissa and east Godavari sent merchandise to either Ganjam, Bimlipatnam or Vizagpatnam.⁹ Thus by the beginning of the eighteenth century, Vizagpatnam emerged as a main port complex within the Gingelly and Vizagpatnam sectors.

The main strength of Vizagpatnam lay in its fertile tracts producing rice needed both for domestic and export markets. The cheapness of rice a major motive for the English company to negotiate for Gingelly and Vizagpatnam. The English factors wrote in 1688:

⁷ *EFI* 1637-41, p..242.

⁸ See, *RFSG, Letters to Fort St. George* 1684/1685 p.26.

⁹ See, for a detailed discussion on ports on the northern Coromandel, S. Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*, pp.-14.

"Despite bad country, the company will must believe it ()capable from those undeniable advantages at first ()and poverty of people, the felicity of soil, the plenty of grain and provisions and cheapness of labour, the abundance of handicrafts and mechanics and quantities () and necessary for many factories so that there appear nothing wanting but money produce and industry it imploy all these benefits"¹⁰

When compared to southern Coromandel, the Gingelly and Vizagpatnam coast showed considerable variation as far as prices of rice and grain was concerned. For instance, Masulipatnam and Madrasapatnam showed steep rise in the prices of rice and grain (often shooting up to 100% increase) which had a telling effect on the weaving economy and consequently on the port of Masulipatnam.¹¹ Orissa and Vizagpatnam were the main surplus areas from which rice was regularly sent to southern Coromandel. In terms of volume of trade, rice became single most important commodity in port-to-port trade in the late seventeenth century Coromandel.¹² One finds numerous instances to show that rice was cheap at Vizagpatnam and Ganjam sectors.¹³

¹⁰ *RFSG, Letters from Ft. George*, 1688 pp.37-38.

¹¹ Basing of the Dutch documentation, Joseph Brenning showed a steep rise in the prices of rice in the Masulipatnam sector. He attributes this rise to the growing controls over grain by the Qutb Shahi administration under Madanna, and to the regressive nature of *Guddem* tax. See, Joseph Brenning, 'Textile Producers and Production in the seventeenth century Coromandel', in Sanjay Subrahmanyam, ed, *Merchants, Markets and the State in Early Modern India*, New Delhi, 1990 pp. 66-90.

¹² S. Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*, p. 209.

¹³ See, *RFSG, Letters from Fort St. George*, 1698, p.124.

But, what could have been the plausible reason for the cheapness of grain despite being affected by constant warfare between the Mughals and the country *rajus*? One can suggest two reasons for the surplus and cheapness of grain here. Firstly, the 'country *Rajus*' were able to effectively expand and create new agrarian frontiers by bringing new lands under cultivation and thorough their control of grain markets in the region. They were instrumental in organising local grain markets such as Payakaraopeta, Srungavarapukota, Gajapathinagaram, Palasa, Vizinagaram etc. and initiated company commerce on the coast. We have at least one instance of a certain chief of Vizagaptnam mediating the prices between the English private traders and the local grain market. The English chief lamented that rice trade by the private traders with that of indigenous elite was so high that it proved detrimental to the company largely due to the active collaboration of the former with the local chiefs. The said chief was paying a custom of Rs. 15,000 to 18,000 to the *Seerlaskar* to export the rice from Ganjam in the local country made boats.¹⁴

The revoking of the *rahadari* and other local concessions given to the Europeans by the Mughals was an additional reason for the cheapness of rice in the highly competitive local markets which in turn brought down the prices in the region. Thus the cheapness of rice was a major factor for the rise of Vizagpatnam before it came into the map of textile trade in the last decades of the seventeenth century.

¹⁴ *RFSG, Diary and Consultation Book, 1709,1 p.32.*

Hinterland, local Politics and Mughal expansion

The cheapness of provisions had direct bearing on the weaving economy of the northern Coromandel region. A comparative price structure of European goods at Vizagpatnam and Fort St. George for the year 1694 reveal that the goods were much cheaper in Vizagpatnam:

Fort St. George (in pagodas)	Vizagpatnam(in pagodas)	
Broad Cloth	28:10:30	24
Aurora	50	40
Cloth rashes	18:10:20	16
perpetuneuces fine	15	12
Perpetunueces ordinary	10	8

Source: *RFSG, Letters from Fort St. George, 1694, p.46*

In 1709 the English factors reported: " rice being cheap at Vizagpatnam and consequently cotton, it is agreed to send *Candy Copper* " a ship with a tonnage of 500 tones for the fort for immediate despatch.¹⁵

The whole Gingelly and the trans-Godavari river was clustered with cotton and textile marketing centres. However, paucity of sources does not allow any systematic estimation of weaving villages with their producing capacities for the period under consideration. The weaving villages were spread across the districts of Orissa, Srikakulam, Vizagpatnam and Vizianagaram. In Srikakulam district, Ponduru, Siripuram, Bonthalakoduru, Alianagaram, Cheepurupalli, Palakonda, Ompolu were the main weaving villages. In the districts of Vizianagaram and Vizagpatnam

¹⁵ *RFSG, Diary and Consultation Book, 1709, p.32.*

the main weaving villages and marketing centres were Srungavarapukota, Gajapathinagram, Veeravali, Gollagunda, Suravaram, Sarvasiddhi, Vizianagaram, Bobbili, Anakapalli, Rajam, and Nakkapalli.¹⁶ Close to these weaving villages were many local marketing towns such as Berhampore, Palasa, Chichacole, Parlakammidy, Narasampet, Ragunathapuram, Ichapuram, Ganjam, Kalingapatnam, Barwah, Russell konda, Copalpur of the Srikakulam district, while towns like Samulakota, Peddapuram, Vizianagaram, Bobbili, Vizagpatnam, Walteroo etc. of the Vizianagaram and Vizagpatnam districts. Rajam for example, was dominated by *Sale*, *Devanga* and *Pattu sale* communities and consisted of 1000 looms. As many as 30 villages around it supplied cloth worth Rs. 1,00,000 to the main marketing centre of Vizianagaram which in turn sent the merchandise to Hyderabad. The Pusapati *raju* was collected a *jama* of Rs. 2,00,000 thus making Vizianagaram the most powerful Zamindari in later times.¹⁷ From the last decade of the seventeenth century, Vizagapatnam was able to attract merchandise from east Godavari as well. Peddapuram, Neelapalli, Tuni, Coringa, Ingeram which supplied cloth to Masulipatnam in the preceding decades now came under Vizagapatnam circuit of trade. This shift in the hinterland of east

¹⁶ Most of the weaving centres are identified from various records of *Fort St. George* during the period under consideration. However, unlike Masulipatnam where the Dutch had recorded the weaving centres of Draksharama, Peddapuram, Gondavaram etc, in detail, sources are very scanty and very impressionistic on Vizagpatnam. See *RFSG*, Series, Government of Madras., and E.B.Haveli, *Report of the Madras Presidency*, 1886 (reprint), 1909, See particularly the Sections on Godavari, Vizagpatnam, Srikakulam and Ganjam.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, and See, *Rajam Kaifiyat*, Vizianagaram Zilla Kaifiyatulu, A.P. State Archives, 1992.

Godavari from Masulipatnam to Vizagapatnam was one of the causes for the decline of Masulipatnam.¹⁸

The hinterland of Vizagapatnam was dictated by some distinct features linked inextricably to the local politics of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Firstly the period witnessed many internecine wars between the Mughals and chiefs but also internal conflicts within the chiefs themselves. Secondly, the gradual emergence of tripartite relationships between the Mughals, chiefs and the English East India company had a direct impact on the trade and thirdly, the expansion of English company and its aggressive collaboration with the politico-military entrepreneurs directly led to the decline of Mughal system in northern coastal Andhra.

The trans-Godavari region was under Cholas and later passed to other regional kingdoms such as Gajapathis, Reddies and Vijayanagara. Except during the rule of Gajapathis, the contemporaries of Vijayanagara, the region was always considered as peripheral by respective central authorities. The first attempt to integrate the region began with the Qutb Shahi thrust into the coastal strips of Andhra during the reign of Ibrahim and Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah. The expansion marked a significant shift in the politics of the region. Ever since the consolidation of Golconda in coastal Andhra, the local warrior velama and *raju's* became tribute payers and pumped money and arms to the 'formal' central government at Hyderabad. However, the process of

¹⁸ See, Thomas Bowrey, *The Geographical Account of Countries Around the Bay of Bengal*, p. 124-125.

political integration remained hazy even under the Qutb Shahi rule and the regional elite more or less retained their autonomy and held sway over vast territorial tracts in coastal Andhra.¹⁹

The main administrative headquarters of the northern Coromandel was at Srikakulam and Kasimkota. As many as thirty big and small *Zamindars* and independent chiefs existed in the period under study. Most of them belonged to powerful peasant warrior clans such as *Velamas* and *rajus* while a few of them had strong tribal base, popularly termed in the later British documents as 'hill rajas'.

These peasant-warrior clans were always considered as potential threats to central governments, be it Golconda or Mughals. In most of the studies conducted on these local forms of dominance a mere stereotypical picture emerges as those who merely cushioned the state through fiscal and military supplies or as potential dangers to the central government in different times and contexts.²¹ They are characterised as 'seditious', 'rebellious' and 'recalcitrant' and sadly surfaced in historical writings as the main forms of destabilisation of the state structure. JR Richard's is of the

¹⁹ The region still lacks any systematic history prior to the Mughal invasion in the Deccan. Unfortunately, even today, one has to depend on the nineteenth century *Kaifiyats* collected by Colin Mackenzie. For the history of Srikakulam and Vizagapatnam See, C.D.Maclean, *Manual of Administration*, Vol. II, See, *Vizianagaram Kaifiyat, Pusapatirajula Vamsavali*, is the only available source for the history of Pusapati family prior to British dominion.

²¹ A typically nineteenth century British understanding of these men was as follows: " ... they took advantage of the periods of weakness of the latter (meaning the state) and erected castles from which like the baronial chiefs of Europe in the feudal ages, they plundered and oppressed the surrounding country. The English government was often obliged to purchase their orderly behaviour by giving them an independent power and jurisdiction. There is class whose subjugation proved so expensive to Great Britain." C.D.Maclean, *Manual of the Administration of the Madras Presidency*. Vol II, p.267.

opinion that the failure to assimilate these traditional elite into the Mughal structure as the primary reason for the decline of Mughal empire.²² One major problem in his study has been the failure to recognise any independent economic 'space' for these chiefs with its own logic of growth and development. Consequently, there has been a total neglect of complex inter linkages between this 'hazy' tributary zone and the state formation.

There is absolutely no doubt that the Mughal conquest of Golconda had unleashed new opportunities to these chiefdoms to chalk out autonomous territorial jurisdictions either by subduing other lesser chiefs of the region or by openly revolting against the central authority. Notable ruling clans of Pusapati Sitarama Raju, Gajapathis and Varasimha Deva of Jeypore went of massive aggrandizement on lesser chiefs and brought them into their fold. Though these wars on lesser chiefs did not mean a complete liquidation, it led on the other hand to hierarchy of chiefdoms with Kaumili and Vizianagaram as the epicentre. For instance, the Kolindar Raja's were dependent on the power of Pusapati Sitarama Raju but did not hesitate to change loyalty to Mughal camp whenever his interests were jeopardised by the Pusapati clan. Within this hierarchy of chiefdoms, even a big house like Pusapati's initially supported the Mughals in their war against the English under the orders of the Mughal *Faujdar* . But as its power grew over a period of time, it took a form of open revolts against the Mughal

²² See, *fn. 3* . and M. Athar Ali, *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangazeb*, Bombay 1966. For South India the arguments are extended by J.F.Richards, *Mughal Administration of Golconda*, New Delhi 1975, *The Mughal Empire*, The New Cambridge History of India, Cambridge, 1994.

authority.²³ Since 1694, the Pusapati family was constantly at loggerheads with the Mughals while maintaining cordial relations with the English company at Vizagpatnam. Sitarama Raju is only one such instance of a series of revolts during the period against the Mughal intervention. A closer examination of the revolts would reveal that they were rooted in the very nature of the Mughal expansion which threatened to disrupt the existing political economy of the northern Coromandel.

Immediately after the Mughal conquest in 1687, Aurangazeb moved cautiously over the Deccan affairs. Instead of directly transplanting the existing system with that of Mughal *faujdars* who came from Delhi, he allowed the old officialdom to continue in the remote areas of the coastal Andhra. Thus, Sayyid Abdullah, Hussain Beg and Mir Muhammad Hade, the erstwhile Qutb Shahi Governors were retained in the provinces with a new official designation called *Faujdars*.²⁴ With the appointment of Mustapha Quli Khan (1690-1697) as the faujdar in 1690 for the united province of Srikakulam, Eluru, Kondapalli, Kondavidu, Masulipatnam and Petapoli, a radical political and economic transformation took place on the northern Coromandel. The strategy of Mustapha Quli Khan was quite complex. He operated at two levels: political and economic. At the political level he adopted a simple strategy of following Mughal principle of totally subduing the *Zamindars* in the region. At the economic level, Mustapha Quli Khan tried to

²³ RFSG. *Letters to Fort St. George*, 1694, p. 46-47.

²⁴ J.F. Richards, *Mughal Administration of Golconda*, p.61.

assimilate the existing economic realities which was used for the enhancement of personal wealth.

It will not be out of context to elaborate and compare the pre-existing economic which linked the state with the tributary chiefdoms before the Mughal conquest. For instance, unlike in the Mughal revenue system, *Jama Caumil* was the basic taxation under the Qutb Shahis which was not uniform and varied from region to region. While much of the land revenue collected went to the state, the local potentates depended mostly on the customs, quit rents for the houses and other local cesses apart from retaining considerable fiscal autonomy from the central authority. The fiscal autonomy and its inherent capacity to enhance the economic status and consequently the political status, cushioned these local potentates to operate freely within their territorial jurisdictions as long as the demands of the state were met. The ancestry of Pusapati's reveals that the initial prosperity of this house depended on farming diamond mines in Krishna district before they migrated to Vizianagaram.²⁵ For these chiefs, farming of regional industry and access to grain markets became a necessary by-product to augment their military power in the localities.²⁶ For example, Gangaraju and Ramaraju of the Kolindar clan of Mogalteru amassed wealth through their participation in grain trade. Their close relative Appa Row who was a small time renter in Krishna district took Divi

²⁵ Madhava Varma, the founder of Vizianagaram Zamindari hailed from Pusapadu near Vinukonda (modern Guntur district) and farmed the diamond mines of Krishna district. See, *Pusapatwajula Vamsavali*, Vizianagaram Zilla Kaifiyatulu, pp. 10-11.

²⁶ *RFSG, Letters from Fort St George*, 1688 p.38. and, S. Subrahmanyam and C.A.Bayly, 'Portfolio- Capitalists and the Political Economy of Early Modern India', p.254.

island as a revenue farm from Zoode Khan, the Mughal *faujdar*, and by the end of the first decade of the eighteenth century became recognized as a *Zamindar* by the imperial government.²⁷

Equally interesting was the history of Pusapatis of Vizianagaram whose known family history goes back to 1650's: The dynasty was founded by Madhava varma and belonged to Pusapadu village in modern Guntur district. In 1458, one Pusapati Timmaraju seemed to have played an important role in the war against Kapilas. He may have been a subordinate of Deva Raya II. Within the paragona of Guntur, Timmaraju developed enmity with *velama* chiefs of Racherlakonda and Devarkonda (modern Nalgonda). During the Qutb shahi rule, Pusapati family was given the *paragona* of Vinukonda. In 1651 they were force migrated to Vizianagaram on the behest of one Sher Muhammad Khan, who took over the areas of Kondaveedu, Vinukonda, Kondapalli, Masulipatnam, Eluru, and Rajamundry areas directly under his control. At Vizianagaram, the family took over a number of villages under their control on the condition that they maintain a specified number of cavalry and infantry for the upkeep of the kingdom. The family acquired the paraganas of Gunderu, Devupalli, Putnuru, Nellamerla, Gudipudi, Anantha Caudhavaram, Alakala in and around the Vizianagaram.²⁸ Pusapati Sitarama Raju, the ruling chief of the dynasty during the time of Mughal expansion, had acquired many honorific titles and was referred to as 'raja' either in

²⁷ RFSG, *Diary and Consulation books, 1709-1711.S.Master, The Diaries of Streyntsham Master, Vol. II, p.62.* For a general theoretical discussion on this See, C.A.Bayly, *Indian Society and the making of the British Empire, p.14.*

²⁸ See, *Pusapatirajula Vamsavali, pp. 10-11.*

the Mughal phraseology or in the European documentation. By the time his son Pusapati Ananda Raju took over the reigns of Vizinagaram in 1704, this ruling clan surely threatened the very existence of the Mughal system and came to be recognised as a 'dynasty' within the region. The case of Pusapatis clearly points out that these *rajās* were products of political and economic exigencies "which is at one and the same time a symptom of the commercialisation of the state and political power, and a response to a set of material conditions -- the need to link ecologically disparate producing regions, to push back the agrarian frontier and organize commercial production".²⁹ Thus, the response to crisis theory of Sanjay Subrahmanyam not only worked for big recognised kingdoms such as Golconda and Vijayanagara in the earlier periods, but also in various levels of hierarchies of power at the level of localities. This, of course, has to be grounded in specific contexts of political behaviour as developed in south India, C.A.Bayly who has worked on these politico-military entrepreneurs in north India sees them predominantly as those who grew in power at the expense of the centre and products of Mughal decline remains relevant for ruling chiefs of northern coastal Andhra.

Mustapha Quli Khan, the first *faujdar*, tried to expropriate several villages belonging to various 'sardars' of which the most

²⁹ According to Sanjay Subrahmanyam portfolio capitalists declined in the late seventeenth century. A modification of the north Indian profile has been proposed by C.A.Bayly for the eighteenth century. For him the careerists were not the great oceanic merchants but those who operated in the local *Ganjas* and markets and the petty kings who mediated between the intermediate economy and the civil society. In Gingelly and northern Coromandel sector, we find the profile of C.A.Bayly more apt for discussion. See, S.Subrahmanyam and C.A.Bayly, 'Portfolio Capitalists and the Political Economy of Early Modern India', p. 253.

notable was Pusapati Sitaramaraju and Raja of Jeypore. Sitaramaraju on the other hand used the strategy of first subduing lesser chiefs in the region and in the process garnered the support of other rebels. He plundered the localities with about 4000 men and killed the Gajapati Raja of Petnor who refused to support him against the Mughals.³⁰ He had the active support of Varasimha Deva of Jeypore (now in modern Orissa) and by 1695 this rebellious chief was well in control of the situation. Even the family of Gajapathis, which was earlier antagonistic to the activities of Sitaramaraju supported the cause of the rebels and by 1695 were instrumental in marginalising Mustapha Quli Khan. Even the English factors at Vizagpatnam wrote: " It is not clear if the seerlaskar (*faujdar*) can fight the united *rajahs* and it will long before the Mughals send the second contingent. It is safest to suppose country *rajahs* will be the conquerors³¹ Mustapha Quli Khan sought the support of Kolindar *rajahs* of Mogalteru but in the mean time Jan Sipar Khan, the *Diwan* designate of Hyderabad removed Mustapha Quli Khan and replaced him with Rustom Dil Khan by a *perwana*.. The emperor on the other hand, instead of removing Mustapha Quli Khan sent him additional troops but proved futile. Mustapha had to reconcile with Sitaramaraju by allowing him to retain all the territories belonging to the combined rebel forces. ⁱ²

³⁰ *Vizagpatnam Consolations*, August 1694 cited in J.F. Richards, 'Mughal Retreat From Coastal Andhra', p. 56.

³¹ *RFSG, Despatches to England*, 1694-96 p. 23, 29, *RFSG, Letters from Fort St. George*, 1697 p.11-12.

³² J.F.Richards, 'Mughal Retreat from Coastal Andhra', p. 57.

In 1697, Mustapha Quli Khan was killed by the combined *raju's* of north coastal Andhra.³³

Rustum Dil Khan who replaced Mustapha Quli Khan was the son of Jan Sipar Khan, Governor of Hyderabad, who served coastal Andhra only for a brief period of time. Rustom Dil's main duty in coastal Andhra was to liquidate the recalcitrant chiefs and *Zamindars* and to collect the taxes and tribute overdue from them. His short tenure went uneventful and was replaced by Fakirullah Khan with a mansab of 1500/1000.³⁴ Fakirullah Khan, son of Mustapha Quli Khan, gained the office of *faujdari* after repaying his fathers arrears and 'bought the Srikakulam *faujdari*. He was sent to administer the entire coast from Nizampatnam to Srikakulam with both executive and fiscal powers in the *khalisa* lands.³⁵ Fakirullah Khan's career in coastal Andhra is particularly significant for the emergence of tripartite relationships which came to dominate the economy of Vizagapatnam in the first decade of the eighteenth century. Unlike Mustapha Quli Khan, the new *faujdar* did not attempt at out rightly imposing Mughal official code on the chiefs but collaborated with them at various levels of administration and slowly developed local roots in the region. Secondly, he entered into complex financial transactions with the English company at Vizagpatnam which surely goes against the Mughal norms.

In his chequed history as *the faujdar*, Fakirullah Khan fell into disfavour of Mughal *Wazir*, Asad Khan, as he failed to remit

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Fakirullah Khan's total pay was 8,025,000 dams or Rs.200,625 with an established receipt of 83,593 with a contingent of 72,000. See J.F.Richards, *Mughal Administration of Golconda*, p. 94, 98-99.

³⁵ Harihardas, ed, *The Norris Embassy to Aurangazeb 1699-1702* p.145.

Rs 2.5 million to the central treasury. ³⁶ Fakirullah Khan faced considerable resentment both from the emperor and the *Wazir* and was replaced by Mehdi Khan Beig as the *faujdar* of Srikakulam affairs. Initially, Fakirullah Khan refused to recognise Mehdi Khan Beig as the *faujdar* on the ground that the order did not come from the emperor. Significantly, in the factional politics of Mughal empire, Fakirullah Khan was actively supported by the local chiefs who refused to recognise the authority of Mehdi Khan Beig³⁷

Mehdi Khan Beig went on massive military aggrandizement which proved not only expensive for him but to imperial government as well. In one bloody conflict, Mehdi Khan Beig attempted to take the villages of Timmaraju, the *Zamindar* of Peddapuram, directly under his control and in the process 100 of Timmaraju's men were killed. The combined *rajus* fearing any further onslaught asked Pusapati Anandaraju's assistance who in turn unified most of the warring chiefs against the aggression of Mehdi Khan Beig. The aggressive political thrust of Mehdi Khan Beig into the interiors of coastal Andhra costed the Mughal empire a sum of Rs. 100,000 to be paid to the *rajus* and also recognise them as legitimate rulers of the region.³⁹

The desperate acts of Mehdi Khan Beig gave Fakirullah Khan another chance to become the *faujdar* of the region. Though one does not find any direct reference to the role played by Fakirullah Khan in ousting Mehdi Khan from his position, his rapport and relations with the chiefs would leave considerable scope for

³⁶ J.F.Richards, 'Mughal Retreat from Coastal Andhra', p. 58.

³⁷ *RFSG, Diary and Consultation Book*, 1700,p.9.

³⁹ *RFSG, Diary and Consultation Book*, 1702, p. 26,32.

speculation and an assumption that he may have had collaborated with local chiefs to retain the *faujdari* of Srikakulam. For instance, 1707, when Fakirullah Khan blockaded the town of Vizagpatnam, he was backed by otherwise antagonistic political entities such as Pusapati Anandaraju and the *Zamindar* of Peddapuram.⁴⁰

The above mentioned series of political events between 1690-1712, starting from Mustapha Quli Khan to Fakirullah Khan show some features which had long term consequences for the economy of northern Coromandel. The events themselves were not sudden and were not mere political outcome of Mughal intervention in Deccan. They were products of a long transformation in the politico-economic structure which had roots in the pre-Mughal phase of Coromandel. The Mughal expansion became turning point because it unleashed the already existing political tensions at the local level which threatened for the first time, the expansion of Mughal empire.

After the Mughal conquest, Aurangazeb retained most of the pre-existing structures of the economy. However, the Mughal action of bringing the existing *Naikumrs* into the Mughal fold as primary *Zamindars* and to reduce them into *mansabdars* was seriously contested at the local level. The petty kings who were accustomed to paying tribute in lieu of fiscal autonomy were threatened by the logic of Mughal expansion which reduced them to mansabdars : in the Mughal phrase - intermediary *Zamindars*.⁴¹

⁴⁰ RFSG, Public Department, Letters to Fort St. George, 1711, p.80.

⁴¹ Chetan Singh, *Region and Empire:Panjab in the seventeenth Century*, New Delhi, 1991,p.136-153.

In the logic of Mughal expansion into northern Coromandel, the Mughal *faujdars* realized the futility of imposing Mughal rules. In reality during the period between 1690-1712, the imperial system failed to penetrate into the local economy. For instance, despite abolishing the system of revenue farming, it continued to be the main form of economic mediation between the state and the coastal economy.⁴² There were two major limitations to the Mughal expansion in the period under study. One, because it failed to penetrate beyond certain level: the main contesting zone being the local levels of dominance which was under numerous *Zamindars* and chiefdoms, whose economic interests directly clashed with that of Mughal *faujdari* system. Secondly, the empire failed to integrate the chiefs of coastal Andhra into the larger Mughal structure even by way of recognizing their hereditary powers - -a policy which the Mughals successfully followed in areas where the direct governance entailed financial and military liabilities.

In northern Coromandel, the Mughal system failed because the tributary chiefs had transformed themselves into politico-military entrepreneurs with independent revenues based on sound management of agrarian production and through indirect benefits in trade. This process, one may suggest, began much before the formal liquidation of Golconda by the Mughal empire. J.F. Richard's is of the opinion that the Mughal failure to assimilate

⁴² It will too exhaustive to account the number of revenue farms given during the Mughal phase on the Coromandel coast. The whole of Coromandel coast clearly shows a deviance from the Mughal rules as far as intervention into the economic structure is concerned. To cite only one example for the region under study, Mustapha Quli Khan himself gave many revenue farms both to the lesser *Zamindars* and the European companies. *Vizagpatnam Consolations*, 1693.

these chieftains as the main cause for the decline of the empire is only half true. The actual decline, as rightly explained by C.A.Bayly, was a result of the creation and controlling of new wealth by these chiefs and their ability to transform resources into larger political interests. Thus, Pusapati Sitaramaraju and later on his son Pusapati Anandaraju were not able to contend themselves as mere 'sardars' under the rubric of Mughal suzerainty but on the other hand preferred to chalk out independent political jurisdictions outside the Mughal structure.⁴³

The next factor for the conflicts in northern Andhra was the slow but steady transformation of the *faujdari* system. The *faujdar*s were responsible for maintenance of public order in the districts and their main duty was to force reluctant *Zamindars* to pay tribute and taxes. However, in the peripheral areas where the Mughal system had to depend on landed intermediaries, *faujdar*s were given additional responsibility of maintaining law and order as well. He was directly under the Diwan but had the power to directly report to the emperor and solely responsible to him. In the period under study the *faujdar(i)system* in coastal Andhra showed contradictory features. Firstly, the irregular nature of Mughal administration and the weakening of central authority made the *faujdari* system very weak in Srikakulam, Vizagpatnam and Masulipatnam sectors. However, it is significant to note that while the office (*faujdari*) was considerably weakened, the careers of

⁴³ The rise of proto-dynastic figures like the *Pusapat*s will taken up slightly later. C.A.Bayly however studied this phenomenon of rural gentry transforming into 'portfolio-capitalists' as something which emerged in the eighteenth century *per se*. But the continuity which was there in the seventeenth century is important for us to understand their final consolidation in the eighteenth century, *ibid*.

individual *faujders* like Mustapha Quli Khan and Fakirullah Khan on the other hand showed remarkable growth at the local level. This growing power of individual *faujders* was a product of the inability of the centre to control these distantly posted *faujders*. Therefore, before analyzing the Mughal empire in the late seventeenth century, one has to make a clear cut distinction between the office a person was holding (such as *faujders*) and the individual careers they embarked on in their respective administrative jurisdictions.

At one level the *faujders* were instrumental in manipulating the growing weakness of the Mughal system; Factions at the imperial centre had their repercussions at the regional level as well.⁴⁴ At another level the *faujders* were assimilated into local political and economic setup which in turn meant a close collaboration with *Rajus* of Srikakulam and Vizinagaram etc. which proved detrimental to the empire but which surely enhanced the status of individual *faujders*. In 1693, for instance, Mustapha Quli Khan, gave a *caul* to Simon Holcombe making him the *havaladar* of Vizagpatnam, which clearly was a deviance of the Mughal practice. Simon Holcombe paid Rs. 4862 per annum as the rent for the town of Vizagpatnam for a stipulated period of three years or till Mustapha Quli Khan remains in the office.⁴⁵ *The faujdar* also sublet farms of the major towns of Ganjam, Kalingapatnam, Bimlipatnam

⁴⁴ See, J.F.Richards, *Mughal Administration of Golconda* pp. 215. For the conflict between Rustom Dil Khan and Prince Kam Baksh for the governorship of Hyderabad. Mehdi Khan beig, the Faujdar of Srikakulam, for instance represented the anti -deccani faction and his appointment was opposed by Fakirullah Khan at Srikakulam. See, *RFSG, Diary and Consultation Book*, 1700 p.9.

⁴⁵ *Vizagpatnam Consultations*, 1693 cited in J.F.Richards, *Mughal Administration of Golconda*, p. 100.

and Vizagpatnam and in the process amassed wealth for their personal political interests. Both Rustom Dil Khan and Fakirullah Khan maintained good and friendly relations with the Pusapati *rajus* and Europeans for financial and military operations.⁴⁶ Fakirullah Khan's career demonstrates how the *faujdar*s manipulated the local political situation to better their individual prospects.

If, on the one hand, conflict between the imperial representatives and the local intermediaries became endemic, there was also close collaboration between these two contesting parties. The basic patterns of conflict and alliance depended on the objective of each party to gain support from each other either for military expansion or for individual profit enhancement. Significantly, the tacit collaboration and some time the open conflicts of the Mughal *faujdar*s with the chiefs actually benefited the local economy in the long run. The complex financial commitments of the *faujdar*s to the central treasury on the one hand (Rs. 3.5 million to be paid to the central treasury in the case of Fakirullah Khan, for instance) and the need for money to curtail or to pacify the Mughal expansion by the chiefs of the region brought the European commerce into focus.

Vizagpatnam: The expansion of English Commerce 1682-1712

In the late seventeenth century sweeping changes were taking place in the Coromandel commerce. Firstly, there **was a** shift

⁴⁶ Mustapha Quli Khan for instance had the active support of Kolindar rajas of Mogalteru during the revolts of Pusapati and Gajapathis against the Mughals.

in the intercontinental trade from west Asia to south east Asia which led to a shift in the trading pattern on the Coromandel coast. New sectors of trade such as Vizagpatnam were drawn into the commercial world. Ports which were able to dominate the oceanic commerce due to vast hinterlands failed, while ports with small but a definite hinterland such as Vizagpatnam grew in prominence in the changing politico-commercial relationships which were wrought due to Mughal expansion in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Barring Masulipatnam which rose into prominence due to its specific links with west Asia or south east Asia, no ports with identical features emerged in the late seventeenth century.⁴⁷ Secondly, the rise of these new ports can be attributed to coastal trade carrying merchandise such as grain and textiles to other emporia ports on the same coast. These coastal ports transformed themselves into major towns with independent shipping and jurisdiction which in turn brought them into the intra-Asian dynamics of Indian ocean system.

The participation of European companies and private traders were crucial factor for the rise of Vizagpatnam, Diu, Ingeram, Kakinada, Yanam and Vizagpatnam. Thirdly, the changing nature of the European commerce which became aggressive in the Indian ocean area insisted on autonomous trading factories and fortifications with exclusive trading privileges became a common feature. In fact the idea of fortifications coincided with the larger

⁴⁷ See, Ashin Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat*, Weisbaden, 1979. and S.Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*, See Chapter on *Coromandel Trade 1700-1740: Stagnation or Decline*.

monopoly controls which the companies sought to achieve in the oceanic trade of Indian ocean.

Anyone interested in the history of Vizagpatnam for the period under consideration is seriously handicapped as there are no studies done on the growth of the port town. J.F. Richards, studied the growth of European commerce and the rise of 'European city-states' within the context of Mughal decline. His arguments are familiar and concludes saying that the lack of political stability in the region led to expansion of the town as a major 'fortification after Madras' and sees Vizagpatnam primarily as an English enterprise.⁴⁸ While there is no denying that Vizagpatnam was exclusively under the control of English, any neglect of the interactions with local politics and economy would only do half justice to these so called 'city-states' of the late seventeenth century.

Vizagpatnam came into the regular English network of trade largely because of active participation of private traders. Though the English established a regular factory in 1682, the initial benefits of the trade went to private traders. In the early English records, private traders such as Richard Brown, Samuel Fleetwood and Clement du Jardin were involved in regular private trade at Vizagpatnam and with local merchants.⁴⁹ Richard Brown, chief of the newly established factory at Vizagpatnam had farmed certain towns around the vicinity of the town on individual capacity.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ J.F.Richards, 'European City -States on the Coromandel coast', pp. 517-519.

⁴⁹ *RFSG*, Public Department, *Despatches From England*, Vol. 7, 1685, p.95 and *RFSG, Diary and Consultation Book, 1688, p. 107-108.*

The development of English commercial interest at Vizagpatnam was an outcome of the Mughal conquest of the Sultanate of Golconda. Immediately after the war, the English were forced to shift their trading operations to Gingelly and Vizagpatnam coast. The Mughals who initially concentrated in the core areas of Telangana and Masulipatnam expanded into the northern most part of coastal Andhra by 1690 which furthered threatened English trade at Masulipatnam. Vizagpatnam which was situated in the frontier was seen as a safer place for trade by the English east India company. It was the only factory on the coast which was not abandoned after the war.⁵¹ The Dutch and the French were quick to realize the importance of approaching the 'grand mughal' for trading privileges on the coast. Even as the Mughals advanced to coastal Andhra, the English were desperately trying to prepare ground for re-negotiations with the Emperor as early as 1687. The Madras factors wrote,

⁵¹ *RFSG, Diary and Consultation Book*, 1687. Contemporary European documentation is full of descriptions of wars and their impact on the mercantile economy in general. Some often cited features had been the breakup of communications in the event of war, severe famine conditions due to artificial deficit, migrations of artisans from one part of the region to the other, rise in the prices of 'provisions' and consequently the decline in textile production. It will be totally unwieldy to handle the whole documentation on wars and its subsequent impact on the economy. See, *EFI, RFSG, Diary and Consultation Books, Letters from and to Fort St. George* etc. However to cite only few examples, "Hearing that Masulipatnam, Madapollem and Petapoli are likely to be in troubles; by reasons that some of the Mughal forces are intended thither to seize upon the King of Golconda's treasures, it is resolved to abandon the factory. *RFSG, Diary and Consultation Book*, 1687 p.113,176. At Vizagpatnam sector See, *RFSG, Despatches to England*, 1694-96 p.23 and *RFSG, Letters from Fort St. George*, 1697 p.11-12.

"the Dutch and French had made their applications to him with great presents to settle affaires, we should on behalf of the company (in regard to the hostility in Bengal, only write him a plausible letter of complaint of governments injuries to us in Bengal and that upon the consideration of our differences we could not make our applications...., otherwise our respects to him are as great..."⁵²

The English were placed in a piquant position as they were already at war against the Mughals in Bengal. The French and the Dutch obtained favourable permissions from the Mughal emperor in 1688 and 1689 respectively.⁵³ The emperor re-confirmed most of the existing privileges to these companies. Till 1690, the English remained helpless and planned to meet the emperor through Surat council which unfortunately led to a total seizure of company goods at Surat. The English company seized six Indian ships belonging to the Mughals which sparked off new hostilities between the Mughals and the English. Aurangzeb ordered for an immediate confiscation and arrest of all English goods and merchants throughout the Mughal empire. This had immediate repercussions on the Coromandel as well. The *faujdar* of Srikakulam, Sayyid Abdullah laid seize on the factories of Masulipatnam, Madapollem and Vizagpatnam. At Vizagpatnam, it sparked off a gun battle when the English tried to resist the Mughal

⁵² *RFSG, Diary and Consultation Book*, p.29,113.

⁵³ For the privileges given to the Dutch and the French see, J.F.Richards, 'European City-States on the Coromandel coast,' p. 508-509.

seizure.⁵⁴ The situation of the company improved when the Madrasapatnam council gave a whole hearted support to the Mughals against the Telugu *rajahs*, and against Marathas at Madrasapatnam . The company also obliged to pay an indemnity of Rs. 150,000 to the Mughals and practically bought peace from the emperor.⁵⁵ In 1692, in a carefully worded request, the English requested Asad Khan, Wazir of the empire for trading privileges on the Coromandel coast and for a special provision to fortify the town of Vizagpatnam apparently for "security from the polligars and thieves, killing our people and plundering of a great amount of goods and money".⁵⁶ In a reply, the Wazir had ordered the *faujdar* of Masulipatnam, Nizampatnam and Srikakulam to compensate the losses suffered by the English in 1689 in the hands of Mughals. In the same year a *finnan* was granted to the English which included permission for a fortification at Vizagpatnam, apart from other trading privileges⁵⁷ By 1694 the English investments at Vizagpatnam increased on par with other settlements on the coast:

Fort St. George	20,000 (in pounds)
Fort St. David	10,000
Vizagpatnam	10,000

Source: *RFSG, Diary and Consultation Book*, 1694. p. 6

As the trade and investments expanded at Vizagpatnam, it also asked for a closer monitoring of the local economy. This meant

⁵⁴ The Vizagpatnam factors graphically described the events of this seizure. *RFSG, Diary and consolation Book*, 1689.p. 87.

⁵⁵ J.F.Richards, 'European City States on the Coromandel coast', p. 510.

⁵⁶ *RFSG, Diary and Consultation Book*, 1692 p.4-5.

⁵⁷ *RFSG, Diary and Consultation Book*, 1692 p. 10-11.

1) to streamline the procuring of the company's textiles and 2) to open up or renew relations with the local powers. In 1696, the English company established the first joint stock at Vizagpatnam, which for some unknown reasons, the company thought it fit to get permission from the *faujdar*. They wrote:

"The company desires to employ weavers and merchants constantly by dividing the contracts annually on Joint stocks, when your merchants have engaged the weavers, they cannot serve others and if they for the justice of your place.....ask Holcombe to get a grant such Rocca's will as will compel weavers and merchants"⁵⁸

The Account Books of Vizagpatnam for the years 1694-97 ended with a net profit of 20,000 pagodas per season which was calculated for 8 seasons which amounted to 1,60,000 pagodas totally.⁵⁹ Scattered references does not allow any deeper study on the affairs of chiefs merchants at Vizagpatnam. However, the name of Budde Narrain's name stands out in the history of early economic history of Vizagpatnam for the period under study. It is not clear when Budde Narrain joined the company service. His name was mentioned in the context of non-payment of debts to the company which stood outstanding for over eight years. In 1698 alone, he owed the company a sum of 63914:6:8 pagodas and did not pay the debts owing to "constant succession of war and famine,

⁵⁸ RFSG, *Letters from Fort St. George*, 1696, p.96.

⁵⁹ RFSG, *Letters from Fort St. George*, 1698 p.73-74.

seconded with scarcity of cotton ... which they (Budde Narrain & Co) will by this present shipping clear most of their debts if not all" Simon Holcombe, chief of Vizagpatnam who appointed Budde Narrain replied to Madras council's suspicion that Budde Narrain was involved in private transactions wrote,

" the company had proceeded from a person either ignorant or prejudiced for he was not dismissed from the Dutch service. . . . but upon commissioners coming to Bimli where he was the chief merchant, . . . with suitable purchases and in which he was asked to resign that place to him (punde merchants) and if he pleased to accept the position of the second which he refused" ⁶⁰

It is clear that for unknown reasons, Budde Narrain left the Dutch service and joined the English company at Vizagapatnam. Budde Narrain who was the chief merchant for the company for more than a decade fell in disfavour of Simon Holcombe. Simon Holcombe, the politically motivated chief of Vizagpatnam favoured Jagappa, a prominent 'braminy' which abruptly ended Budde Narrain's career. Jagappa was a typical example of those many social elements who provided capital, knowledge and support to European companies in pre-modern India. Jagappa mediated between the English company and local chiefs and heralded a new phase of collaboration between local politics and English

⁶⁰ *RFSG, Letters to Fort St. George, 1699-1700, p. 231.*

commerce. He stood as surety to the parties in various economic transactions between the company officials and the local chiefs.

The trade at Vizagpatnam was dominated by Jagappa in the first decade of the eighteenth century. His mercantile activities in textiles and grain spread as far as Ganjam, Kalingapatnam and Sonapur. While there is no information on the volume of trade he conducted, sources reveal his unscrupulous ways of eliminating other merchants of Vizagpatnam and its adjacent Bimlipatnam. However, we have no information on whether he traded with VOC at Bimlipatnam. In a petition of Freeman, the Chief of Vizagpatnam to Madrasapatnam Council, Budde Narrain & Co graphically described how they became the victims of Jagappa's manipulations in trade which ousted him from chief merchant ship.⁶¹ The main strength of Jagappa lay in the close political relations he maintained with politico-military entrepreneurs and the company at Vizagpatnam. Other prominent merchants who traded with the English company were Consium Linganna, a raw cotton merchant, Gunny Narso, traded in grain and cotton, and Cossavavera brought cotton to Vizagapatnam(?).

The next set of merchants were the Persians on whom there has been a sudden crop of literature on the Coromandel coast. Scholars like Sanjay Subrahmanyam and S. Arasaratnam have Persian merchants who carried trade mainly from the port of Masulipatnam migrated to northern Coromandel due to number of factors in the last decade of the seventeenth century. For Sanjay Subrahmanyam, the main cause lay in the decline of independent

⁶¹ *RFSG, Diary and Consultation Book, 1706, p. 22.*

shipping activities to west Asia, while for Arasaratnam the sweeping political changes and the liquidation of Golconda forced these Persian merchants to migrate to other parts of Bay of Bengal, especially to Bengal and Vizagpatnam. While the conjecture of migration of these merchants seem plausible, there are few documents of Vizagpatnam which testify such a migration in the period under consideration. However, documents do reveal that trade was conducted by 'moors' and as integral component to Vizagpatnam. But whether they belonged to Masulipatnam is question to be explored.⁶² In 1693, there is a single reference, at least in the English records, to one Sheik Hussain "bringing with him some 20 ox load of cloth and promised to speedily complete the investment".⁶³ It is also not clear from the records whether all the 'moor' merchants who traded at Vizagapatnam were of the Persian origin or not.

Private trade was an important component of Vizagpatnam port. From the point of view of Coromandel merchants, the difference between company trade and the private activities of English factors was quite hazy. All most all the Indian merchants such as Budde Narrain, Jagappa, Linganna traded openly with the private trade of Richard Brown, Sherars, Samuel Fleetwood, Simon Holcombe etc. The appointment and the subsequent dismissal of Budde Narrain from chief merchant ship was due to some differences in private trade conducted with Simon Holcombe. Private trade which centered around Vizagapatnam was mostly

⁶² See, Sanjay Subrahmanayam's various articles on Persian merchants.

⁶³ *RFSG, Letters to Fort, St. George, 1693-94, p. 26.* and *RFSG, Letter from Fort St George 1698, p.73-74.*

carried in rice and grain to be sent to southern Coromandel. There is also no doubt that the Vizagpatnam and Bengal links which got crystallized in the eighteenth century brought private traders directly into the intra-Asian network as well. In addition, some of the private merchants took adjacent places on revenue farm from the Mughals. Richard Brown had to quit his chief ship on the charges farming certain towns adjacent to Vizagpatnam. Likewise, Simon Holcombe, who practically 'ruled' the Vizagpatnam factory as his personal 'fiefdome' rented the town and became the first English *havaladar* with an annual payment of Rs. 4862 as rent for the town.⁶⁴ For some reasons the company allowed Holcombe to continue the renting of town because,

"...doubtless and advantage to the management of the business and may tend to enlarge and increasing the town... for this reason, Mr. Holcombe hath bound to the company for rent thereby binds himself to the town for 3 years"⁶⁵

Though this has been a major deviance from the policy of the English company of farming towns and collecting rents from the 'native population', it also shows the vulnerability of Madrasapatnam council in curbing private trade at Vizagpatnam. Interestingly revenue farm of Simon Holcombe was later on converted as a company's privilege which considerably expanded the town in the first half of the eighteenth century.

⁶⁴ *Vizagpatnam Consultations*, 1693.

⁶⁵ *RFSG, Letters from Fort St. George*, 1698, p.100.

The regular renting of town brought the English company closer to the hinterland powers. Throughout the period under study, the English company by necessity had to depend on the Mughals for various privileges. But soon it realized that the actual functioning of the economy depended largely on politico-military entrepreneurs who wielded power at the local level. Till about 1694, The English at Vizagpatnam were oblivious of local politics and expressed scepticism on the continuance of the factory. In fact the English expressed fears about Pusapati Sitaramaraju's attempts of plundering Bimlipatnam and Vizagpatnam made the company to press the *Seer laskar* for permission to fortify the town of Vizagpatnam.⁶⁷ There is no doubt that the local *rajus* were highly extortinate on the European companies both at Bimlipatnam and Vizagpatnam. The English company reduced the investments from 30,000 to 15,000 pagodas ; the reasons being 1) "it is not safe to trust investment in the country without peace and 2) the *rajus* are more or less governing than the moors of the country and may probably take the first opportunity to take the revenge."⁶⁸

However, the company realized that the most of the cloth production areas were located in the areas dominated by the local *raju's* and compulsions of procuring the merchandise pushed the companies to establish direct contact with them. Simon Holcombe, the chief of Vizagpatnam between the years 1686-1707, negotiated

⁶⁷ As mentioned earlier, Pusapati Sitaramaraju was an important ally of the Mughals till 1697. He blockaded the towns of Bimlipatnam and Vizagapatnam which had major impact on the company trade. Apart from this, Chitteram (?) the local Zamindar lately demanded the loan of money offering the rent of towns for security, which the company rejected, which renewed hostilities with this Zamindar. ,RFSG, *Despatches to England*, 1694-96, p. 20,23.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

with these politico-military entrepreneurs (especially with Pusapati Anandaraju) and heralded a phase of intense collaboration between the English company and the local potentates of Coastal Andhra. This collaboration helped the English company in many ways. Firstly, as the records themselves testify, transportation of goods from the hinterland to the port went unhindered in an otherwise war ravaged economy. Writing on the wars in the region and the prospects of English trade at Vizagpatnam the English reported that "the new Nawab have impeded all travelling by keeping *Meltees* all along the country so that trade and all correspondence come to a stand still, *but our chiefs good understanding to the rajus our peons are passing freely* " (emphasis added) and further noticed that "we however have not suffered amidst all the revolutions either in our town or the country."⁶⁹ Secondly, the relations also brought the companies closer to the local Hindu merchants who in turn had close relationship with the chiefs of the region. It is a more or less established fact that Hindu merchants derived specific advantages of working with European companies and *vice versa*. During this period the chiefs of coastal Andhra especially maintained Hindu merchants for the sake of finances and for the necessary expansion of commercial sector on which their politics depended. Jagappa is just a case in point. Thirdly, the much needed arms for their wars was readily provided by the European companies. In fact by the end of the seventeenth century, European intervention in the Indian subcontinent became more militaristic rather than being dependent

⁶⁹ RFSG, Public Department, *Letters to Fort St George* ,1699-1700 pp. 122,155.

only on the system of passes on the oceanic front.⁷⁰ In a situation marked by political fluidity, the companies did not adopt rigid rules and framework on to whom the arms were to be supplied. The companies supplied arms to both the warring chiefs and to the Mughals alike, thereby maintained a certain neutrality as far as arms supply was concerned. Significantly, neither of these mutually antagonistic parties seemed to have objected to this method. From the Indian point of view, it seems, the companies were mere supplier of arms and ammunition and neither of the parties objected as long as their demands were met without any hindrance.

The English company, both by imperatives of trade and the exigencies of the political situation in the hinterland was drawn into the politics of the region which led to a complex pattern of conflict and collaboration which benefited the company in the long run.

The emergence of Tripartite Relations: *Mughal Faujdars*, Politico-military entrepreneurs and English East India Company

The first decade of the eighteenth century was marked by constant making and unmaking of alliances between the chiefs and the Mughal *faujdars* in northernmost segment of coastal Andhra. The balance of power definitely tilted in favour of combined *raju* clans of the region, while the Mughals failed to consolidate its position at the local level. The Mughal Diwan had to conclude a

⁷⁰ RFSG, Public Department, *Letters to Fort St George 1711*, p.9. RFSG, *Letters to Fort St George*, 1712 p.17, RFSG, *Letters to Fort St George*, 1711/12, p. 39.

humiliating treaty in 1697 treaty with the rebels which retained the autonomy of combined *raju* clans. However, from the point of view of Vizagapatnam, important changes took place during the tenure of Fakirullah Khan's (1699-1713)*faujdari*. Fakirullah Khan became dependent on local politics and used his position of *faujdar* for his personal gains. Fakirullah Khan who was appointed as a *faujdar* after paying a substantial sum of money to the emperor adopted a reconciliatory attitude towards the chiefs and the English company. During his tenure as a *faujdari*, Fakirullah Khan realised the futility of dislodging bigger proto-dynastic figures like the Pusapati Anandaraju and Varasimha Deva, instead concentrated his military operations on smaller *Zamindars* of the region. Fakirullah Khan who was aware of the factional politics at the imperial court and its concomitant effect at the provincial level embarked on personal aggrandizement to augment his wealth. It must be remembered that Fakirullah Khan bought the office of *faujdari* of Coastal Andhra by paying an additional sum of money to the emperor- an early indication of the Mughal version of *ijardari*.⁷¹

The local chiefs, after their initial success against the Mughals, consolidated their position by revamping the economy which was affected by internecine wars which spanned for over a decade. The strategy of Pusapati Anandaraju was similar to that of Fakirullah Khan. He tried to subdue lesser chiefs of the region and faced stiff resistance from Mogalteru and Peddapuram Zamindars who in turn lent support to Fakirullah Khan. However, when Mehdi Khan Beig was appointed as the *faujdar* of Srikakulam, the

⁷¹ J.F.Richards, *Mughal Administration of Golconda*, pp.98-99.

Zamindars of Peddapuram and Mogalteru shifted their loyalty to Anandaraju which led to a combined revolt against the Mughal expansion. *Anandaraju*, who stood at the apex of the hierarchy of chiefdoms needed money to augment his military power and thus entered into relations with the English company. One of the most important outcome of this new relationship was the import of Madras rupees into Vizagpatnam.⁷²

The relationship of Ananda raju with the port of Vizagpatnam, through English trade, gained him both long term and short term benefits. As part of long term strategy, Anandaraju directly intervened in the production economy and thoroughly exploited already well established networks of markets. He encouraged the formation of small marketing towns such as Kaumali, Vizianagaram, Bobbili, Ramachandrapuram, Gudipudi, Nellamerla etc. This led to integration of commercial sector with that of Vizagpatnam which benefited the English company as well.

Anandaraju's short term strategy was dictated by immediate political exigency of wars against the Mughals which forced him to depend on the company for immediate financial needs. Ananda Raju took loan from the company on the promise of giving away some weaving villages to the company and on providing security at Vizagpatnam.⁷³ Simon Holcombe readily provided a sum of Rs. 1,35,000 to Ananda Raju as a debt. But not having cash in hand,

⁷² J.F.Richards, 'European City-states on the coromandel coast', p. 517.

⁷³ The actual promises of Ananda Raju to the English are not clear from the documents. However, from the correspondence of Simon Holcombe to the Madras council, it becomes clear that Anandaraju favoured the chief of Vizianagaram. See, *RFSG*, Series between the years 1702-1705.

Simon Holcombe took the money from Fakirullah Khan, at an interest of one per cent.⁷⁴

In the above mentioned transaction, Simon Holcombe used the company seal regarding the debt to Fakirullah Khan, while it is also significant to note that the English chief did not possess any such written guarantee from Anandaraju.⁷⁵ Jagappa, the company 'braminy' and the chief merchant negotiated the deal between Anandaraju and the English and assured the company's prospects at Vizagpatnam⁷⁶ The initial reaction of Madrasapatnam council to this financial deal was positive and in fact hailed Simon Holcombe for having entered into such a deal for, 'it would help the relations between the native governments and the company'.⁷⁷

The financial transaction between the company, Fakirullah Khan and Anandaraju had major ramifications for working of the company at Vizagpatnam. As long as the relations between the Mughals, Anand a Raju and the English were smooth, neither of the parties bothered about the debt position. However, the developments after the death of Simon Holcombe in 1705 and the subsequent claim for the repayment of debt by Fakirullah Khan clearly reflects the 'fluidity' and the temporary nature of the relationships between these contesting parties.

The developments between 1705-1712 compounded into a major show down when Fakirullah Khan who blockaded the port of Vizagpatnam. On the one hand, the events that followed the

⁷⁴ *RFSG, Diary and Consulation Book, 1710, p.79.*

⁷⁵ *RFSG, Diary and Consulation Book, 1710, p.126.*

⁷⁶ *RFSG, Diary and Consulatiton Book, 1706, p.22.*

⁷⁷ *RFSG, Diary and Consualtation Book, 1702, p. 24-25.*

death of Simon Holcombe unfolded the predicament of Mughal *faujders* in coastal Andhra. Anandaraju whose power grew due to unification of chiefs under one political alliance left very little scope for Fakirullah Khan to exercise his authority over the districts Srikakulam and Vizianagaram, especially at a time when other *faujders* contested for power. In 1709, Bahadur Shah appointed Abid Khan as the *new faujdar* for entire trans-Godavari region and Srikakulam. Only Vizagapatnam remained under the *faujdari* of Fakirullah Khan which meant considerable erosion in his territorial jurisdiction.⁷⁸ Abid Khan consolidated his position at Rajamundry independent of the imperial government in the Deccan. He soon extended his area of operations into the vicinity of Vizagapatnam which threatened Fakirullah Khan's position. Abid Khan was helped by the local Kolindar *Raja* of Mogaluru in his political ambition. Fakirullah Khan was caught in a piquant situation on both sides; he remained helpless about the growing power of Ananda Raju who declared war against the Mughal empire and the aggressive expansion of Abid Khan into Vizagapatnam sector.

Fakirullah Khan was hard pressed for money and hence demanded the unpaid balance and interest for the loan given to the English company. In 1710, Fakirullah Khan wrote a letter to Madras council ordering for Rs 10,000, a present worth 300 pagodas to the Nawab, and to send him the account of money and a complete account of dues from the 'country *rajahs*' to the company.⁷⁹ He also sent a detailed account of money to be remitted on his account which amounted to 44,000 pagodas and the interest for the last 12

⁷⁸ J.F.Richards, *Mughal Administration in Golconda*, p. 89

years which came up to Rs. 70,000 at the rate of one per cent. He accused the company of making at least 25 to 30% profit of the same sum by lending it to 'country *raju's*'. He wrote to the company: "you are trying to escape me and probably go to Madras or any other seaport, but will not leave you as you are still part of the Mughal dominions".⁸⁰ The English at Madrasapatnam were very sceptical about the whole affair of Fakirullah khan and in fact decided to abandon the fort and leave for Madrasapatnam. However, the President and Council decided "not to pay a pie until we are first well assured that the old *Cojees* seal is affix in the obligation of Holcombe."⁸¹ So desperate was the company's situation that they even tried to endorse *Koran* as 'their religion as contained in their *Koran* they cannot demand and indeed receive any interest of any person either of their own or any other'.

During the course of the events, Anandaraju had agreed to come to a fair adjustment of accounts and pay the balances and asked the company to send a Mulla and a Brahmin to them.⁸² However, Pyakarao and Ananda Raja who clearly dominated the politics of the region never paid the money which in turn aggravated the events into a blockade of Vizagapatnam. Seeing the mood of the English and their non-committal attitude to the repayment of the debt, Fakirullah Khan immediately ordered for the seizure and blockade of the town. Anandaraju used the blockade as an opportunity to get the loan waived and immediately sided with Fakirullah Khan .⁸³

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p. 79.

⁸² *RFSG, Diary and Consultation Book*, 1709 p. 42-43.

⁸³ *RFSG, Diary and Consultation Book*, 1711,p.25.

In fact during the course of the blockade none of the *Raju's* of the region who maintained cordial relations with the company helped them at Vizagpatnam. The blockade extended to two years after which the English company finally agreed to pay "the moor Rs, 20,732, being the amount of bond given him by Mr. Holcombe together with a present of 500 pagodas."⁸⁴ However, the success of Fakirullah Khan was short lived; he was arrested and imprisoned by Abid Khan in 1713 who took over as *new faujdar* of Srikakulam.

The above mentioned financial transaction highlighted the fluid nature of relationships between various contesting parties at Vizagapatnam It further reflects on how Mughals and the English operated at local level. On the Mughal side it showed the transformation of *the faujdar* at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The careers of Fakirullah Khan and Abid Khan clearly indicated that the *faujdar* was acting independently of the empire. Fakirullah khan for instance, had entered into financial transactions with the English company irrespective of the Mughal official policy in which private financial obligations were prohibited. The career of Abid Khan is slightly different from that of Fakirullah Khan. He embarked on a political career with the help of local Deshmukhs and chiefs of the Rajamundry area. So powerful was his position in the region that he offered to help the English company in lifting the seizure of Vizagpatnam by Fakirullah Khan. The English company seemed to have inclined to take his help and wrote to him that:

⁸⁴ *RFSG, Despatches from England, 1710-1713 p.86.*

" in order to compromise all the differences between Fukrela Khan and English, relating to what remains as the balance which our people at the factory say is 6500 pagodas and that the money be his if he does raises the seize of the factory and that all the formalities be done on his and company's seal"⁸⁵

The inherent characteristic of conflict between Abid Khan and Fakirullah Khan questions the long held view on the nature of intra-Mughal conflicts. It has been argued that the nature of conflicts in the imperial administration were vertical in nature, i.e. between the *Zamindars* and the Mughal officials at the provincial level. However, the activities of Abid Khan to override the neighbouring *faujdari* of Vizagpatnam is an indication of horizontal nature of conflicts in which of *intra-faujdar* conflicts became endemic in the provinces where the central authority was only nominal.⁸⁶ At the end of the seventeenth century the effective functioning of *faujdar*s depended on two traits. Firstly, in its conscious effort to become localised with autonomous territorial and administrative jurisdictions and secondly, on the active collaboration with local elite, rather than liquidate or assimilate them into the Mughal system *per se*.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ *RFSG, Diary and Consultation Book*, 1711, p. 46.

⁸⁶ See, Douglas Streusand, *The Formation of Mughal Empire*, New Delhi, 1989, 'Conclusion'.

⁸⁷ For instance, if we contrast the career of Abid Khan with that of Ayar Bek, he declared war against Koliandar Rajus of Mogalteru, Timma raju of Peddapuram, and Appa Row of Nuzvid. He forcibly extracted Rs 25,000 and an agreement to pay Rs.875,000 as arrears to the central government. The rajus on their hand refused to recognise Ayar Bek as the legitimate *faujdar* and thus had to face the mutiny of his own army. His administration collapsed in coastal Andhra and

In spite of huge financial losses to Fakirullah Khan, the English company was able to make an impact in the local political economy as a major source of 'private finance'. However, it must be noted that the company had not yet formulated any definite policy in dealing with the hinterland powers. In fact, as the course of events reveal the English company was still vulnerable in the political dynamics on Coromandel. The series of correspondence between 1700-1712 of Madrasapatnam council and the Court of Directors at London show that it initially welcomed the decision of Simon Holcombe with regard to financial transaction with the local *rajus* as a step which would bring the local powers closer to the company. But when the *rajus* refused to repay the debt which led to a blockade, the Madrasapatnam Council felt that " the chief has erred in his politicks (not to say worse)should have brought Fuckerela Khan to our terms and made the rajahs his enemies which would prove disappointment to his affairs and ...nothing but force of arms can take him off his high demands..."⁸⁸ This chivalry of the Board of Directors obviously did not work for the company at the local level. However, the local political exigencies in various regions forced the European companies to enter invariably into complex relations with the hinterland powers on which the trade in the region depended.

finally Abid Khan stepped in to assist the *Rajus* of Peddapuram and Mogalteru. See. J.F.Richards, *Mughal Administration of Golconda*, pp.257-261.

⁸⁸ *RFSG, Diary and Consultation Book*, 1710, p. 127 and *RFSG, Despatches from England*, Public Department, 1709, p. 149 and *RFSG, Public Department, Letters to Fort St George*, 1711, p. 108.

Vizagpatnam, English Company and the Logic of Fortification

The contemporary documentation of the European companies justified fortification at Vizagpatnam on three grounds. Firstly, it depended on the proposition that the European powers were helpless due to the 'rapacious' nature of local extortions. Secondly, on the ground that fortifications offered security to the artisans; especially to those who worked in highly volatile situation such as at Vizagpatnam, and thirdly, to the inherent capacity to generate revenues.⁸⁹ All these features, if analysed combindly, formed the basic character of fortifications which came to be defined as 'autonomous', 'city-states', with independent logic of growth irrespective of the role of inland administrative systems: the latter forming into a mechanistic provider of goods and services to these burgeoning 'islands of growth' amidst chaos and decline. This has been the dominant characterization of fortifications across Asia in the seventeenth century.

Force was part of the inherent logic in which indigenous powers Europeans interacted at various levels is now recognised by historians. However, scholars have failed to recognise the varied

⁸⁹ The characterisation of these fortifications as city states was first propounded by W.H.Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, New Delhi, 1972 (reprint). Scholars who have argued for the extortionate and rapacious political hinterland include S. Arasaratanam, J.F.Richards and to a lesser extent by Ashin Das Gupta. J. F.Richards for instance, wrote on Vizagpatnam that "Clearly, the British in Vizagpatnam in 1689 were peaceful merchants who depended on indigenous authorities to protect them as they traded. By 1710 this was far from the case. ...by fortifying the town., they transformed from hitherto peaceful merchants into armed defenders of city-states" See, J.F.Richards, 'European City States on the Coromandel Coast', p. 518-519. For the inherent idea of force between the indigenous powers and the Europeans, see, I Bruce Watson, 'Fortifications and the 'Idea' of Force in the seventeenth Century, *P&P*, 1980. *passim*, and, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce*, See, Chapter on 'Europeans and Asians in the age of Contained conflict.

nature of conflicts which differed from region to region which threw up different responses in Asian-European relations.⁹⁰ Thus, regional specificity must be stressed before any analysis on European settlements in Asia.

Though the contemporary European documentation projects a mere stereotype of the extortion's of the local administration, the fact remains that European fortifications such as Pulicat, Fort St. George were firmly grounded in specific political and economic situations in which the Europeans had to operate. That the rise of Pulicat and Vizagpatnam as major fortifications cannot be attributed to same set of causes, though, offense and defense provided the fundamental base for building of fortifications on the Coromandel coast.⁹¹ For example, the rise of Vizagpatnam as a fortification was not so much due to extortionate nature of local administration but was a product of various internecine wars between the Mughals and local *rajus* chiefs in the region.⁹² In 1692, Elihu Yale, the Governor of Madrasapatnam sent a petition to Asad Kahn, and requested him to have a small fortification at Vizagpatnam, "that for the future we may live without fear from the country rajahs."⁹³ Curiously, enough the request does not mention about the Mughal pillage in Coroamandel which logically should have been the main incentive for construction of a fortification. Further more the clustered nature of port towns on the

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ W.H.Moreland, *Relations of Golconda in the early seventeenth Century*, Hakluyt society, 1931.

⁹² J.F.Richards, 'European City-States on the Coromandel coast', p. 517.

⁹³ *RFSG, Diary and Consultation Book*, 1693-94, p. 22.

Coromandel which were located in close proximity to each other was seen as a detrimental factor by rival companies of VOC and EIC which called for a need for fortifications. Thus, the English were threatened by the Dutch at Bimlipatnam (which was situated at only 5 miles north of Vizagpatnam) thought it fit to request for a *firman* from the Mughal Wazir.

In 1692, the English were granted a *firman* from Prince Kam Baksh to erect a fortification at Vizagpatnam.⁹⁴ Immediately after the first revolts broke out between Mughals and the country *raju's*, the English expanded the fort on the southern side which had a circumference of 330 feet. As far as the permission of construction of fortification at Vizagpatnam was concerned, the English were put in an uncomfortable situation, for, in coastal Andhra, the power was hazily divided between Mughals and the local politico-military entrepreneurs. Theoretically speaking, it was the prerogative of the Mughal emperor to grant privileges for any settlement on the coast. However, his power existed only fitfully in the changing political context of the early eighteenth century. For example, as the revolts in coastal Andhra tilted towards the favour of the country *rajus*, the English, by necessity, had to approach these local potentates for any consideration of a settlement on the Coromandel. However, it must be noted that their power did not have any legal sanction from the Mughal emperor. In 1697, reacting to the dilemma of English factors on country affairs, the Madrasapatnam Council wrote to Vizagpatnam :

⁹⁴ RFSG, *Diary and Consultation Book*, 1692, p.10-11.

"It is not clear if the seerlaskar can fight the united rajahs and it will long before the Mughals could send the second contingent. It is safest to suppose that country rajahs are the conquerors. Any correspondence would be on the following lines: a) the business cannot be done without the favour of country rajahs, b) we do not quarrel with any other nation, c) we bring great treasures to the country, d) that we shall quit the place if they pay Rs. 100,000."⁹⁵

In the initial period of the company trade at Vizagapatnam, the English were sceptical about the consolidation of power by the *Raju's* in the long run and expressed doubts about their own presence Vizagapatnam in such an event.⁹⁶ The active collaboration of Simon Holcombe in the country affairs had radically changed the prospects of English trade and revenues at Vizagpatnam. For all day-today operations and other functional purposes the English depended on the local *Raju* chiefs for the expansion of the settlement. In fact the Madras council concurred with the opinion of Simon Holcombe on the issue that the actual interest of the company depended on the country *rajus* either for fortifications or farming of seaports and other towns of coastal Andhra⁹⁷

The company relations with regard to Mughal permissions depended on the individual strength of *each faujdar* rather than on the Mughal official policy. For instance, in 1698, when Rustom Dil

⁹⁵ RFSG, *Letters from Fort St. George, 1697*, pp. 11-12.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

Khan threatened a blockade on Vizagpatnam, the English factors decided to withdraw the factory without entering into any 'hostility with the *seer laskar*' and suspended all the trading activity till the appointment of Fakirullah Khan.⁹⁸ Fakirullah Khan, WHO pursued the policy of collaborating with the English company precisely at a time when the company forged alliances with the local chiefs. In fact, during the period under consideration, there is no evidence to suggest that the company had ever approached Fakirullah Khan for permissions of any kind apart from merely reconfirming the *husbulhukum*'s every three years.

However, the correspondence between the English and the Mughals became regular on the eve of the blockade of the town of Vizagpatnam by Fakirullah Khan. In 1709, Thomas Pitt, the Governor of Madras wrote to Zoode Khan on the revenues and fortifications of Vizagpatnam. This request to Diwan was sent to reconfirm all previously given *perwanas and firmans*, with an additional privileges of revenues of Vizagpatnam and other villages adjacent to it in perpetuity.⁹⁹

There is no doubt that the years between 1690-1712 saw a steady growth of Vizagpatnam primarily due to the tripartite relations between the Mughals, country *raju*'s and the English company. In the period between 1694-98, the company invested heavily on fortifications which steadily went up from 16748:5:3 to 63194:30:3 to 79038 for the years 1696-98 respectively.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ RFSG, *Diary and Consultation Book*, 1698, p.43.

⁹⁹ RFSG, *Diary and Consultation Book*, 1709, p.7.

¹⁰⁰ RFSG, *letters from Fort St George*, 1698, p.73-74.

Concerning revenues of Vizagapatnam, sources are very scattered and hence difficult to construct the nature of revenues at Vizagapatnam. As mentioned earlier, the town was rented to Simon Holcombe in 1693 at an annual payment of Rs. 4862 which for some unknown reasons converted it into a company rent.¹⁰¹ The English company expanded slowly into neighbouring villages of Perwada, Woodapoonda, Walteroo, Macuapauram and Dolphin's nose which came under company's territorial jurisdiction.¹⁰² For all these villages the English paid an annual rent of Rs. 1400 per annum.

One interesting feature at Vizagapatnam was the absence of weavers and artisans flocking to the fortified settlement in search of security, a feature which was often justified as a fundamental reason for the growth of fortifications in the early modern India. Perhaps, the absence of activities of Muslim merchants at Vizagapatnam may be regarded as a major reason for any development of urban groups *per se*. This also reflects the buoyancy in the economy despite of constant war in the region. Wars between the Mughal faujdars and the country rajas which included not more than 4000 men on either sides did not really affect the functioning of economy to push weavers and artisans to migrate to Vizagapatnam.

Nevertheless, Vizagapatnam as a town grew in size and importance in the eighteenth century which can be associated within the changing politico-economic dimensions of the later seventeenth century, firstly in the Mughal expansion. Secondly, the

¹⁰¹ RFSG, Public Department, *Letters from Fort St. George*, 1693/94, p. 140-41.

¹⁰² RFSG, *Diary and Consulation Book*, 1698, 1699-1700 and 1709.

crucial intervention of the politico-military entrepreneurs in the local economy played a major role in establishing links between the commercial production and the English East India Company. And lastly, the English chief, Simon Holcombe whose adventurous ministrations with the local chiefs and Mughals alike which fostered unhindered growth of Vizagpatnam and transformed it into a modern town in the eighteenth century.