EUROPEANS ON THE COROMANDEL AND IT'S IMPACT ON THE MUSLIMS

The age of European maritime colonism set in the peninsular India right from the beginning of sixteenth century. The Portuguese who arrived first incorporated themselves in the systems in practice in the land. The Portuguese success exited the cupidity of other Europeans. The Dutch, French, Danes and the English too followed on the footsteps of the Portuguese. All these foreigners were accepted and assigned a place with all protection by the ruling houses. The local rulers adopted the concept of free trade and the maritime zones became more prominent. The colonial powers not only monopolised trade and the maritime zones became more prominent. They also began to encroach the political authority.

The entire Coromandel region rapidly got transformed from a peace zone and free trade zone, to zone of maritime discard based upon denial of free trade and freedom of navigation. The rivalry was not only between the new comers [Europeans] and the native powers but also among the Europeans themselves. The struggle continued till the nineteenth century when the English emerged as the dominant naval power and a new colonial rule was established that was based upon maritime dominance.

The big local power, the Vijayanagar, collapsed in the sixteenth century and the succeeding states like the Nayakdoms, the Deccani Sultanates and the like were fighting themselves or confronting with the Mughal empire and none of them could develop the capacity to challenge the European powers. Finally they succumbed to the naval superiority and financial backing of the English power.

In the above trade competitions and race for supremacy the traditional maritime people, the Muslims of Coromandel suffered more than the traders of other communities and the economic blows proved them fatal. A look on the trading activities of the Europeans in the Coromandel Coast itself will amply testify the plight of the maritime Muslims of the coast. Hence a sketch on the activities of the colonial powers that stormed the silent waters of Coromandel and in that how the Muslims were wrecked is briefed in this chapter.

V-1 - PORTUGUESE

The anchorage of the galley of Vasco da gama, the Portuguese adventurer, at the port city of Calicut in 1498, marks the first European presence in the Indian sub continent. It led to the establishment
of an overseas empire of Portugal in India. The Portuguese said that they came to India in search of Christians and spices. In the words of W.H. Moreland, "in the sixteenth century, the Indian ocean was a Portuguese lake in which the absence of any serious opposition made it possible to control the seas". The Portuguese became the masters and monopolists of spices trade in India. Indian rulers, at that time did not enter into trade, so there was no claim on the part of the rulers for monopoly over trade in Indian Ocean. Hence they extended all facilities to the Portuguese to attract them to their ports. The diversion of the maritime trade of India to the hands of the Portuguese, destroyed the trade of the Arabs and the native Muslims and also delivered a mighty blow against Islam.

The maritime Muslim community of the western coast could not view the arrival of the Portuguese with sympathy. But against the strong opposition of the Arabs and other Muslim traders the Portuguese rapidly expanded their power and gained mastery over the trade in Malabar. They participated in the Indian Ocean trade as much as they could. They built the first fortified factory in 1503 at the mouth of the river Edappalli (Cochin). Thus the first European fortress on the Indian soil came up as the harbinger of the future. The Portuguese pressurised the native rulers for commercial monopoly to the exclusion of everyone. Spices, gold and silver were declared as royal monopoly. They exploited the Christian faith of the Christians for trade and persuaded them not to sell pepper to the Muslims. Slowly the Portuguese went far and wide to conquer territories and establish fortresses to circumvent the Arabs and Turks to trade with India. Ceylon was made their tributary state in 1507, Goa was conquered in 1510. The control of Goa gave them a better point to prevent the Arab merchants entering the Malabar emporium. Control of Ormuz, the key to east and Persian gulf by 1515, stopped the flow of spices from Malabar coast through Persian gulf. Malacca was compelled to agree to a commercial treaty in 1511. The Portuguese establishments became Portuguese territories.

Cartaz system was enforced by the Portuguese for shipping that operated in the Indian seas. Cartaz (from Arabic Certaz, meaning, a document) can be defined as a pass for navigation to the merchant ships so that they could navigate and enter the ports without any trouble. Ships without cartaz could be captured. This compelled the merchants and rulers
to be friendly with Portuguese. Rulers of Malabar who supported the trading activities of the Portuguese also had to obtain Cartaz. Even the Mughal emperor Akbar obtained Cartaz for his ships to Red Sea.⁶

Available Evidences show that the Portuguese made their way to Coromandel only after 1505. Lodovico de Varthama who visited Nagapattanam in 1505 mentions the presence of Christians but not the Portuguese.⁷ As early as 1506, some of the Portuguese during their trip to investigate their prospects in Malacca, had landed purely by accident in the vicinity of Nagappattanam where they received a hostile reception from the Muslim traders.⁸ Sewel points out that the governance of the seas east of Cape Comerin was also in the hands of the Portuguese by 1509.⁹ From that time onwards the Portuguese made Pulicat as an important trading centre since there was good hope for the collection of hinterland textiles of the area. These textiles were exported to Malacca.

According to Portuguese chronicler Corriea, one Manual de Frias was appointed as the first Portuguese captain of the Coromandel and Fishery Coast in 1521 with headquarters at Pulicat.¹⁰ Frias had authority to issue Cartaz. Cartazes were obtained by Muslims and other navigators and traders. The ships without Cartazes were captured. By 1530, the Portuguese had two important centres on the Coromandel: one was Pulicat with satellite Sao Thome and the other was Nagapattanam. Nagapattanam was a busy coastal commercial centre in rice trade to Ceylon and other southern ports and Malabar bringing back areca, timber, cinnamon and pepper. Pulicat was a textile centre. By about 1530, Nagapattanam became an important trading centre with the outside world. It is noteworthy that in essence, the Portuguese settlers, operated side by side with the other principal groups in Nagapattanam, the Marakkayars; both typically functioning with small profit margins and small individual consignments in the trade. The trading activities of the Portuguese at Pulicat declined by 1580. But trade from Nagapattanam was on the rise.¹¹

When the Portuguese arrived in India the whole of Tamil Country was under the sway of the Vijayanagar Empire, though this hold was feeble. The Portuguese did not seek the permission of the native potents to settle in their settlements or for opening factories. Krishna Deva Raya [1509-1530] of Vijayanagar followed a careful imperial policy towards Portuguese, though his transactions with them showed the spirit of friendship.
After the fall of the Goa into the hands of the Portuguese, the aggressive attitude of Albequerque was not approved by him. When Albequerque sought the alliance of the Raya against the coastal native powers, such as the Zamorin, it was not favoured by him. Albequerque also requested the Raya to assist him against the Muslims of Calicut and in turn he promised to extend help to defeat the Sultans of Deccan and also not to sell horses to Bijapur but only to Raya. In this Raya gave special consideration to the merchants who imported horses and elephants, so that they may not supply them to his enemies. Prior to the fall of Goa to the Portuguese, this trade was in the hands of the Muslims. But by the time of Krishna Deva Raya, the Arab and the native Muslim merchants were completely driven out from this market and the Portuguese enjoyed the monopoly in horse trade.

The successors of Krishna Deva Raya also purchased a large number of horses. Sadasiva, concluded a treaty with the Portuguese that the horses landed at Goa should be sold only to him. The ruler of Travancore had a different request. He requested the Portuguese permission to buy horses for war with Vijayanagar. In return he promised to permit all the fishermen to become Christians.

Though the Vijayanagar Emperors, were not against the monopolistic trading attitude of the Portuguese, the proselitizing of the natives by them called for drastic action. There were large scale conversions to Christianity in the coastal belt. The converts were regarded by the Portuguese as Portuguese subjects. When the Vijayanagar emperor Ramaraja, felt this danger, he wanted to assert the Imperial authority and hence the invasion of the Badagas on the Coromandel.

Vithala, the cousin of Ramaraja, during his southern expedition in 1537, wanted to suppress the activities of the Portuguese in Coromandel. The Portuguese were well established during this decade at Manapad, Pinnalkayal, Vembar and Tuticorin and also took the civil and criminal jurisdiction of the whole fishery coast. Pinnalkayal was the head quarters of the Portuguese. It was shifted to Tuticorin in 1580.

The Paravas were effective tools at the hands of the Portuguese and it helped them to become the masters of the fishery coast wresting it from the Muslims. The Paravas had lived as fishers and pearl divers in the fishery coast from ancient times. By 14th century A.D.,
the Muslims had established firmly in the coast of Kayalpattanam and Kilakkarai, and gained control over the pearl fishery as lease holders. The control of the Pearl fishery by the Muslims reduced the Paravas to the state of daily labourers and slaves. They had to pay tribute to the Muslims lease holders. According to Francis Xavior, the Paravas were oppressed under the Moorish yoke. There were many quarrels between the Paravas and the Muslims resulting in the loss of many lives on both sides.

The Paravas approached the Portuguese Captain at Cochin. The Portuguese captain promised them help and protection if they got converted to Christianity, which was gladly accepted by the Paravas. Priests were sent from Cochin and many were baptised. Later during the visit of the Francis Xavior to the Coromandel coast there was mass baptism. Thereafter the Paravas were spoken off as the favourite children of Portuguese and regarded as Portuguese subjects. The Muslims of Kilakkarai and Kayalpattanam wanted to prevent these conversions obviously fearing that these conversions will hamper their activities in the fishery coast. They sent a delegation to Cochin with valuable presents to the Portuguese Captain and approached their co-religionist, Cherina Marakkar, an influential ship owner and merchant of Cochin, to pressurise the Portuguese. But the latter could not help them. By 1537, the entire fishery coast was converted to Christianity. Later, the Paravas also became competitors to the Muslims, in the maritime activities with the blessings of the Portuguese.

Vithala’s forces started their campaign against the Portuguese and the Paravas with the assistance of the local Muslims. The Portuguese captain at Pinnaikayal was attacked in 1544 and he fled with his family. Tuticorin was also swept. The Port of Nagore was captured in 1543. The Portuguese had a mud fort at Vedalai. The Portuguese soldiers stationed there were collecting toll from the pilgrims to Rameswaram. Vithala drove these soldiers from Vedalai with the help of the local Muslims. Vithala again attacked Pinnaikayal with the help of the Muslim pirate, Irap Ali’s fleet and the Portuguese captain was caught. But the Portuguese retaliated and defeated the Muslim fleet. There were mass scale murders of Muslims.

The Portuguese had fortified Nagapattanam and carried on brisk trade. The Nayaks of Thanjavur greatly favoured the Portuguese. The Nayaks do not seem to have possessed control either fiscal or judicial over the Portuguese and they cared only for the revenue return from the trade operations, the regular payment of which maintained a happy
relationship between them. Moreover the Nayaks did not encourage the trade enterprises of the natives including that of the Muslims. Foreign trade went to the hands of the Europeans. The fortified city of Nagapattanam became the subject to the King of Portugal in 1642.23 Nagapattanam became the centre of Portuguese missionary activities. Religion and commerce always combined in the expansion of Portuguese empire. But their religious policy made them unpopular.24 Like the Vijayanagar rulers, the Nayaks of Thanjavur also were not in favour of the proselitizing activities of the Portuguese and were unhappy over their treatment of the natives and hence they wanted to push them out of Nagapattanam.

In spite of the hostilities of the later Nayak rulers towards the Portuguese, they carried on vast trade at Nagapattanam. There was brisk trade between Nagapattanam and Malabar. Spices and drugs were exported to Malacca and China25. Along with the Portuguese, there were many Chettiar merchants who were dominant. But there were also many Muslims who were the natives of the land and owners of many ships26. By 1650, though political powers of the Portuguese diminished, their fortress and factories defenceless, the trade continued to increase27. The attempts of the Nayaks to oust the Portuguese from Nagapattanam failed just as the efforts of the Moghuls to oust them from Goa.28 During this period, the Portuguese trade and their supremacy were challenged by the Dutch. When the attempts of the Nayaks failed to ground the Portuguese they sought the help of the Dutch to drive them away. In 1658, Nagapattanam was captured by the Dutch and the Portuguese surrendered.29

The trade enterprises of the Portuguese assumed definite shape in the coast of Madurai by 1650. The nayaks of Madurai did not encourage the native maritime traders including the Muslims. Utilising the naval deficiency of the Nayaks the Portuguese became the masters of the fishery coast.

Hostility among the native rulers resulted in the political polarisation, centering round the European powers. Since the native rulers were unequal to the Portuguese in the sea, they necessarily had recourse to the other European powers. Thus we find the Madurai Nayaks in alliance with the Portuguese, Thanjavur and Ramanathapuram were in alliance with the Dutch.30

Thirumalai Nayak of Madurai (1623-1659), strongly supported the Portuguese. In the succession dispute of the Marava kingdom of Ramnad in 1637, Thirumalai nayak favoured the opponent's claim and enlisted the support of the Portuguese. The Sethupathi got the
assistance of the Dutch. In return for the support from the Portuguese, Thirumalai Nayak undertook to give a place for the fortress wherever they desired in his territory. He also undertook to build at his own cost a church at Ramanathapuram and seven churches between Pamban and Tondi. He also gave permission to all those who desired to become Christians, and promised to the king of Portugal all assistance in men and supplies for services in Ceylon. He further undertook not to be friendly to the Dutch, not to admit them into his territories and not to send his vessels to the Dutch ports. This encouraged the Portuguese to strengthen the proselitizing and trading activities which went against the interest of the Muslims of the region.

On the other hand, the Sethupathis were hostile to the Portuguese. They favoured the Muslim traders in their coast against the Paravas of the Portuguese camp. In February 1655, Sethupathi Raghunatha Devan contracted a treaty with the Dutch declaring common enmity towards Portuguese. The Dutch promised the Sethupathi, protection from Portuguese attacks.

In the fierce contest for colonial rivalry between the Portuguese and the Dutch, the winds were in favour of the latter. The Dutch gained the blessings of the most of the native rulers. Ultimately the Portuguese political hold began to weaken and their territories slipped from them. The Dutch captured Tuticorin in 1658. Ceylon was also taken in the same year. Malabar was lost in 1663. Kuthub Sha of Golkonda took Mylapore in 1662.

After the loss of Nagapattanam in 1658, the Portuguese and their Mestico [children through Portuguese father and Indian mother] and Kestico [children through Portuguese mother and native father] offsprings relocated their activities in PortoNovo. From there, together with the local Muslim merchants, they developed extensive network of mercantile contact with the ports of Malay Peninsula, Malacca, and Ace. Thus the Portuguese trading activities continued. Thus forgetting their old rivalry the local Muslim population extended their helping hand to the Portuguese.

The Portuguese settlers on the Coromandel bowed to the changed situation, abandoning their trading role, were all too happy to apply for jobs with the Dutch and the English, as soldiers and clerks. In the nineteenth century and thereafter the Portuguese survived in India owing to their friendship and alliance with the English. The English tolerated them in Indian packets of Goa, Diu and Daman.
The Muslims were considered as principal competitors by the Portuguese in India as elsewhere. But Vasco da gama could not have reached India without the guidance of the Muslim navigator, Ibn Masjid, a native of Oman. He conducted Vasco da gama from the east coast of Africa to Calicut. Portuguese attitude towards the Muslims was one of the inveterate hostility on account of economic motives and the idea of colonisation. In the light of these realities it will be seen that the Portuguese animosity towards the Muslims was strong even after centuries of their conflict in Iberia and North Africa. The Muslim merchants were not permitted to trade in merchandise in which the Portuguese claimed monopoly. Hence the Muslims had to trade on the commodities in which the Portuguese had little interest. Most of the Muslim traders became petty merchants dealing in arecanut, coconut, coarse cloth and such other things.\(^3\)

The Portuguese were also responsible for innumerable atrocities on Muslims on the sea. Panikkar while quoting a passage from Kerala Pazhama, says: "The Mohamaden ships were special objects of their fury. Even with cartazes, their ships were not safe. The Portuguese sea-men demanded heavy bribes, if it is not given the ships were confiscated". \(^3\)\(^7\) To quote an example a ship captured at the port of Kayalpattanam in 1526 by Manuel de gama, then the captain of Coromandel, was confiscated and the Muslim Nagudha and his family sold to slavery. \(^3\)\(^8\) There were wanton destruction of Muslim vessels, people and ports. The Muslims carried on trade in such adverse condition at the risk of their lives and property.

Whenever possible the Portuguese allied themselves with the Hindu state of Vijayanagar against the Muslim principalities and adopted a different attitude towards the Hindu natives. They spared the Hindus while massacaring Muslims as in the case of D' Albequerque's capture of Goa in 1510, where the Hindus were spared the Muslims, men, women and children were burnt in batches in mosques. \(^3\)\(^9\) They did not scruple to destroy mosques for the construction of churches. They prevented the Muslims from going on pilgrimage to Mecca. \(^4\)\(^0\)

The Portuguese tried to eliminate the Muslims from the pearl fishery with the assistance of the Paravas. The Muslims, clashed with Joao Froles, the captain of pearl fishery coast, in 1527. Affonso de Mello, the Portuguese captain avenged this in 1528 by burning down Kayal and Kilakkarai. The Muslims had to agree to pay annual tribute to the Portuguese for pearl fishery. The Muslim leader [Nainar] of Kilakkarai made an agreement with the Portuguese with regard to pearl fishery since the latter assumed themselves the charge of the pearl fishing of the coast. \(^4\)\(^1\) The Muslims of Kayal left the place and developed the port of Kayalpattinam from 1532. \(^4\)\(^2\) But the battle continued between the Portuguese and the Muslims on the sea between Pamban and Cape Comerin.
In 1537 the three captains of the Zamorin, Pate Marcar, Kunjali Marcar, and Ali Ibrahim came to the rescue of the Muslims of Coromandel and sailed to the fishery coast with a strong force. They attacked the Parava villages and many were killed. Then they sailed to Vedalai and waited for a voyage to Ceylon. The Portuguese with a large contingent and with the help of the Paravas of the area attacked the Muslim camp. Many Muslims were slain. Vedalai and other nearby villages were burnt, their properties looted, and boats were burnt. [We can see hundreds of epitaphs in Vedalai even to this day, which are ascribed to the martyrs in this battle, awaiting the attention of the historians.] Further the Paravas sailed to Kayalpattanam and burnt the entire village and the Muslims fled to nearby islands and Ceylon. The Portuguese and Paravas, emerged stronger and Muslims trading power was broken. According to a letter of the St.Xavior [dt. 28.10.1542] "after the victory of Vedalai, no one now remembers Moors, none among them dares to rise his head".

When the Portuguese established a fortified settlement in the port of Colombo in 1518, they became hostile to the Muslim settlers there. Some of the Muslims had blood relations in the Coromandel some had dual domicile in South India and Ceylon. Regulations were passed restricting their migration and settlements. Muslim merchants spread out to the smaller ports away from the Portuguese. So the migration of the Coromandel Muslims to Ceylon for trade and religious purposes was seriously affected.

Malacca was captured in 1511. Coromandel Muslim traders avoided Malacca and transferred their headquarters to Brunei on the southern coast of Borneo, which became a new centre for the spread of Islam and they also concentrated in Johore. By 1535, the North Coast of Java was Islamised. The rapid spread of Islam in Southeast Asian lands contributed a serious setback to the plans of the Portuguese. Thus the earlier conflicts between the Portuguese and Muslims was centred both on ecclesiastical and economic rivalries.

When the Portuguese military and naval power were episodic in the areas in Bay of Bengal, the Muslim traders evaded the Portuguese instead of challenging them and they could carry on their trade. It is also a fact that the Muslim traders in many places acquiesced to the Portuguese. M.N. Pearson reports that the Muslim merchants made no attempts to oppose the arbitrary explosive demands of the Portuguese. The merchants rather accommodated quickly and indeed cooperated with the exploiters. Muslim merchants of Cochin like Cherina Marcar, Mammalae Marcar supplied large quantities of pepper to the Portuguese. They obtained cartazes from the cochin factory to send their ships toOrmuz. These two merchants were very influential with the Portuguese. The Governor of India recommended to the Portugal crown in 1513 for some special concessions to them. Nino Mercar another ship owner had sent his ships for the Portuguese to Malaca. The vessels of Chilay Marcar took elephants to Goa for the Portuguese. Nino Marcar and his brother had commercial establishments in Coromandel coast and arranged for 1500 fighters to overpower the enemies of the Portuguese in Coromandel region.
The Portuguese kings often instructed their officials in India to favour the Christian and Hindu merchants in contrast to the Muslims. This could not bear any point. The Hindu and Christian merchants had no such great capital as the Muslims. The local ship owners and sailors were only Muslims. In 1590, when the Portuguese crown ordered that the mosques in the Portuguese territories (except in Ormuz) be demolished, the Governor of India replied that the orders could not be put in to effect since the Portuguese were trading in these territories, with the Muslims also.

Because of economic compulsions and in the furtherance of their trading activities, the Portuguese had to throw their lot with the Muslims. They married even local Muslim women. As K.S. Mathew puts it very aptly "the Crusade joined hands with Jihad in the matter of trade. The Portuguese who reportedly crossed the ocean to hunt out the Muslims had to depend on the intermediary and shipping expertise of the Muslims for their trade promotion".

It will be seen that in the later part of the Portuguese’s stay in India, their animosity towards the Muslims cooled down to certain extent. But it was too late for the Muslims to recoup and readjust, since most of them were driven to despair and had started to change their occupational trends. Muslim trade declined not due to the lack of commercial expertise but because it was faced with the use of force based on superior technology and the lack of support of the local ruling powers. The Coromendal Muslims were lacking in warfare technologies and also had no aptitude to counter the attack. Thus the shattered trade of the Muslims became subservient. The Muslim could not match the Portuguese naval power. This key factor enabled the other European powers especially the Dutch and the English to encroach the further areas hitherto left out in Muslims' hands.

The Portuguese oppression of the Coromandel Muslims is not the end of the story and it was continued by the Dutch.
V. II. THE DUTC

The Hollanders - the Dutch - came over to the Coromandel Coast when the trade system was well established. They had to face a strong European rival, the Portuguese. The originator of Dutch commerce in India was Lins Cotton who visited Goa in 1583. In 1602 "The Verenigde Oost Indiche Compagnie" - (V.O.C.) - The Dutch East India Company - sent two Dutch factors from Ache to Surat in 1605 to explore the commercial prospects. The Dutch vessels commenced trading in the Coromandel from 1605. In the early years of their expansion, in 1610-20, their chain of factories extended from Masulipattanam in northern Coromandel through Pulicat in the centre of the coast to Tiruppapuliyur (Cuddalore) in the south. Prosperous local merchants were their intermediaries. The attempt of the VOC to set up factories from Cuddalore to Point Calimere met with limited success only. Masulipattanam and Pulicat became the centre of their Coromandel enterprises.

The Political events in the Coromandel from the 17th -19th centuries are intertwined with the commercial and European colonial history. The Dutch appeared on the Coromandel when the native rulers were in search of a strong power to counter the Portuguese. They found it in the Dutch and invited them to their territories. A chronology of events about the relationship of the Dutch with the local powers, native traders, other European companies and its impact on the maritime trade of the region is briefly discussed below.

The central part of Coromandel was ruled by the Nayaks of Ginjee (Senji) when the Dutch appeared there. Krishnappa Nayak of Ginjee, treated the Dutch with hospitality and allowed them to build a citadel at Devanampattanam (Cuddalore) in 1608. He was hostile to the Portuguese. The Dutch trade brought large profit to the Nayak. But the Portuguese were influential in the court of Venkatapathi Raya, the Vijayanagar emperor and persuaded him to expel the Dutch from his subordinate state of Ginjee. Accordingly the Dutch were expelled from Devanampattanam and Krishnappa was forced to support the Portuguese. But the Portuguese were driven away by the Nayak in 1609. The Dutch were invited to the Ginjee territory and trade concessions were offered. Meanwhile, the Raya himself became friendly to the Dutch and permitted them to build a factory at Pulicat in 1610. In 1617 Pulicat became the seat of Government of the Dutch under a governor. The Dutch and the Portuguese interfered in the civil wars of Ginjee in 1622.
The Dutch gained some advantages over their Portuguese rivals in eastern trade. In 1638, the Portuguese Viceroy of India wrote to Lisbon that the trade had generally fallen in to the hands of the Dutch. Baticola in Ceylon fell to the Dutch in 1638. The Dutch attacked Goa in 1639 and Malacca in 1641. In 1658 the Dutch captain Joan Van der Lean captured the Portuguese settlement of Nagapattanam without a shot being fired. Jaffinapattanam also fell in the same year.

The Dutch were conducting their transactions with the traders of the region through Malaya alais Chinnana Chetty who was an influential merchant in Coromandel. He was a prominent figure in the politics and trades of the coast for over half a century.

The Dutch were negotiating with the Nayaks of Thanjavur to build a factory at Thirumalairajanpattanam, where much was expected in cloth trade. Vijayaraghava of Thanjavur (1633-73) was at first not favourably disposed towards the Dutch, and even did not recognise their hold of Nagapattanam. Subsequently he had to acquiesce in their possession, when his army sent to oppose them was defeated. At the instance of Chinnana Chetty, Vijayaraghava gave the Dutch a charter in 1658 offering valuable trade concessions. This deed permitted them to hold the port of Nagapattanam, along with ten villages on an annual tribute. The same charter was renewed in 1662 by Vijayaraghava with additional privileges of setting up of their own mint, the profit of which to be shared between the VOC and the Nayak. About 1666 the Dutch got the ports of Thirumalairajanpattanam, Karaikkal and some other neighbouring places on lease. Thus Vijayaraghava who opposed the Dutch earlier, became more friendly to them as years passed on.

The Danes who settled at Tranquebar did not fare well and they were ready to part their trade right to the Dutch. Vijayaraghava was not in favour of the English till 1664. These were advantageous to the Dutch and they gained a comfortable footing in Thanjavur coast. They had factories at Adirampattanam and Thirumullaiivasal. There was brisk trade from Nagapattanam.
An impressive fort was built at Nagapattanam and named as Narden. (There is no trace of this fort at present). The only memory of the Dutch here, is, a street called Ollandar Saalai). Their indigo factory site of PortoNovo is called Ollandhar Thottam (garden). In 1690 the seat of Dutch government in India was transferred from Pulicat to Nagapattanam and it was in their possession until the English siezed it in 1781.

When the kingdom of Ginjee was taken over by the Sultan of Golkonda, Mir Jumla, on behalf of the Sultan, granted a cowl in 1647, favouring the Dutch. They were given exemption from embarkation and disembarkation duties, in the port of Pulicat. The export and import duties collected in the port was to be shared between the Sultan and the VOC. They were also given the right to mint coins.

The Sultan of Bijapur who captured the other parts of Ginjee, confirmed in 1654, the privileges that they were enjoyed from the Nayaks of Ginjee. They were permitted to purchase, cloth, Indigo, saltpeter in the Ginjee province and transport them to the ports of Devanampattanam, Pondicherry and PortoNovo on payment of half the embarkation duty. The liberal policies pursued by the Sultans of Bijapur and Golkonda to attract the Dutch to their coasts helped the Dutch to expand their trade. When the Golkonda possession of the Coromandel fell into the hands of the Mughals, the emperor Aurangazeb, in a farman, granted the Dutch in 1689 all the earlier concessions. His successor also followed suit. Maratha Shivaji who occupied some territories in Carnatic, also granted a cowl in 1677 confirming all the concessions enjoyed by them.

The Nayaks of Madurai supported the Portuguese and the Dutch were repulsed in their coast. However the Dutch were permitted to set up a factory at Kayalpattanam. The Portuguese were agrieved over this and attacked the Dutch factory in 1648 probably with the blessings of the Nayak and the assistance of the Paravas. To avenge this, the Dutch commenced hostile operations in 1649. They captured Thiruchendur temple and demanded payment of penalty for the alleged intrigues of the Paravas with the Madurai Nayak, and consequent expulsion of the Dutch factor from Kayal. Since no response came,
the Dutch sacked Tuticorin town, partly burnt it and got a written promise from the Paravas to pay a fixed sum and carried away even their fishing boats. Finally Tuticorin was taken over from the Portuguese by the Dutch in 1658.

The Dutch felt greater rights on the coast of Madura since they inherited it by conquest from the Portuguese. They fortified the port of Tuticorin and had a number of Christianised settlements along the coast. By 1664, in all the seven ports of Madura Kingdom (viz. Tuticorin, Manapad, Alandalai, Virampattanam, Pinnakayal, Vaipar and Vembar) the Dutch flag was planted. Those ports were secured by the Dutch in return for a loan given by the Dutch to the Nayak in need. The civil and criminal administration of these ports were taken over by the Dutch. The Marakkayar traders who had previously frequented these ports migrated to the Sethupathi’s ports. The pearl and chank fisheries came under the monopolistic control of the Dutch. The lion’s share of the profits from these went to them.

The Nayaks of Madurai were in constant wars with the neighbouring powers and also had to face the Mughals, and were in need of money. In 1690 the Nayak conceded the exclusive right of trade to the Dutch and also to keep away other European powers from the coast. The Dutch gave timely financial assistance to the Nayak and they agreed to help each other if attacked by the enemy. Again a treaty was contracted in 1669 granting many more trade concessions. Thus the Dutch enriched themselves in the coast of the Nayaks who had to remain idle spectators of their progress and sometimes tolerated their misdeeds.

There was a good market for Madurai textiles (Cochai), rice and other food articles in Ceylon and areca in Coromandel. The printed cloth of Madurai was in demand in Batavia for which they bartered the leather of Japan and spices of Mollucos and earned considerable profit. Utilising the drought and famine conditions in the coastal belt during the third quarter of the seventeenth century, the Dutch engaged in large scale slave trade. They took full advantage of this to buy slaves for labour and settlements in the colonies of Ceylon, Batavia and South Africa. They purchased the slaves in Tuticorin, Nagapattanam, PortoNovo, Devanampattanam and Pulicat. The Marathas in 1677, prohibited the slave trade in the Carnatic territory occupied by them.
Ekoji the Maratha general was installed in Thanjavur kingdom in 1675. He withdrew the concessions given by Nayak Vijayaraghava to the Dutch. But the Dutch got them back by force. Ekoji succeeded in recovering the ports of Thirumalairajanpattanam and Karaikkal. But the success was short lived. Ekoji granted a cowl on 30th Dec. 1676 and granted all the concessions given earlier by the Nayak and also restored to their possession the ports of Thirumalairajanpattanam and Karaikkal. The local Governor of Sirkali gave the Dutch a piece of land to build a factory at Thirumullaivasal. The successors of Ekoji were weak pressed by financial problems. They often approached the Dutch for advance payment of the tribute. In 1691, Sahaji Raja invaded Nagapattanam and was defeated by the Dutch and he sued for peace.

The Maratha Kingdom of Thanjavur grew weaker militarily and financially due to the attack of the Mughals, Madura and Ramnad. Though the Dutch were strong at Nagapattanam, they feared that other European powers will be admitted near Nagapattanam. Their efforts to get exclusive trade rights in Thanjavur coast failed. Karaikkal was given to the French in 1738. Thanjavur state was close to the financial collapse. The Maratha rulers mortgaged large parts of its coastal territories to the Dutch in return for a cash payment in 1741 and again in 1757. But by this time the Dutch themselves were too weak to take advantage of these opportunities to expand their political and economic hold in Thanjavur coast.

The Sethupathi of Ramanathapuram, the ruler of the pearl fishery coast, in 1658 contracted a treaty with the Dutch, declaring a common enmity towards the Portuguese. After establishing themselves at Nagapattanam and Tuticorin, the Dutch came close to the Sethupathi for more concessions. A treaty was again effected in 1660. By this, free traffic was granted for each other's subjects through the straits of Rameswaram and Manaar controlled respectively by the Sethupathi and the Dutch. Teh Pamban canal, in the Sethupathi's territory, was the most convenient waterway for ships with considerable burthen sailing between east and west. The rightful share of the Sethupathi in pearl fishery was ensured. The Dutch trade in Sethupathi's territories increased.
In the course of time the Dutch grew greedy and in 1670 declared monopoly on essential articles of Indo-ceylon trade and imposed severe restrictions on the local traders. They wanted monopoly in the export of arecca from Ceylon and to control its sale in the Coromandel Coast. For this the Malabar arecca was a hindrance. This was brought by the Coromandel Muslim boatmen and taken to all the ports through Pamban canal. The Dutch wanted to prevent it by fair or foul means. Similarly the Dutch desired to forbid the pepper trade through Pamban by private traders. All these ran counter to the interest of the Sethupathis and his subjects particularly the Muslim traders.

When the Sethupathi was in need of money, due to the political turmoils, he turned to the Dutch. The Dutch took the opportunity to drive a hard bargain and the Sethupathi conceded to a treaty in 1674, on highly unfavourable terms. The treaty abridged privileges of the Sethupathi in pearl fishery. Chank fishery became the Dutch monopoly. Malabar areca was prevented from passing through Pamban canal. The Dutch became masters in areca trade. The implementation of the treaty adversely affected the trade prospects of the Muslims of the coast.

Request for amendments to the provisions of the treaty was not heeded by the Dutch. Hence the Sethupathi began to follow a policy of flouting the provisions of the treaty. In this he had the active support of the Muslim traders of the coast. The influential, Periathambi Marakkayar family of Kilakkarai, that was prominent in the trade of the region now got close to the Sethupathi. They were appointed by him to high offices in the state. With their help the Ceylon ports were blockaded by the Sethupathi. The Sethupathi's boats and Marakkayar boats with contraband goods like cloth frequented the shallow bays of Ceylon and returned with areca. The officials of the Kadiyan kingdom also helped the Sethupathi and Muslims. Sethupathi also assisted the flow of Malabar areca and pepper through Pamban and protected Muslim vessels from the Dutch cruisers. Chank was smuggled out to PortoNovo by Muslims to be sold to the English and French.
However the Dutch web caught hold of the Sethupathi. The loan given to him by the Dutch in 1674 was pending unpaid for a long time. In lieu of it, he was forced to mortgage all the ports of his coast to the Dutch. The Sethupathi’s trade was ruined. The vessels of the Sethupathi and the Muslims were confiscated in Ceylon. Dutch cruisers and soldiers by effective patrolling prevented the Muslims from bringing Malabar areca and pepper through Pamban. The attitude of the Dutch, forced the Sethupathi to establish contact with the English and the French. Sensing the danger, the Dutch got revised the earlier treaty, in 1684. It modified some objectionable clauses of the 1674 treaty. The right of the Sethupathi in chank fishery was partially restored. The Sethupathi was permitted to confiscate the vessels with Malabar pepper and the value of the goods and vessels was to be shared between the Dutch and the Sethupathi. Thus the Dutch tried to pacify the Sethupathi. However conflicts broke between the Dutch and the Sethupathi. The Marava army with the help of the local Muslims let loose in the area. Muslims began to attack the Paravas who were now with the Dutch. Finding their authority threatened, the Dutch attacked the Sethupathi in January 1685, by sea. His ports were blockaded and the vessels anchored there were confiscated. The Sethupathi sued for peace and a peace treaty was signed in March 1685.

By this treaty the Sethupathi promised to remove from administrative positions Periathambi Marakkayar, and his relatives and as well as other Muslims. This treaty was highly unfavourable to the interests of the Sethupathi and the Muslims of this coast. The treaty was flouted with the help of Periathambi Marakkayar. Hostilities broke again in 1690 but the Sethupathi, sued for peace and a fresh treaty was signed by which the Dutch took over the Pamban canal and other coastal areas. The Muslim traders of the coast did not take it kindly and connived with the Sethupathi’s officials to flout them whenever possible.

Till about 1740, the Dutch were well placed in Madurai and Ramanathapuram coasts with great trade in Indian ocean. The local powers were engaged in civil wars and the Dutch supported one or another. The native powers took no notice of the trading activities of the Dutch. The Dutch had factories at Nagapattanam, Tuticorin, Vembar, Vaipar, Pinnalkayal, Old Kayal, Manapad, Cape Comerine and an out station at Alwar Thirunagari.
Even in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, the Dutch had most favourable trade concessions down the Coromandel coast. They also had a number of ports well spread out for their import and export trade. Yet during the subsequent decades, they abandoned the factories in Devanampattanam, Thirumullaivasal, Karaikkal, Adirampattanam and greater power was concentrated in Nagapattanam. The hinterland powers were tottering militarily and financially and seeking Dutch help. But by that time the Dutch themselves became weak.

The English were emerging stronger in the Carnatic from the second quarter of the eighteenth century at the cost of the Nawabs of Arcot. The growing power of the English threatened the commercial interests of the Dutch. The Dutch also decided to enter the political fray of the region. During the Carnatic wars the policy of the Dutch was one of discrete neutrality, and began to side with the loosing power. When the French were winning, they sided with the English and Nagapattanam served as a heaven for those who fled from the fury of Chanda Sahib and the French. The Dutch supplied sail cloth to the English ships and the wounded English soldiers were treated in their settlement. But when La Bourdonnias, the French Admiral, touched Nagapattanam in August 1746, the Dutch gave him a red carpet welcome and a banquet in his honour and promised to be friendly with the French. But by October 1746 the relationship between the Dutch and the French were so strained that the Dutch declared war against the French.

In 1758, Yusuf Khan the English governor of Madurai was in the process of suppressing the rebel Polygars. The Dutch drove close of the Polygars. They entered the coalition of the eastern Polygars of Thirunelveli. Now the Sethupathi allied with the English and expelled the Dutch from the occupied territory of the Nawab. The Dutch had to withdraw from the battle in 1761.

Again the Dutch were caught in the hostilities between the Sethupathi, the Marathas of Thanjavur and the Nawab. The Nawab complained to the English about the help of the Sethupathi to the Dutch, allowing their commercial activities without his consent. The Sethupathi granted commercial facilities to the Dutch only after the English
rejected a similar offer made to Colonel Heron. With the help of the English, the Nawab took over Ramanathapuram and the Dutch had to adjust with the Nawab. Thanjavur was annexed by the Nawab in 1771 and he wanted to acquire Nagore, which was mortgaged to the Dutch by the Thanjavur Maratha ruler. The Nawab sent his troops to Nagore assisted by the English. The Dutch withdrew from Nagore98. In consequence of the growing threat to their trading activities, the Dutch shifted their principal commercial centre from Nagapattanam to Colombo by 179296.

In 1782 when the English were facing the Mysore force, they sought the Dutch military help offering to cede the province of Thirunelveli. The Dutch readily accepted. But the arrival of additional British forces removed the need for Dutch help97. Then the Dutch began to swing on the side of the French. They supplied guns and gun powder to Hyder Ali when he invaded Carnatic98. They became hostile to the English and restricted their movement in their settlements99. The Dutch tried to use Hyder Ali and the French as a counterweight against the growing strength of the English. But when Hyder Ali demanded exhorbitant sum of money from the Dutch, they again swung back to the side of the English. On the refusal of the Dutch to comply, Hyder Ali blockaded Nagapattanam100. The Dutch prepared for a war with Hyder Ali101.

But the developments in Europe affected the political scenario in Carnatic. In June 1781, England declared war on Holland. The English utilised this occasion to wipe out the decaying Dutch power from the Coromandel. Had this not happened, the Dutch would have stayed in Coromandel for a long period like the French. Consequent on the outbreak of war between the Dutch and the English on the Coromandel, Nagapattanam surrendered to the English in 1781. Tuticorin also fell to English in 1785 102. By 1783-84, V.O.C. was on the verge of bankruptcy. In 1795, the English occupied all the other Dutch settlements to prevent them from falling to the French.

The VOC was decaying on account of corruption and private trade among its employees. They could not match their other European rivals. Their troops declined in
standard and fell to the English attack. Their naval power also declined and the number of vessels in their possession reduced considerably. Their ships became outdated. Their factory buildings ruined. They delivered Pulicat to the British on 16th July 1795 under an agreement. Their influence and the quantum of trade fell by the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Finally, the British took over in 1825, all the Dutch settlements in India.

Thus a brief account of events as discussed above from the entry to the exit of the Dutch in Coromandel will go to show that their commercial activities were closely linked to the politics and economy of the region. The economic strength and superior naval power gave them ascendancy. In the fluid political condition, the struggling weak local powers were ready to align with any foreign power. Further the local rulers never hesitated to sacrifice the interest of their own subjects who were in maritime trade and allied activities. The maritime zones in Coromandel became Europeans zones, because of the policy followed by the local powers for their survival. It will be seen throughout their presence on the coast for over two hundred years, along with other European colonial powers, the Dutch enriched themselves with local political sanctions, at the cost of the traditional maritime community in which the Muslims were worst hit.

The Dutch also inherited the deep seated suspicion over the Muslims like the Portuguese. But their religious policy towards the Muslims was not so harsh as that of the Portuguese. However, the Dutch wanted to eliminate the Muslims who were not helpful for their commercial schemes. To overcome the competition of the Muslims in trade, they imposed many restrictions.

The policy of the Dutch in Ceylon towards the Muslims, also holds good for South Indian Coasts particularly to the Coromandel. The Batavia council had instructed the governor in Colombo to prohibit the rent and lease of land to the Muslims and no government work was to be entrusted to them. Further, no permission was to be granted to Muslim traffic by sea and those who migrated from other places were to be diverted from Ceylon. This was intended to apply to those Muslims who are called Cholias (Coromandel Muslims) but not to Bengal and Hindustani Muslims. Thus they singled out the Coromandel Muslims.103
The Dutch took the Coromandel textiles to the Asian markets and in this they followed the traditional markets and trade routes that had been already developed to Malacca, Ache, Bantam, Batavia, Macassar, Celebes, Moluccos, Pegu, Tensionserim, Arakan, Thailand, Cochin-China and Ceylon. The textile market of Ceylon, Moluccos, Celebes, and Java were kept exclusively for company trade using military and naval dominance. They controlled many of the species producing areas and grew some spices themselves and hence the Dutch East India Company was initially far more successful. In all other places they had to compete with the Indian and other Asian merchants. Dutch commercial policies had a very marked effect on the export trade of Coromandel.

The Coromandel Muslim traders had established commercial contacts almost in all the Southeast Asian countries for a very long time. The Dutch competed in all these markets with the Muslims and considered them as their trade rivals since the enterprises of the Dutch were guided by a much more commercial spirit and religious aims found only secondary role in it. The Dutch used force against the Muslims in sea and land, like the Portuguese and humbled them whenever possible, since the Muslim merchants were not trained in such warfare or their vessels were suitable for it. When the Dutch took over the management of the ports in Southeast Asia and as well as in Coromandel they collected higher tariffs from the Muslims to keep them out104.

The Paravas received favourable treatment from the Dutch and the Nayaks of Madurai. But the Sethupathi patronised the Muslim traders of Kilakkarai and Kayalpattanam. The Dutch as protectors of Paravas and controllers of the pearl fishery coast strove hard to limit the political and commercial influence of the Muslims and tried to crush it.105

In the last quarter of the seventeenth century, the Muslims of Coromandel under the leadership of Periathambi Marakkayar of Kilakkarai, with the patronage of the Sethupathis, were dominating the Indo-Ceylon, Malabar and interportal trades. But the treaties concluded between the various native powers and the Dutch were detrimental to the interest of the Muslims. The treaties with the Sethupathis dealt a severe blow to them. The restrictive and monopolistic policies of the Dutch in Indo-Ceylon trade affected the Muslim traders of Coromandel who made a living by participating in the trade of the region for a very long time.
This naturally led the Muslim traders to smuggling and clandestine trade activities. The Muslim community is often found named as leading participants in smuggling activities in 17th-18th centuries. Periathambi Marakkayar was the chief among them and he was the architect to foil the Dutch monopoly. The Dutch had termed Periathambi Marakkayar as the country captain and the evil genius behind the anti-Dutch policy of the Sethupathi.\textsuperscript{106}

The anemosity of the Dutch towards Periathambi Marakkayar and other Muslim traders is well reflected in the treaties of 1674 and 1685, which compelled the Sethupathi to remove Periathambi Marakkayar, his brothers, sons and as well as other Muslims from administrative positions along the coast from Point Calimere to Cape Comerine. This shows the intention of the Dutch to drive away the Muslim traders of the Coromandel from trading activities.

The Dutch monopoly in pearl and chank fisheries was also against the traders and labour class among the Muslims who were engaged in these activities. Paravas were preferred to the Muslim divers. The Muslim traders who were engaged in pearl trade had to be at the mercy of the Dutch. The Muslims in chank trade were driven to smuggling and illicit export to other regions. But the Muslims adjusted themselves to the situation and tried to cooperate with the Dutch. The Muslim traders helped the Marava forces during Dutch campaign against the Portuguese in 1657-58.\textsuperscript{107} During the Portuguese-Dutch war in 1652, a Muslim contingent from Thirunelvelli helped the Dutch.\textsuperscript{108}

But the initial hostility of the Dutch to Islam and the economic rivalry towards Muslims was quite well worn from the close of seventeenth century. In the pearl fishery, the Marakkayars of Kayalpattanam were allowed to have free boats. In Tuticorin pearl fishery, free stones were allowed to the Muslim headman.\textsuperscript{109} The Dutch after realising the importance of Periathambi Marakkayar in the Coromandel coast, in 1696, requested his assistance to run the trade. The Marakkayar permitted the Dutch to build a factory at Kilakkarai.\textsuperscript{110} Kilakkarai and Kayalpattanam became the hub of trading activity of the Dutch on the Coromandel. The Dutch permitted the free flow of Muslims between Ceylon and Coromandel. They also showed tolerance to the religious activities of the Muslims.
The Portuguese never extended such concession in religious matter. Though the Dutch attitude gradually became more tolerant of Islam and less regorous although the anti Islamic laws continued to remain on the Batavia Statute Book.

Learned religious preachers were allowed to migrate between Ceylon and Coromandel. The Dutch even tried to formulate a code for Muslims. The Muslim traders were treated with consideration. Muslims were employed for shipping activities in Malabar. Owen Kail says many Tamilians were employed in the V.O.C. subordinate service, at Pulicat and Nagapattanam as book keepers, writers and craftsmen. Among them there might have been Muslims also in considerable numbers.

However trade rivalry and oppression outmatched the other considerations. The successive and gradual suppression of the Muslim maritime activities for centuries, pushed them back economically. Traders with large capital and political influence alone could survive. Among others, some undertook interportal trade in the coast, some others went in pursuit of hinterland trade and many were reduced to petty traders. With the disappearance of the Dutch the Muslims had to face the strong European power, the English.

V-III- THE FRENCH:

The French were late comers to the eastern trade and entered into the Coromandel Coast in 1672. The French captain Haye captured Sao Thome in the same year from the Sultan of Golkonda. The Dutch assisted the Sultan to wrest Sao Thome from the French. Haye surrendered Sao Thome to the Dutch in 1674. Bijapur, the old enemy of Golkonda was in favour of the French. The Bijapur general Sherkhan Lodi granted the French a site for a settlement in Pondicherry.

In 1674, Francois Martin assumed charge of the affairs of the French in India. He established a good relationship with Maratha Shivaji who took over Ginjee from Bijapur. Shivaji issued a farman granting the port of Pondicherry to the French in 1693 with it's administrative and judicial rights and customs concessions. The Dutch captured Pondicherry in 1693 but restored it to the French in 1697. When Pondicherry passed on to the Mughals, Dawood Khan the Mughal general added to the possession of the French some more villages near Pondicherry. The trading activities of the French was modest.
In 1736 the Nawab of Carnatic, Dost Ali gave the French the right for minting coins in Pondicherry. The French brought bullions and Silver and minted coins. Pondicherry had an extensive currency. French trade picked up. New factories were opened. The growth of the French was at the expense of the Dutch and the English.

The French under Francois Martin occupied Karaikkal in 1688 but they had to abandon it, the next year, due to the pressure of the Dutch. The Maratha Sayaji of Thanjavur in 1738, gave a deed of cession of Karaikkal, and surrounding villages to the French. The deed provided for mutual military aid. The announcement of the French occupation was received with delight by the entire population of Karaikkal. But Sayaji soon withdrew the deed. The deed was again confirmed in 1739. The Maratha Raja of Thanjavur was getting loans from the French and in lieu of it the French got more villages near Karaikkal. By 1760 the French settlement of Karaikkal had 113 villages. Karaikkal served as a granary of Pondicherry. It was useful for provisioning Pondicherry and also for procuring cargoes to its ships.

The French and the English traded side by side without much hitch but by 1744 they entered into a life and death struggle due to the hostilities between London and Paris. Pondicherry became the stronghold of the French in Coromandel. From 1745 the English fleets began to harass the French. French ships were attacked in the waters of Southeast Asian ports. Madras, was captured and Cuddalore was attacked by the French several times between 1745 and 1748. The English had to withdraw from Cuddalore area. However Madras was handed back to the English in 1748.

In 1749, Carnatic wars, the famous struggle for supremacy between the French and the English brokeout. We have already narrated the events of these wars elsewhere. The exit of Chanda Sahib and Muzafar Jang by 1752 was a serious set back to the French. The French were not fortunate in Coromandel. Their offensive operations miscarried; all their strong holds in Carnatic were lost one by one and finally they suffered a most decisive defeat in 1760. The English captured Pondicherry in 1761. It was restored to the French in 1765. The English again captured it in 1782. In the same year the French came to an understanding with Hyder Ali and this alliance was a real challenge to the English. In accordance with a Peace Treaty of 1785, Cuddalore was restored.
to the English and Pondicherry to French. In 1790 the French allied with Tippu Sultan against the English. In the fall of Tippu Sultan in 1799, the French lost a strong native support. Karaikkal surrendered to the English in 1793. When Thanjavur power was transferred to the English East India Company in 1800 it included Karaikkal also. It remained in English possession till 1816. Later it was transferred and remained in French possession till they quit India in the second half of the present century. By 1817 Pondicherry, Karaikkal, Yanam in Coromandel, Mahe in Malabar were the French territories.\textsuperscript{127}

The commercial history of the French territories for almost two centuries between 1675-1875 was closely linked to the activities of the French trading companies. Martin attracted the native traders to Pondicherry. Pondicherry traded with Devenampatnam, PortoNovo, Tranquebar, Karaikkal, Nagapattanam, Marakkanam, Madras, and in overseas trade with France, Siam, Ceylon and Manila. The French imported European goods and marketed them in Coromandel. Steam ship was introduced between Pondicherry and France in 1862.\textsuperscript{128}

The French invested in textiles in competition with the Dutch and the English. This created a marked impact on Coromandel textile trade. A network of agencies were established to procure textiles. They gave advances to the weavers and offered higher price than the other companies. This competition was advantageous to the native weavers and traders. The French company suffered from inadequate funds. They had to rely on local merchants and intermediaries. Its poor financial condition and its inability to monopolise the inter Asian trade must have prompted the French to resort to joint ventures with the Coromandel merchants.\textsuperscript{129}

The French emerged as the protectors of regional shipping, particularly PortoNovo. They lent their colours and provided protection and navigational expertise to the native ship owners and this encouraged them to trade with Thailand, Tennaserim, Ujang Salang, Bantam, Ache and other Southeast Asian countries. Even the ship of the king of Ayuthya sailed to Coromandel under French colour. When the merchants of PortoNovo were penalised by the Dutch or Danes for not taking passes from them or refused passes due to enmity
the French gave them protection under their flag and pressed into service French sailors and soldiers to protect their business ventures. But the French also restricted Indian shipping by issue of passes and permitting trade under their colours only if they did not carry goods of adversaries during war times.130

The French Company provided the merchant community several avenues for their economic prosperity by making them participate in export and import trades, shipping, money lending and minting. Being commercially and economically weak, the French had to adjust with the locals to keep their enterprises going. The native merchants derived utmost benefit by their participation in these enterprises and they grew in wealth, status, and commercial power. But the religious intolerance of the French on certain occasions was a hindrance to their progress.131

Karaikkal was a distinct centre of salt manufacture. Export of salt to Bengal was the chief avenue open to the French at the close of the eighteenth century. It contributed the main source of income to the government.132 According to an agreement in 1815, between the French and the English, salt manufacture was suppressed in French territories. Hence salt was brought from English territories for sale and the native crafts took up this work. Rice, paddy, fish, brick, poultry, sandal wood, bone powder, indigo, skin and hides and spices were exported to France, French colonies and British colonies. Steamers belonging to the British India Steam Navigation Company and other shipping companies called regularly at this port in connection with the passenger service to Penang, Singapore and other Eastern cities.133 Indian labourers were sent from this port in large numbers to the Eastern countries.134

By the third quarter of nineteenth century, the French ports lost their importance when compared to other Coromandel ports. In 1894, imposition of advolaram duties on goods entering French ports dealt a severe blow to the prosperity of the French ports. Introduction of railway in British India was another important reason for the decline of trading activities in these ports.
The French settlements were a heaven to the Muslim traders. Though much of export trade was done by the European trading companies and merchants, the native Muslims were also encouraged by the French. They undertook joint ventures with Muslims. During the time of wars and political confusion, the French came to the rescue of the Muslim traders by allowing them to trade under their colours. They also offered them technical expertise in navigation. The PortoNovo Marakkayars benefited much by French help. Thus the ship of a PortoNovo Marakkayar, Mohamed Shah during its voyage to Manila was manned by a French Captain. Many ships of the Marakkayars engaged in coastal trade such as that of Mohamed Ali Beg employed French captains in their ships. The French also employed Muslim navigators in their ships for Kedah, Tennaserim etc. Since the customs duties were half to that of Madras, the Marakayar ship owners and traders of PortoNovo, Nagore, Nagapattanam, and Tranquebar utilised the French ports for their trading activities. Thus the French settlements were favourable to the Muslim merchants and their trading activities, which was a blessing in disguise.

V-IV-THE DANES

The Danish settlement of Dansborg (Tranquebar) was founded on the Coromandel in 1620. Raghunatha Nayak of Thanjavur permitted the Danish Captain Ove Geede to build a fort at Tranquebar and trade freely with his subjects, and mint coins. The fort was built in 1621. The English factory records testify the prosperity of the Danish trade in Coromandel during this decade. They entered into textile trade and tried to procure painted cloth in Pondicherry and PortoNovo in competition with the Dutch.

At first the Danes traded with Ceylon. Their capital resources were very limited. They opened up trade between Coromandel and Tennaserim, thus directly coming into conflict with the Portuguese at Nagapattanam. They traded with Maccassar and imported cloves, much to the chagrin of the VOC. They also traded with Ache. They contracted the local vessels to freight their goods to Bengal.

The attempt of the English to establish a factory at Thanjavur Nayak's territory in 1624 could not materialise because of the influence of the Danes in Nayak's court.
Between 1626-28 the relationship between the Nayak and the Danes were stained due to the latter's failure to pay their dues on the villages they farmed. In 1629, the Danes approached their rival, the Dutch for loan but it was rejected. Achyuthappa Chetty, a powerful merchant of this area, an associate of the Dutch, provided the finance to the Danes to run the day to day administration of the fort and pay the annual rent to the Nayak. By 1630, in agreement with the Portuguese at Nagapattanam, the Danes freighted their goods to Mergui and Maccassar.144

The Danes borrowed ships from the natives for their freight to the Maccassar, Ache and Bantam. But they lost a few such ships, freighted, in the course of their voyages, resulting in great loss to the company. After some years, they concentrated in the entrepots of Indonesian ports and abandoned trade with unfavourable routes. Their debts increased day by day. Some Muslim merchants in Maccassar lent them money.145

The Danes were friendly to the Portuguese and were against the Dutch and the English trade interest. When the Dutch planned to attack Goa and Ceylon in 1638, the Danes offered their help to Portuguese to protect Nagappattanam if they were allowed to open factory in Ceylon. This was turned down by the Portuguese. But the Danes again offered their help with a request to permit them to procure cinnamonson, areca and elephant from Ceylon. Nothing came out of this negotiation, since the Portuguese themselves lost Ceylon in 1638. 146

The Danish settlement at Tranquebar had no support from the home government. The arrival of Danish vessels to India was also limited. Their financial condition was near to bankruptcy. They had to sell a ship in their possession, to the Sultan of Bantam for their urgent financial needs. They could not withstand the competition of the Dutch, Portuguese and English Companies and as well as the private merchants of these nationalities. With occasional assistance from home they continued their shipping to Maccassar, Japan, Bantam and Manila.147 Hence the Danish captain at Tranquebar came out with many proposals for selling or leasing of fort. Even in 1629, they were willing to part with the fort to the Dutch. But the Dutch refused. In 1640, the English were ready to purchase Tranquebar.
A record of Fort St. George of 28 Jan 1644 refers to the miserable condition of the Danes. Then the Dutch were negotiating with the Danes to purchase Tranquebar fort to prevent it's falling into the hands of the Portuguese or the English. However, the Danes promised the Dutch their first offer. In 1653, the Danish chief at Tranquebar had offered to deliver the fort to the Dutch if they agree to pay their debts in Thanjavur coast and to restore the fort to the king of Denmark on demand, which was unacceptable to the Dutch.

The Danes had fallen from the favours of the Nayaks at the close of the seventeenth century. The English factory records refer to Chokanatha Nayak's negotiation with Francois Martin in 1675 offering both Nagapattanam and Tranquebar for his help in driving away the Dutch and Danes from Thanjavur coast. When Thanjavur territory was taken over by the English in 1799, the English permitted the Thanjavur Maratha to continue to receive the rent on Tranquebar.

The Danish trade was built on fragile foundation and was crumbling day by day. Their trading activities had not created a marked impact on Coromandel trade. Occasionally they interfered in the local politics also. They supplied gun powder to Yusuf Khan, the renter of Madural. Though the Danes were financially weak, they continued their trading activities with the help of the local traders. They lent their flags to the local merchants to trade with the ports of Ceylon, Ache, Penang, Malacca, Malaya, Malabar, and Bengal during the time of political turmoils. The Danish Government was neutral in the war between the English and the French in the last decade of the eighteenth century. But when the Danes were found to be no longer neutral, the native ships with their flags were captured by French privateers.

Though the Danes were insignificant in their trading activities due to their financial deficiency, their relationship with the local traders, particularly the Muslims was cordial. They maintained a good rapport with the Muslims of the Coromandel and the Southeast Asian countries. The Danes helped the Marakkayar traders of Nagore, Karaikkal, Thirumalairajanpattanam, and Tranquebar to continue their trade by giving their colours during the period of political unrest and wars.
But for this, the sinking economy of the maritime Muslim people of the area would have come to a near collapse. Thus the Danes rendered a timely help to the Coromandel Muslim maritime traders.\\n
The English purchased the Danish settlement of Tranquebar in 1845 and thereafter the commercial importance of Tranquebar declined. After 1845 Nagapattanam gained commercial importance as a main port.

V. - V - THE ENGLISH

The English East India Company emerged from a humble beginning, rose to height of opulence and power in India. Throughout the period of our study, the English East India Company and the British power continued and make their presence felt in the political and commercial history of Coromandel. The maritime activities of the Muslims met with many fluctuations under the English and finally they were reduced to insignificance. With the firm establishment of the English the maritime Muslims once dominated the ocean trade from the Coromandel region were pushed back to the status of petty traders.

At the beginning of the period of our study, the two major European powers, the Dutch and the English reacted to the political turmoil keeping in view their own interests and the opportunities that came their way and were ready to defend their trading rights. The English were strong in and around Madras and Cuddalore. The Dutch were concentrated in the Madura Bay and Palk Straits adjacent to Ceylon. The native powers also responded suitably, opening the doors for the ascendancy of these European powers which ultimately subordinated them politically and economically.

The English entered into Coromandel trade as early as 1614. They established a factory at Pulicat in 1619, but the trade was not profitable due to Dutch competition and the factory was closed in 1623. Their first attempt to establish a factory at Thanjavur Nayak's territory did not materialise. In 1624 the English negotiated with the Thanjavur Nayak for favours and privileges. The negotiations broke down due to the greedy demands of the Nayak. Viriddhagirisam attributes the failure to the intrigues of the Danes who were enjoying considerable influence in Nayak's court.
The settlement of Madras (Fort. St. George) was founded in 1640. The weak Vijayanagar administration had given substantial concessions and by 1650 the English had a port settlement at Madras. When this part of territory was overrun by the Golkonda, the Sultan confirmed in 1672 an autonomous administration to the English in Fort. St. George area.

By another farman, the village of Triplicane was added.

In 1689, the administration of Madras area passed on to the Mughals from Golkonda rulers. The Mughal general Zulphikar Khan confirmed all the earlier concessions to the English. In 1690, he granted the remission of the annual rent to their Madras settlement. More towns and villages near Madras were given on lease. The English were also permitted to mint coins in the name of the emperor. In later years, more villages were rented to the English by Zulphikar Khan. Thus the Muslim conquest of the Coromandel brought the tide of fortune in favour of the English.

The Maratha subedar of PortoNovo issued a cowl to the English in 1682 and they were allowed to settle and trade from PortoNovo, Cuddalore and Kunimedu. The English purchased the old fort of Devanampattinam from the Maratha ruler of Ginjee in 1690, along with some surrounding villages, including the port of Cuddalore and Manjakuppam. Devanampattanam old fort was demolished and a new fort, the Fort St. David, was constructed at that site. The Dutch had a factory at Devanampattanam and they protested over the concessions to the English. But the English asserted their rights and the Dutch trade ruined in Devanampattanam.

Dawood Khan was appointed as the Nawab of Carnatic in 1700. He blockaded all the English factories and prohibited their trade. The English settled the matter with Dawood Khan paying a heavy sum. At the death of Aurangzeb, the Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah (sha Alam) was engaged in a war of succession. For getting the assistance of English against his rival contender, he granted five more villages around Madras.
on rent through Dawood Khan. The English got confirmed all the earlier grants from the new Mughal emperor Faruk Shiyar. These concessions and privileges made them assertive and they even challenged the Nizam or the Nawab boldly. The English also utilised the confused political conditions to establish their authority over the subcontinent. Almost all the native powers were loosing their ground. The Mughals lost control of most of their territories including Carnatic, after their defeat at the hands of Nadirsha. The English obtained the control of Bengal in 1757. At the end of the Carnatic wars in 1763 the English established their supremacy. The Marathas were routed at Panipet in 1761. The earnest efforts of Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan to check the growing power of the English proved futile. The fall of big native powers witnessed the mushroom growth of small autonomous centers. All these enabled the English to assert their hegemony. Thus the Mughal empire of 1740 metamorphosed into that of English empire in 1801.

The year 1749 witnessed the outbreak of three wars of succession in the south, all of which powerfully affected the course of Indian history. They were, in Thanjavur, between Sayaji and Pratap Sing; in Carnatic (Arcot) between Wallajah Anwar-ud-din and Navayet Chanda Sahib; in Hyderabad, between Nazirjang and Muzafar Jung. Until this time the French were secluded away from the major political events. The English were also isolated in their relation with the native powers. But these wars of succession brought them close to one power or other. The English supported Thanjavur Sayaji, Arcot Anwar-ud-Din, and Hyderabad Muzafar Jung. The French took the cause of the opposite camp. By their intervention in Thanjavur affairs the English got Devikottai, from Thanjavur. This prepared them for further territorial ambition.

The forces of confederates descended upon the territories of the Carnatic. In the first round the French were victorious getting Pondicherry, Karaikkal, and surrounding villages. Subsequently the English force humbled the French Navayet confederacy. Mohamed Ali Wallajah was made as the undisputed master of Carnatic. The immediate glory went to the Wallajahs but the ultimate victory devolved upon the English. The Nawab rewarded the English for their meritorious services in the form of a few villages near Madras as free gift. The English interest in Carnatic began almost simultaneously with the establishment of Wallajah rule in Arcot.
The Mysore wars of subsequent times weakened the Nawab and made him more dependent on the English. The Nawab secured the assistance of the company for his defence which overburdened him with debts and he found it difficult to extricate himself. Every subsequent military operation brought with it fresh burdens. This process together with the Nawab's practice of contracting loans for his personal expenses continued until the creditors, the English, swept he Wallajahs out of power.

In 1755 Mohamed Ali tried to consolidate his power in the southern districts of Madura. Many of the Polygars were in alliance with the Dutch and defied the authority of the Nawab. The rents could not be collected for liquidating the debts of the English. With the help of the English forces, the new governor of Madurai, Khan Sahib (Yusuff Khan) suppressed the Polygars in 1760. The consolidation of the powers of the Nawab was attended with an almost equal extension of English influence. As the Nawab continued the Military operations by associating the English company forces besides contracting loans for palace expenses, his financial obligations continued to increase. Therefore there appeared no scope for liquidating his debts completely or to get rid of the English influence. The indebtedness forced the Nawab to grant a partnership to the English in the receipt of the revenue of Carnatic.

After a period of short glory the Nawab's power suffered a setback. Thanjavur was annexed by the Nawab in 1771 and Ramanathapuram in the next year. The English interfered in these affairs and obtained the status of arbitrators. The Madras council restored Thanjavur to Maratha Thulaji which demonstrated the higher status of the English. Thulaji entered into a settlement with the company accepting the English protection and to pay 4 lakhs pagodas a year for this, and not to render assistance to the enemies. Subsequently, the English brought pressure upon Thulaji to cede the company, Nagore with its 277 villages yielding a revenue of 2 1/2 lakhs of rupees. The English thus gained a footing in the fertile granary of the south. Nagapattanam which was under the Dutch possession surrendered to the English in 1781. The possession of Nagapattanam helped the English for the stabilisation of their power in Coromandel since it was an important key to the southern provinces. Nagapattanam and Nagore continued to be important trading ports under the English.
During the second Mysore war the Nawab had promised to pay a considerable amount to the English but he could not pay. To realise this amount, the Madras council forced the Nawab to sign a treaty in 1781. According to this, the revenues of Carnatic were to be transferred to the English for a period of five years and one sixth of the annual collection to be assigned for the private expenses of the Nawab. By this treaty, the Polygars of the south Coromandel came under the direct administration of the English. Thus the retrogression of the Nawab resulted in the direct involvement of the English in our country's administration.

In 1785 the English surrendered the assignment of the revenues to the Nawab and another treaty was contracted. It defined the military and financial superiority of the English in Carnatic. The Nawab had to recognise the defence of his country as a joint venture with the English by agreeing to contribute a part of it's expenditure. Besides the treaty formulated an arrangement for the clearance of his debts. This treaty reduced the Carnatic to the status of a protectorate. The English presided over the defence system of the region. The financial commitment imposed on the Nawab was very heavy. The arrears of payments towards the debts as per the treaty of 1785 was not settled by the Nawab. To realise the arrears of the debts, the English assumed the revenue administration of the Carnatic and Thanjavur in 1790 by a proclamation.

The English gave up the administration of the assumed revenues of the Carnatic in 1792 and a fresh treaty - the Carnatic treaty of 1792 - was settled with Mohamed Ali. It imposed regorous provisions to the effect that the Carnatic territories will pass on to the English in the case of default. The Nawab lost the control over the foreign policy and the right to collect revenues from the Polygars. But the English supressed the Polygars by iron and blood in the name of the Nawab. A similar treaty was imposed on Thanjavur in 1793.

The political settlements, and treaties made during the period of 1785-1792 imparted a legal sanction to the encroachments made by the English Company on the rights of the native rulers. The English deprived of the Nawab and the Thanjavur Marathas of their political rights. In 1795 the English deposed the Sethupathi of Ramanathapuram. Many Poligars were also sacked. This created a hatred among the people towards the English.
Under the English administration the taxes were oppressive. Natural calamities added fuel to the fire. The rentiers and assignees increased the prices of the articles by common agreement. William Collins Jackson, the Company's Collector at Ramanathapuram imposed an embargo on the import of grain through sea with an intention of providing increased demand to the hoarded grain of the company. The prices of the grain shot high. The inhabitants were unable to obtain the food articles. The import and export of grain trade suffered. This affected the traders in the field.

The Polygars began to rebel from 1793. The insurrections of the Polygars of 1799-1801 was defeated because of the superior military power of the Company and its vast resources. In the midst of military operations against the insurgents, the English East India Company entered into a political transaction of major significance with the Nawab on 31st July 1801. The English East India Company concluded the treaty of Carnatic which provided for the transfer of power and authority of th Carnatic to the English. This marked the formal British rule over Carnatic. The Nawab of Arcot and other auxiliary powers ceased to exercise any political authority. The treaty vested the perpetual and exclusive civil, military and revenue authority with the English. The Nawab was made a pensioner. One fifth of the total revenue was to be paid to him. On the transfer of the territories, the English became the masters of Coromandel. The administration was in the hands of the British East India Company till 1857, when the Indian territories came under the direct administrative control of the British crown and India became politically and economically a vassal state of British Empire.

Even by the second quarter of the seventeenth century, the English had established a well founded network of trading factories centered on the Fort St.George. The city of Madras was the chief centre from which the British rule expanded. It became the chief factory of the English on the Coromandel and the headquarters of English East India Company. The English acquired a site from the Raja of Chandragiri in 1640 and it was developed as a fortified settlement. The town was called Chennapattanam. The trade of the most of the Coromandel ports had to depend on Madras. A large part of import and export trade was channelled through Madras port.
The English had a permanent machinery at Cuddalore for entering into contract with the weavers and local traders for the supply of textiles. PortNovo was also included in this network. The English tapped the markets to the west of Cuddalore as far as Salem. The company ships were carrying good deal of freight. In 1684 the English company's export from Coromandel was the highest in the history of the textile export from Coromandel190.

The English shipping of the Asian trade plied in the popular routes of Coromandel trade. It sailed to Martaban, Pegu, Tennaserim, Arakan, Kedah, Perak, Johore and Ache participating in the customary trade between these places and Coromandel coast. Much of the trade from Madras was carried out by English private operators, company servants and free merchants. The traditional maritime merchants, the Muslims and Chettiar plied side by side with the English from the ports of Cuddalore, PortNovo and Nagapattanam. The English traded directly with Manila in league with the Portuguese, Armenians and Coromandel Muslims191. There was small boat traffic from Madras to Malabar, Ceylon and Maldives. Short distance inter portal traffic from Kovalam, Fort St.David, PortNovo, Pondicherry, Tranquebar, Karaikkal, Nagore, Tondi, Kilakkarai and Kayalpattanam was also undertaken in which the local Muslim traders participated.

The English company imported the English manufactures into Coromandel. They imported from Mocha, Bandar Abhas, the West Asian goods; from Burma and Thai ports, tin, aromatics and a variety of goods; from Malaya and Sumatran ports, pepper, tin, aromatic wood and spices; from China, Copper and porcelain. The English private traders directly competed with the Coromandel native traders192.

The English carried on a brisk trade on slaves. They regularly supplied the slaves to the Southeast Asian markets of Ache, Arakan and Pegu. Slave trade was prohibited in Madras by 1687. But the trade went underground. Even during nineteenth century children were kidnapped and transported overseas as slaves. A number of Muslim traders were involved in such cases at Nagapattanam, Nagore and Kayalpattanam 193.

It will be seen that the first settlements of the English were purely commercial in nature. Their settlements contained nothing more than factories, warehouses and residences
for local representatives. Most of them were in sea coasts. The merchants of London were looking anxiously for the return from their investments. They pertained to the arrival and departures of ships, purchase and export of textile and various other products of the country. Thus the early settlements of the company was essentially trade in character.

Force of circumstances soon placed territorial ambition before it. As rightly pointed out by Holden Farber "It was the decay of the Mughual authority in India which forced the Company to consider exercising control over the land which produced it’s staple export, the cotton piece goods". Thus the early expansionist activities of the Company were due to it’s own commercial motives.

With the development of the Company from a commercial power into a territorial one, between 1757 -1784, there arose demand for some control of the English East India Company. The Regulating Act of 1773 imposed an indirect control of the British government on the affairs of the company. The Charter of 1813 abolished the company’s monopoly in Indian trade. Because of this, English private trade increased in volume. The Company’s trade steadily declined. The private merchants and commercial centres of England brought pressure to strip the company from trade. Accordingly, the Company’s trade was absorbed altogether by passing the Charter of 1833. From thenceforth it simply stood as administrators of India drawing it’s dividend from the revenues of India. The Board of Revenue which was formed in 1835 supervised the entire administration.

Cotton piece goods were the staple commodity of export of the English like the other European companies. In fact, the entire investment of the English was made only on piece goods. The East India Company started it’s investment on the weavers from the year 1793. The wars in eighteenth century were a temporary setback to the textile industry. When the dust of war settled, the company saw to it that the weaving villages continued their work without much interruption. The company invested about 50 to 60 lakhs rupees per annum. In addition to the export market, the entire internal demand was also met. The Coromandel weavers produced many varieties of piece goods for export. To mention a few, muslin, chintzes, palempore, longcloth, calicos, allegaes, bettelles, collowaypoos, dispers, mooris,
percolles, rumals, saucer guntees, sadaram - cheras, sollampore, sail cloth etc.\textsuperscript{197}. There were countless calico producing centres in Ramnad, Tinnelveli and Thanjavur. There were about 1023 looms and 4000 weavers at Nagore\textsuperscript{198}. There were about 980 looms in Ramanathapuram.

The company encouraged the local weaving sector up to the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Huge advances were distributed to the weavers. Some special concessions were extended to the weavers who supplied textiles exclusively to the company and they were designated as company weavers. They were exempted from loom tax and their lands were moderately assessed. There were a large numbers of Muslim weavers in Ramanathapuram and Thirunelveli districts\textsuperscript{200}.

The first half of the nineteenth century witnessed a remarkable change in the character of trade between India and England. Hence forward, India began to receive those very commodities as imports as hitherto shipped in her export trade, i.e., cotton manufactures and sugar. The Lankashire cotton industry so developed that by the middle of the century the cotton piece goods from there started to invade the Indian market. It represented about the total import of foreign merchandise in India\textsuperscript{201}. Raw cotton was exported for Lankashire textile industry and the finished products came to India\textsuperscript{202}. To feed their home market with superior varieties of cotton, cultivation of new varieties of cotton was encouraged in many parts of Coromandel. By 1823, except the Madras long cloth, all other piece goods lost market in England\textsuperscript{203}. Company’s export trade in textiles was ruined. By the Charter Act of 1833 the Company ceased to be a trading corporation. The Act drove the last nail in to the coffin of the East India Company’s trade and as well as the cotton handloom industry of the Coromandel\textsuperscript{204}. The weavers were thrown into misery and their industries nearly ruined. Among them there were many Muslim weavers on the coastal towns.

By the end of eighteenth century the free English merchants grew. The control of trade got transferred from covenanted servants to the free merchants. Trade firms took up the place of loosely associated individuals. This was a real challenge to the individual local traders both Muslims and Hindus\textsuperscript{205}. Joint stock companies were formed with influential
and confident merchants as share holders and money were advanced to the producers of
textiles through the contractors. There were money lenders to advance to the English for
the duration of the voyage and the rate of interest was very high up to 30%. The English
ships carried Coromandel piece goods and returned with silver that overflowed in to Manila
from Spanish America. The profit earned by them was very high.  

When the East India Company lost its trade monopoly, private English merchants
took up the place. They competed still vigourously with native merchants in all the traditional
markets and commodities. The English administration showed racial discrimination against
the native traders and favoured the English merchants.

The English tried to curb the rival commercial competitions. To safeguard the English
shipping interest an act was passed in 1814 restricting Indian shipping and ships employing
Indian sailors. Indian built ships were prohibited in Indo British trade from 1814. The act
stipulated that the ships entering English waters whose crews were not at least 75% English,
were liable to forfeiture, while the captain in all these ships had to be white British. Local
shipping was discouraged by discriminatory tariffs. In the Madras presidency, in 1872 the
import duty on goods brought by the Indian ships was raised to 15% compared with 71/2% in
the case of English ships. These measures dealt an effective blow to native shipping and reduced
it to insignificance in Indo-British trade by 1840. A corollary to these changes was the fact
that the traditional Indian merchants Hindus as well as Muslims ceased to play a major role in the
external seaborn trade of India.

The decline of Indian ocean shipping commercial and financial enterprises meant that
Indian entrepreneurial classes lost their principle and traditional income and many had to be
content with the subservient role of dealings under English enterprises and the "Nabobs", the
free merchants.

The English also monopolised certain commodities. Monopoly of the Indian products by
the English meant that the Indian merchants were prohibited from buying commodities directly
from the producers which were monopolised by the British. The agents of the Company and
Company servants forced such goods on the Indian merchants at a price higher than the prevailing ones.\textsuperscript{208} The Indian merchants had to acquiesce to the Company or its servants engaged in private inland trade or private English merchants, otherwise they had to find a new source of income.

The political, trade and other general policies of the English affected the maritime trade of the Muslims also. They were the most oppressed among the native traders under the English rule. Though the English supported the maritime trading activities of the Muslims in the early years of their ascendancy their policy towards them changed in the later periods and thus the English had an ambivalent attitude towards the Muslims. Bearing all the difficulties, the Muslim vessels operated from PortoNovo, Cuddalore, and Nagapattanam to Burma, Ache and Malacca. From the Madura coast trade with Ceylon was brisk.\textsuperscript{209} The Nawab of Arcot wanted to develop the ports at Kovalam, Santhome and Alambaram relying on the Muslim shipping. But it was not attended to.

The English thought that influential Muslim merchants created problems for the Company's relationship with the Nawab.\textsuperscript{210} There were occasional disputes with the Muslims in the collection of customs. The Muslim ship owners and traders moved to the places favourable to them. The attempt of the English in the second half of the eighteenth century to attract Muslim traders to PortoNovo failed.\textsuperscript{211} The growth of Pondicherry port under the French was an attraction to the Muslim traders of PortNovo. The customs duty at Pondicherry was only half to that of Cuddalore. When the native traders represented for the reduction in the customs rate the Directors rejected it.\textsuperscript{212} Rice and grain trade from Coromandel to Ceylon continued to be an important activity of Coromandel Muslims. In the long run it was also affected by the rise in tariffs.

Further the English were favourable to Hindu Chettiar merchants. They were nominated as their chief agents and principal traders at Madras. It is also a fact that Chettiar merchants were in sound financial position than the Muslim traders. The English felt that the Hindus were a dosile group and very dependent on English power and hence they were in good books.\textsuperscript{213}
Choudry alleges that the English East India Company itself seldom made use of the Muslim merchants. The English considered some of the Muslim merchants as their enemies due to their common religion with the Mughal rulers. Mujib opines that the British had been the cause of the economic ruin of the Indian Muslims, and the British administration had taken fierce revenge on the Muslims for their participation in the upheaval of 1857-58. The maritime trade of the Muslims of Coromandel suffered further after the mutiny. Though the religious animosity of the English towards Muslims may not be comparable to that of the Portuguese and the Dutch; but still the English discriminated them because of their political and economic compulsions.

At end of the period of our study, the whole of India was under the British Empire. The British administrators were not very serious about the maritime trade activities of the natives. The Muslim traders had to share the fate along with other native traders. Very few Marakkayar maritime traders and ship owners alone survived the economic storm. In the scattered pockets of Thanjavur, Ramanathapuram and Thirunelveli there were few wealthy Marakkayar traders engaged in trade with Ceylon and in coastal trade. The trading activities of many of the families dominating in the Coromandel Coast was engulfed by the British economic power and supreme shipping technology, by 1900, and the glorious history of the Coromandel Muslims' maritime activities faded away in silence. Thus the occupation of the Coromandel region by various European powers and their commercial and political activities, right from the sixteenth century to the dawn of twentieth, has played a major role in the economic downfall of the Muslims.
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208. Ramakrishna Mukharji The Rise and Fall of East India Company, (Bombay 1973) pp. 304-305.
209. S. Arasaratnam , Companies and Commerce, op.,cit. p.199 
211. Despatches to England, 17 Aug. 1717, p. 117; Despatches from England, 8 Jan 1717-18 p. 112.
213. S. Arasaratnam, Companies and Commerce, op.cit. 209.
214. K.N. Choudri, op.cit. pp. 149-150