CHAPTER 6

EUROPEAN PENETRATION INTO KOLATHUNAD

Geographical explorations, which started by the end of the fifteenth century, resulted in the establishment of direct European contact with the East. Arrival of Vasco da Gama in Calicut on 20th May 1498 marked the beginning of the regular European interaction with India, especially the Malabar region. Following the Portuguese, other Europeans like the Dutch, the English and the French established their settlements in Malabar. All these Europeans had the common motive to engage in spice trade, especially to acquire monopoly rights on pepper trade, because pepper was the most preferred item of spices in Europe. Therefore, it was very natural that the European powers always engaged themselves in severe competitions and even in warfare. These commercial competitions among European powers in the maritime trade led to the establishment of colonies in the littoral areas of overseas local kingdoms. It marked the beginning of colonial penetration into India. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss colonial penetration into Kolathunad, which occurred chiefly through a process of mercantile exchanges and engagements.

The traditional trade activities of South India with the western world started even from the biblical times onwards.¹ Malabar had a vital role in the

East–West trade contacts. The ports of Kolathunad exported large quantities of pepper, cardamom, wild cinnamon, copra, coir, areca nuts and many other commodities to the West.\(^2\) Even before the advent of the Portuguese, Naura, identified as modern Cannanore, was an active port as early as the period of Roman trade itself.\(^3\) The ancient Tamil literature also glorified these trade activities between South India and the Western World. But widespread trade of Malabar with various regions outside India started with the coming of the Arabs.\(^4\) The attitude of the local rulers, who wished to have foreign trade relations, promoted the Arab merchants in Malabar. For example, the security and safety of property and life provided in the Kingdom of Calicut was highly appreciated by foreign settlers like the Arabs.

The Arab merchants, who had wide commercial contacts with the Mediterranean world as well as the South East Asian countries, were peace loving people. They contributed a lot to the development of Malabar Coast, especially for the kingdoms of Cannanore and Calicut. The local rulers of Malabar encouraged them and gave them lands in the suburbs of many towns. They


settled there and married local women and their progeny was known in Malabar as Mappilas.\textsuperscript{5}

**Early trade**

Sea power really connotes the power to use the sea, both during peace and war. Geographical and geopolitical circumstances enable one nation to control transportation over the sea. In its broadest sense, sea power embraces all that tends to make a people great upon the sea.\textsuperscript{6} The Arabs had complete dominance in the overseas trade between the East and the West. In 1453, Ottoman Turks, taking possession of Constantinople, blockaded the overland trade route to the East. Before the fifteenth century trade and commerce between Asia and Europe was carried on by merchant guilds through the Mediterranean. The Eastern spices and stuffs were mostly carried by land and sea routes by these merchant guilds.\textsuperscript{7} The important spice trade with the East could only be carried on by the West through a hostile intermediary, the Arabs. So the discovery of an independent sea route to India became an indispensabe factor in Europe.\textsuperscript{8} Before the thirteenth century A.D, Europe remained as a continent of principalities, duchies, counties, little oligarchies and little republics. The Mediterranean states that had engaged


\textsuperscript{7} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid.
in trade activities with Indian states in the medieval periods were cities rather than countries.\(^9\)

In Kolathunad like in other parts of Malabar the agricultural production was mostly for local consumption and not for export. However, production of spices was mainly for export purposes. From early period onwards Malabar spices, especially Cannanore spices, had high demand among the Arabs and Europeans. But these spices were not cultivated in a systematic manner. The good climatic conditions and fertility of the soil helped the natural growth of spices in abundance.\(^10\) Francis Buchanan wrote about the rich fertility of the Malabar soil.\(^11\)

During the period of Roman trade with Western Coast of India, Malabar pepper was known as black gold.\(^12\) Naura was one of the most important centres of pepper trade on Malabar Coast.\(^13\) Ptolemy, a first century geographer also speaks of Kottonara, later identified as Tellicherry was also the centre of pepper


\(^13\) Wilfred, *The Periplus…*, p. 204.
Thus it can be said that different parts of Kolathunad were centres of international trade and famous for pepper trade in the western world from ancient times.

In the early period the foreign merchants rarely involved in the local affairs and they showed dependency on the indigenous producers, middle men and local rulers. In Malabar a number of rich Arabian traders had settled for carrying their business effectively and efficiently. The Portuguese decided to expel these Islamic foreign merchant groups from Malabar. The peaceful trade activities held in the Arabian Sea for centuries were rudely shaken by the arrival of the Portuguese by the end of the fifteenth century. The Portuguese had inherited the Mediterranean mercantile practises. The real intention of the Portuguese was to eliminate the merchants of Arab origin from the south. Cannanore was one of the strongholds of Arabian merchants. Unlike in any other parts of Kerala, in Cannanore the Arabs and indigenous Muslims had their mercantile chief and protector, called Ali Raja. That is why the Portuguese had to face severe opposition from Cannanore Muslims under the leadership of Ali Raja. In Malabar the local rulers treated the Arabs very kindly and peacefully. The rulers wanted to gain prosperity through foreign trade. In the fifteenth and

14 H. G. Rawlinson, *Intercourse between India and the Western World from the Earliest times to the Fall of the Roman Empire*, Cambridge, 1916, p.112.


sixteenth centuries Calicut emerged as a very prosperous city by its trade with Arabs.

Before the arrival of the Arabs and Europeans, the trade guilds like Anjuvannam and Manigramam were prominent in Kolathunad. The historically important and contemporary work produced the thirteenth century called Payyannur Pattu is a good source of information about the presence of these trade guilds in Kolathunad. Certain indications such as Sthanu Ravi’s inscriptions suggest that in the ninth century the Manigramam was associated with elite ruling urban group at Quilon. Till the close of the thirteenth century Manigramam merchants enjoyed a special position as compared to the other merchant guilds of the South India. Christian traders occupied important position in these guilds. Manigramam was a localized merchant body operating within a specific region. Anjuvannam was an organization of foreign merchants. They started their commercial activities on the Western Coast, especially on the Malabar Coast in the eighth and ninth centuries and spread out to other parts of South India in the eleventh century A.D. They interacted with the local merchants and were mostly engaged in the purchase and sale of commodities like pepper, spices and


18 Meera Abraham, Two Medieval Merchant Guilds, New Delhi, Manohar, 1988, pp. 34-35.
incenses.\textsuperscript{19} One of the fourteenth century inscriptions of the \textit{Manigramam} is located at Ramanthali in the Chirakkal Taluk of Kannur district.\textsuperscript{20}

In medieval Kerala the kings had no direct connection with overseas trade but enriched their treasury by receiving tolls from the merchants, who engaged in seafaring.\textsuperscript{21} In Kolathunad, Ali Raja, one of the vassals of Kolathiri had directly involved in trade activities and funded the treasury of the king, but later he withdrew from his position as a vassal and emerged as an independent power through immense wealth which he collected from maritime activities. When the Portuguese arrived at Cannanore, Ali Raja enjoyed independent position and dominance over trade in Cannanore. The Kolathiri received the Portuguese with great pleasure because he wanted to improve his position as the wealthiest king of Kerala as suggested by Marco Polo, the Venetian traveler in the thirteenth century.\textsuperscript{22} In Kolathunad the trade activities were carried on by the Arab and native Muslim merchants under the control of Ali Raja. Kolathiri wanted to eliminate the supremacy of the Muslim traders in seafaring. He was also jealous of the emergence of Calicut as the great emporium of trade in Malabar under the


\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Meera, Two Medieval...}, pp. 34-35.


\textsuperscript{22} Marco Polo, \textit{The Traveels of Marco Polo}, (trans.) Aido Ricci, p. 328.
Zamorin in the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{23} So he received Gama happily and was very anxious to give him all facilities in his land.

Until the second half of the fifteenth century the kingdom of Kolathunad was in a flourishing condition on account of vast and extensive trade contacts with the several countries and its precious products like pepper, cardamom and sandalwood which brought much wealth to the kingdom.\textsuperscript{24} During this time Ali Raja, the foremost among the vassals of Kolathiri was conducting seafaring to Persian Gulf. His people collected all kinds of saleable freights to Cannanore. Through these trade contacts Ali Raja became more rich and powerful than his sovereign. At that time Hindu rulers and their family members were not personally involved in trade activities. They only collected some part of the profit from those who actively participated in maritime contacts. Though the Laccadive Islands originally belonged to Kolathiri, by the time of the arrival of the Portuguese, Ali Raja had become the head of Laccadive Islands.

In Kolathunad the administrative jurisdiction of the ruler was confined to a small territory. The vassals of the Kolathiri acted as independent rulers in their own areas. The internal quarrels among the *thaivazhis*, the rise of feudatories and the disinterest of Kolathiri in trade activities resulted in the deterioration of the royal family of Kolaswaroopam. In the meantime Ali Raja grew as a great threat to the sovereignty of Kolathiri over Cannanore. Often he questioned the authority

\textsuperscript{23} K. V. Krishna Iyer, *The Zamorins of Calicut*, p. 84.

\textsuperscript{24} A. Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar*, Madras, 1911, p. 143.
of Kolathiri. The Ali Raja earned more wealth than the Kolathiri. His authority over Laccadive Islands further enriched his treasury. Therefore, the Kolathiri was very eager to welcome the interference of any other power to recapture the trade activities from the hands of the Muslims.

The Portuguese

In was in this situation the Portuguese on the occasion of their first visit to Kolathunad in 1498, selected that place as a good alternative to Calicut.\(^{25}\) In 1500 Pedro Alvares Cabral sailed to Cannanore and requested the king to offer him a suitable place in order to settle his people.\(^{26}\) The Kolathiri gave consent to erect a fortress on the coast of Cannanore near the Mappila Bay, the centre of Muslim mercantile activities. He offered the assistance of six Nair militia and sufficient materials and specialized craftsmen for construction.\(^{27}\) The construction of a Portuguese fort and their settlement created a blockade to the Moorish commercial activities. The house of Ali Raja was also very near this fortress.


Thus the Portuguese settlement in Cannanore widened the gap between the Kolathunad and Ali Raja. Later the hostility between the king and Ali Raja worsened the situation in Kolathunad. The attack of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan in the eighteenth century was the result of these movements. It was Ali Raja who prompted Haider Ali to attack Kolathunad.28

A wide spread belief was current in Portugal in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that there were other Christian communities in the distant lands of Asia and Africa and that they were separated from them by the Muslim territories. In his letter to Zamorin of Calicut, delivered by Vasco da Gama to the Zamorin, the king of Portugal was very much anxious to contact the Christian king of the East. He believed that the king of Calicut was a Christian.29 In the fifteenth century there was an acute shortage of gold in Europe and they were compelled to trade with the East. The availability of better guns and navigational equipments prepared Portugal for seafaring to the East.30 The European supremacy in Indian Ocean did not mean that Indian shipping at that time was not efficient. Before the arrival of Europeans Indian navigation was in a flourishing condition. The Indians were skilled shipbuilders and navigators but unfortunately the European ships were larger and fitted with gun and modern armaments.31


The Portuguese also introduced the system of trade passes called *cartazes* in order to control commercial activities and navigation. All merchants vassals owned by local and foreign merchants, except the Portuguese, and local rulers had to obtain these passes from respective Portuguese factory in the coastal region for the transportation of their good. Ships without these documents would be captured by Portuguese naval force. Thus *cartaz* was a coercive mechanism to establish Portuguese trade monopoly in the Indian Ocean region, which was highly successful until arrival of European rivals in the field of maritime trade.

The continuous trade contacts with Kolathunad prompted the Portuguese to erect a fortress at Cannanore, an easily defensible place. The Kolathiri Raja granted lands to the Portuguese in Cannanore. It became the most important sea port of Kolathunad in the sixteenth century. It experienced the nature of an urban centre only after the establishment of a Portuguese fortress there. Attached to the fort they started a factory, church, hospital and other institutions which were essential for an urban life. Even if the Portuguese expansion bombarded the traditional seafaring, it contributed to the urbanization of Cannanore in the Indian Ocean region.

Among all other ports of the fifteenth century in Kolathunad, Cannanore emerged as a port city only after the interference of Portuguese seaborne empire.

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The medieval travellers highlighted the prosperity of this city and functioning of the Portuguese fortress in a very detailed manner. John Huyghen, a sixteenth century traveller wrote about the facilities that were available in Portuguese fortress. The things like eggs, butter, honey, Indian oil and all that were available in the Portuguese fortress were brought from different parts of Cannanore. In the fort the Portuguese had their own four Churches, Cathedral, hospitals and other facilities.

The seventeenth century travellers like Thevenot, Varthema and Pyrard give us a detailed picture of Cannanore at the time of their visit. In the seventeenth century trade activities in Cannanore was in a flourishing condition under the Portuguese. Thevenot, in his travel accounts gives a very beautiful description about contemporary life in Cannanore. According to him, “There is a good harbour at Cannanore, which is a large town, the little king (who is called king of Cannanore) lives not there; he holds his court towards a strait farther from the sea; his country affords all things necessary for life; the Portuguese have been always his friends, and many of them live in his country.”

Varthema, an Italian traveller had also visited Cannanore in the seventeenth century. Then the city was in a flourishing condition. According to

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him “Cannanore is a fine and large city, in which the king of Portugal has a very strong castle. The king of this city is a great friend of the king of Portugal, although he is a pagan. This Cannanore is the port at which the horses which come from Persia disembark.” Varthema pointed out that the trading activities of the country was in a flourishing stage under the Portuguese and every year more than two hundred ships were anchored in the harbour of Cannanore. The king of Kolathunad was comparatively more powerful than in the past and had possessed 50,000 Nair soldiers.

The travel accounts of another seventeenth century traveller Francois Pyrard throws light on the political condition of Cannanore. During that time Cannanore was a handsome town, situated on the sea shore, and it had a good harbour. It was one of the important Malabar kingdoms of that time. He says that the Muslim chieftain Ali Raja was quite independent from the Kolathiri. The contemporary sources suggest that in Cannanore a number of Arabs were settled for the purpose of trade and they were good merchants and Sea warriors. In the seventeenth century Ali Raja was immensely rich and the Laccadive Islands were under his possession. Moreover, the Maldives also paid tribute to him. He further pointed out that the other Indian kings never recognized Ali Raja as a ruler.


38 Ibid.


40 Ibid. p. 445.
of Cannanore but only as a vassal of Kolathiri. He had wide trade relations with many other parts of India and the Red Sea. His connection with the rulers of Arabia opened the doors of trade towards ancient Sea routes.\textsuperscript{41}

In Cannanore there was a fine market place called Basar. The country produced best type of pepper in great quantity. There the Muslims were good merchants.\textsuperscript{42} The continuous trade contacts of Portuguese lowered the price of the Eastern commodities in the Italian markets and created a spirit for distant navigation and commerce among the other Europeans like the Dutch, the French and the English.\textsuperscript{43}

The Dutch

Holland was the first European country which ventured to challenge the Lusitanian seaborne trade in India. They captured all important trading centers from the hands of the Portuguese. In 1663 along with the capture of Cochin the Dutch succeeded in overthrowing the Portuguese from Cannanore.\textsuperscript{44} They entered into independent treaties with Kolathiri and Ali Raja of Cannanore. These treaties effectively helped to bring Cannanore completely under the Dutch control. The

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid. pp. 445-46.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid. p. 441.

\textsuperscript{43} To the Honorable the Court of Directors of the United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies, the Annals of the Honorable East India Company from their Establishment by the Charter of Queen Elizabeth, 1600, to the Union of the London and English East India Companies 1707-8, Submitted by John Bruce to East India House, Vol. I, 1810, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{44} R. Vaidyanadhan, Communication history of the Dutch in Indies, London, Member India Study Circle, 1997, p.42.
Dutch turned their attention to the Coast of Malabar only after the capture of Colombo and the establishment of a firm footing in Ceylon. Close access to Malabar from Colombo would make it very easy for the Dutch to prepare themselves for military actions in Malabar. The fame of Malabar as motherland of pepper inspired them for a complete monopoly of the region.  

Houtman, a native of Holland who had made several voyages to India, in Portuguese ships, was confined at this time, for debt, in Lisbon. This navigator offered to the merchants of Amsterdam, that if they could remit a sum sufficient to procure his release, he would conduct a voyage by the Cape of Good Hope and introduce his countrymen to the Indian commerce. Houtman sailed in 1595, with four ships, and arrived at Bantam, where the Portuguese were at war with the local king and for the assistance which he offered to this chief, he obtained liberty to build a factory, the first of which the Dutch had in the East Indies, and returned to Europe with three of his ships richly laden with spices and other Indian produce. The success of Houtman attracted several associations in the Netherlands, which in 1597, formed “The Society for Trade to Distant Countries.” It also aroused the desires of the English.

Dutch Trade in Malabar

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45 K. M. Panikkar, *Malabar and the Dutch*, Bombay, 1932, p.3

46 *Annals of the Honorable East India Company* ..., p. 27.


The Dutch East India Company was governed by a body of seventeen directors. They were elected from other principal official bodies interested in the East India trade. These bodies were organized into chambers and they were autonomous in the matter of administration. The centre of Dutch administration in Malabar was Cochin and the council of Cochin carried on the affairs and they had five sub centers. Cannanore became one of the sub-centers of the Dutch. The other outstations were Quilon, Kayamkulam, Purakkad and Cranganore. The Company had separate administrative wings to carry on the political, as well as military matters on Malabar.

The Dutch followed a highly democratic and effective administrative system in Malabar. They had their own political organizations in their Eastern settlements. Even the smaller factory settlement had its own councils, committees and courts. Unlike the Portuguese the Dutch had freedom of choice in their respective colonies. Later the English East India Company adopted this liberal Dutch administrative system in their colonies.

In the early decades of the Dutch in Malabar, they peacefully participated in trade from Malabar to the Red sea ports, exporting pepper and cardamom. The Malabar traders used the Dutch as protectors against the Portuguese. The Dutch

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50 Ibid. p. 133.

51 Ibid. p. 132.

participation in the Malabar trade provided boost to the local traders. At first the Dutch did not interfere in the internal affairs of the country. In 1639 they blockaded Goa, the Portuguese possession, and thereafter they established strong relations with the native rulers.\(^53\) Subsequently they attempted to gain possession in Cochin.

When the Dutch arrived in Malabar, there were four major ruling families in Malabar, viz., the Kolathiri of Cannanore, the Zamorin of Calicut, Raja of Cochin and Raja of Travancore. By that time the Kolathiri had lost much of his political powers. The sea port of Cannanore was under the direct control of Ali Raja.\(^54\) The Dutch Company was the first protestant country of Europe to find a strong trading network in Malabar.\(^55\) The Dutch East India Company was founded in 1602 by a charter granted by the States-General, the national administrative body of the Dutch Republic.\(^56\) In the sixteenth century the Dutch East India Company was an important trading company among the European trading companies.\(^57\) The Dutch company was the most important one, in terms

\(^{53}\) Ibid.


\(^{57}\) Ibid.
of the large volume of trade it had conducted, and the number of ports, through which they carried on the trade.\textsuperscript{58}

In the beginning the Dutch had no intention of acquiring territory or establishing colonies. The aim of the Vereenigde Oost – Indische Compagnie (VOC)\textsuperscript{59} was to watch over all the places in Malabar, which provided pepper to the European market.\textsuperscript{60} Gradually it became necessary to establish factories and fortresses in Malabar Coast, which enabled the company to control their market in Europe.\textsuperscript{61}

In the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese intervention in Kolathunad destroyed the progressive trading activities in Cannanore.\textsuperscript{62} The Portuguese highhandedness in the internal politics and their continuous war with the Mappila chiefs of Cannanore further destroyed the peaceful atmosphere in Kolathunad.\textsuperscript{63} Therefore the advent of the Dutch East India Company in Cannanore started a new era of intra-regional commercial activities. After the

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{60} On 24\textsuperscript{th} March 1602, on the initiative of Van Oldenbarnevett The States – General succeeded in getting all these companies to amalgamate as the united East India Company, the Vereenigde Oost – Indische Compagnie, Known as the VOC. See for details Owen, \textit{The Dutch...}, p. 29.

\textsuperscript{61} Binu John, “The VOC and the Prospects of Trade between Cannanore and Mysore in the Late Seventeenth Century”, in K. S. Mathew and Joy Varkey, ed., \textit{Winds of Spices Essays on Portuguese Establishments in Medieval India with Special Reference to Cannanore}, Tellicherry, IRISH, 2006, p. 207.

\textsuperscript{62} Galletti, \textit{The Dutch in Malabar...}, p. 143.

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.
capture of Cochin from the Portuguese in 1663 the Dutch were able to expel the Portuguese from Kolathunad also. The Dutch captured the fort at Cannanore in 1663. Cannanore was the last Portuguese stronghold in Malabar to fall under the Dutch possession.

After the Portuguese fall the Dutch followed the same policies practised by the Portuguese in Malabar. They issued passes to other traders, who wanted to go to other countries with commodities from Malabar. Consequently, the Kolathiri made a treaty of peace and friendship with the Dutch company on 26th March, 1663. The Ali Raja also participated in that treaty. The Dutch started a deliberate policy of friendship with the king of Kolathunad and Ali Raja, the merchant chieftain. The Kolathiri allowed the Dutch company to bring large amount of opium to Kolathunad, which was the monopoly of the Arakkal house.

Even from the early period, the Dutch monopoly on the trade in Kolathunad had little success. They had failed to increase either the export of pepper or the import of opium. At first the Ali Raja did not object the policy of

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64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
67 Galletti, The Dutch in Malabar..., p. 143.
the Dutch company. They independently concluded peace treaties. But the Dutch attempt to monopolise the trade created friction between Ali Raja and the company. Ali Raja’s attempt to sell his produce to other traders, who offered more returns than the Dutch company, provoked the latter. The dissatisfaction of both the Dutch and Ali Raja entered into an open conflict in 1665.

Following the decline of the Vijayanagar Empire after the battle of Talikotta in 1564, the Nayakas, the early feudatory chiefs of Vijayanagar emerged as political powers of South India. These newly emerged states used West Asian war horses for the purpose of their expansion. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries these Nayak states played a vital role in the political history of South. Though the Dutch had established trade relations with the Nayaks, they feared the latter’s influence on Malabar.

The Dutch were suspicious of and disturbed by the growth of the Nayakas in the south. So the company often rejected the offers of the Nayakas to establish trade relations with them. Moreover, the appearance of the English East India Company and the French East India Company in Malabar blockaded further expansion of the Dutch in Kerala. The support gained by the former from the

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70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid. p. 211.
Raja of Kolathunad and the Ali Raja was a rebuff to the Dutch. Anyway the suspicious attitude of the Dutch, their blind acceptance of the trade policies followed by the Portuguese, strong presence of the English East India Company at Tellicherry and the French presence at Mahe curtailed the Dutch interest in Kolathunad.\textsuperscript{76}

In 1608 the States-General found it expedient to consolidate the several societies of East India adventurers, into one and constitute by Placart or patent, the Dutch East India Company with exclusive privileges of trade for twenty years.\textsuperscript{77} This company commenced the trade on a joint stock with a capital of 6,440,200 guilders. The Dutch Company attempted to dislodge the Portuguese from Mozambique and Goa, opened a communication with the Island of Ceylon, and succeeded in expelling them from the Island of Amboyna and Tidere. The large armoury of the Dutch and the great experience and bravery of their commanders enabled them to expel the Portuguese from Malabar.\textsuperscript{78}

As the Portuguese ceased to receive reinforcement, the Dutch were enabled to fix factories at Pulicat, Musulipatam and Nagapatam on the Coromandal Coast, on the Coast of the Island of Ceylon and at Cranganore, Cannanore and Cochin on the Malabar Coast and thence pushed their commercial agencies to Bussora and the Coast of the Persian Gulf.\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{76} Arsaratnam, *Maritime India*…, p. 99.

\textsuperscript{77} *Annals of the Honorable East India Company* …, p. 28.

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.
In early part of the seventeenth century the political and commercial superiority of the Dutch were confirmed, while that of the English declined. The Dutch not only made Batavia, as the centre of their commercial activities in the East Indies, but also of their exchanges with their port and their factories on the Coromandel and Malabar Coasts. During this period the Dutch succeeded in accumulating the profit of the trade in the East and those of the export from Batavia to Europe as well as the imports from Europe to the Indies. 80

In the sixteenth century the Portuguese had not faced any serious threats from the European powers in Malabar. 81 Unfortunately the Dutch in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries faced severe threats from other European powers. As a result of these internal rivalries among the European powers and conflict with the native rulers for monopolizing the pepper trade in Kolathunad, the Dutch mercantile influence began to decline. 82 At the same time the English and the French entered into an agreement and they jointly fixed the price of pepper. 83 During this time Kolathunad was fragmented among these native as well as foreign powers. In the same period the Canarese invaded Kolathunad and

79 Ibid. p. 29.
80 Ibid. p. 31.


the English entered into a treaty with them for concession in the price of pepper.\textsuperscript{84} The rise of the price of pepper by the entry of the French into Kolathunad\textsuperscript{85} and the control on the supply of best cardamom in Kolathunad by the English and the French compelled the Dutch to withdraw from Kolathunad.

**The French and English in Kolathunad**

On 23 March 1722 the Kolathiri permitted the English Company to conduct trade in the areas between Kazargod and Pudupattanam and he also permitted the English East India Company to prevent the commercial activities of other Companies like the Dutch.\textsuperscript{86} The regents of Kolathiri alternatively confirmed and renewed grants made by the king and themselves with the Company.\textsuperscript{87} Though traditional boundary of the kingdom extended from Kazaragod in the North to Korappuzha in the South, the continuous struggle with Zamorin reduced the extent of the kingdom up to Pudupattanam River.\textsuperscript{88} In the sixteenth century Kolathiri continued to keep his sovereignty over important ancient cities like Ezhi, Madayi, Srikantapuram, Kannur, Etakkad and Dharmadam. At the same time with the coming of the foreigners like the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the English, Kolathiri had lost his authority over such strategically important places like Tellicherry, Mahe, Dharmadam and

\textsuperscript{84} *Ibid*. pp. 40-41.


\textsuperscript{86} Logan, *A collection of Treaties…*, No. VIII, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{87} *Ibid*. p. 4.
Etakkad. The main cause of the weakening of central authority was frequent internal quarrels among different thaivazhis or branches of the royal family mainly due to Kooruvazhcha and conflicts among the feudatories.\textsuperscript{89}

\textbf{Anglo-French Conflicts}

The French obtained their first foothold in Mahe in 1721. Though the French established their loge in Calicut with the permission of Zamorin, they obtained a grant of some land at Mahe on the river bank from the Vazhunnavar of Vatakara.\textsuperscript{90} Moreover, they obtained a colony of 6000 persons, who cultivated 6,350 cocoa trees, 3,967 arecanut and 7,762 pepper trees for the French Company.\textsuperscript{91} When the French settled on the coast of Malabar, Kolathunad was in a fragmented condition.

They settled at Mahe because, Kolathunad was preferable than Calicut for the best quality of pepper and where local political power was weak. The Vazhunnavar was one of the feudatories of Kolathunad but Hamilton recorded him as one of the most powerful princes of Malabar.\textsuperscript{92} This showed the inferior position of Kolathiri in his own political domain. The French planted indigo, jute, cotton, coffee, and tea in their different centers of trade like Madagascar, and

\textsuperscript{88} Kurup, \textit{Tellicherry Factory}..., p. 13.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibrahim, \textit{Medieval}..., p. 136.
\textsuperscript{91} Raynal, \textit{A Philosophical}..., II, p. 164.
Bourbon, where they employed slaves for its cultivation. They carried on the trade of slaves from Malabar through Mahe.

According to the treaty with the Vazhunnavar, the French Company had to purchase all the pepper produced in this country but the Company did not have sufficient fund to purchase the commodity. Therefore, the relation between the Company and the Raja became strained. Taking advantage of this situation the English at Tellicherry encouraged the Vazhunnavar to declare war against the French. In 1725 he attacked the French settlement at Mahe.\(^93\) In December 1725 the French squadron commanded by Pardaillan recaptured the French possession at Mahe. The hostility and friendship between the vassals of Kolathiri and the European Companies occasionally changed. In 1726 the hostility between the French and the Vazhunnavar came to an end. But Kurungothu Nair, one of the minor feudatories of Kolathiri, who possessed land in between English settlement at Tellicherry and French settlement at Mahe, came into conflict with the English because of some differences of opinion with the English. In this conflict the French helped the Kurungothu Nair.\(^94\) Kurungothu Nair failed in that war. The French and the English entered into a treaty according to which both parties would not fight for each other’s territory intervening in local affairs.\(^95\)

Unlike other European countries, the French East India Company was a government attached body. The Company established its first factory in India at

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\(^{93}\) Cheriyan, *Gazetteer*, p. 254.

\(^{94}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{95}\) *Ibid.*
Surat on 1668 by obtaining a *firman* from Aurangazeb.\(^{96}\) Besides, the company occupied a village in Pondicherry from the Governor of Valkondapuram in 1673.\(^ {97}\) As directed by the Governor of Pondicherry, a small squadron under the command of M. De. Pardillan arrived at Mahe in 1725.\(^ {98}\) At first Kurungothu Nair, who was already engaged in war with the English, refused to grant any land to the French company.\(^ {99}\) Later the French compelled him to yield.\(^ {100}\) The advent of the French, near the English stronghold at Tellicherry, was a great blow to the English activities in north Malabar. The English could overcome these obstacles because the English East India Company was an autonomous body having no interference from the mother country. But the French company was bound to its mother country and the company was a government body without independence.

**English East India Company in Kolathunad**

Like the Portuguese and the Dutch, the French and the English also came to Malabar for the purpose of trade. In the beginning the English settled in Cochin and gradually secured a small establishment in Calicut, where they lived

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\(^{96}\) R. C. Majumdar, (et.al), *An Advanced History of India*, New Delhi, Macmillan, Reprint, 2004, p. 635.

\(^{97}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{98}\) Soon after the establishment of the Tellicherry factory, the French, by force of arms acquired possession of Mayyali, which came to be called ‘Mahe’ after the French Captain, Francois Mahe de H. La – Bourdonnais... Ibrahim, *Medieval….*, p. 136.


\(^{100}\) *Ibid.*
like ordinary merchants.\textsuperscript{101} Sometimes they helped the local rulers in their fight against the Portuguese and the Dutch. In 1634-35 the English East India Company entered into an agreement with the Portuguese.\textsuperscript{102} According to this treaty, the English got access to all Portuguese possessions in Malabar.\textsuperscript{103}

**Nair Chiefs, English East India Company and Their Domination**

During the beginning stage of English contacts, the merchants of the Company lived under the protection of the native rulers of Malabar. The English chief sent factors to various places to observe the condition of trade that seem to have later enabled the company to decide on the best place for their trade activities and establishment of factories. Thus they established the centers of trade on Malabar Coast, one at Anjengo and another at Tellicherry in Kolathunad. In the seventeenth century, during the time of establishment of the Tellicherry factory, the old kingdom of Kolathunad broke up into a number of petty principalities.

In the beginning the English factors in Kolathunad faced many atrocities from some princes of Kolathiri family and their Nair chieftains. The English secured the monopoly of trade in the country from various chiefs through treaties signed with them separately. As a result of exporting of goods without permission


\textsuperscript{102} A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey...*, p. 318.

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.
was prohibited both by land and sea. The princes of Kolathiri family themselves in association with their Nair chieftains conducted many atrocities against the English settlement at Tellicherry for stopping further growth of the English company. So the English factors applied their policy of divide and rule in Kolathunad. In 1745 the prince of Udayamangalam in Kolathiri family with the support of his Nair chieftains of Iruvazhinad attacked the Company’s warehouse at Tellicherry.

At the time of the English settlement the Kolathunad was in an unstable condition. When the English established their factory at Tellicherry in 1683, the important principalities that became free from the kingdom of Kolathunad were Randuttara, Iruvazhinadu, Kurungothu, Cannanore, Kottayam, Kadathanad and some other small feudatories. Most of these principalities were under the administration of Nair chieftains. Randuttara was under the control of four important houses of Achanmar. The regions like Mavilayi, Chembilode, Iruveri, Makeri, Muzhiappilangad, Etakkad and Anjarakandy form important parts of this chiefdom.  

Six houses of Nambiar were the rulers of Iruvazhinadu. The modern amsams of Panur, Puthur, Triprangotur, Panniyanur, Perinkulam and Kariyad were part of this region. Kurungothu became a part of this territory. The later

104 Logan, Malabar..., p. 386.


106 Kurup, Tellicherry Factory..., pp. 37-54.
modern *amsams* of Kallayi and Olavilam were part of this chieftdom. Cannanore was under the control of Ali Raja, the Muslim chief. He had suzerainty over Laccadive Islands. Maldives were a tributary of the Ali Raja.\(^{107}\)

Kottayam was ruled over by Puranad Rajas. This was an independent principality in between Tellicherry and Waynad. During the British period this ruling family had a role in the war against English East India Company under the leadership of Pazhassi Raja.\(^ {108}\) The Raja of Kottayam minted a coin called *kottapanam* meaning coin of Kottayam against the will of Kolathiri.\(^ {109}\) The high quality pepper, turmeric and sandalwood produced in this area attracted European Companies to Kottayam. The items produced in this area were normally brought to the ports of Cannanore for delivery to the European port.\(^ {110}\) Later on the English at Tellicherry realized the accessibility of Kottayam from Tellicherry port and preferred it for their future trading activities.

Kadathanad, another important principality within Kolathunad, came under the administrative purview of *Vazhunnavar* of Vatakara. He accepted the suzerainty of Kolathiri. But in 1750 he became powerful even to assume the title ‘Raja’.\(^ {111}\)

\(^{107}\) Ismail, *Revenue Administration*..., p. 28


\(^{110}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{111}\) Ismail, *Revenue Administration*..., p. 29.
Among the chieftains of Kolathiri, Kurungothu Nair was not at first friendly with the English. He entered into conflict with the Company. The English settlement was under the administrative control of the Kurungottu Nair. Later the Nair and the Company fought against each other on the issue of the royalty of every trading vessel that anchored at Tellicherry. The Nair engaged in continuous war with the Company till 1719.\textsuperscript{112} Finally he made peace treaty with the English factors at Tellicherry.\textsuperscript{113}

The French settlement at Mahe near Tellicherry created future problems in Kolathunad. The French settlement at Mahe came within the limits of Kolathunad. The Kadathanad chief came into direct conflict with the French for the issue of the sale of pepper as mentioned earlier. Kottayam raja maintained good relation with the French at this time. So Kolathunad declared war with Kottayam Raja and the French at Mahe. The English factors gave support to Kadathanad in this issue. The Company sent a squadron of hundred Nairs for the sake of Kadattanad Raja’s issue. The Raja did not want the military assistance but monetary support. The continuous war emptied his treasury.\textsuperscript{114} Hence the chieftain of Kadathanad became the debtor to the English Company.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Kolaswaroopam had been divided into many branches. The internal quarrels became usual in family circle.

\textsuperscript{112} Logan, \textit{Malabar…}, p. 349.

\textsuperscript{113} Logan, \textit{A collection of Treaties…}, No.VI and VII, pp. 2-3.

\textsuperscript{114} Logan, \textit{A collection of Treaties…}, No. XIII, p. 7.
Therefore the rule of succession was sometimes violated. The most powerful member of the family sometimes peacefully or by force seized the reins of power.\textsuperscript{115} The company exploited the differences among the royal family members. On 17\textsuperscript{th} January 1750 Thamas Dorill succeeded Byfeld as the chief of Tellicherry. His personal estrangements with the then \textit{defacto} Prince Regent naturally turned the latter towards the French. Then again the Company's relation with the Prince Regent became strained. In April 1751 the chief of Tellicherry proceeded to Valarpattanam and requested the king to appoint Ambu Tamban as a new Prince Regent. In this issue the chief of Tellicherry Thomas Dorill entered into an agreement with Kolathiri in Valarpattanam.\textsuperscript{116} Similarly Prince Ambu Thampan agreed to maintain friendship with the English Company.\textsuperscript{117} The English thus interfered in the local political affairs and created differences in the family circles of Kolathiris.

In 1747 the Prince Regent claimed the property of a Nambiar who died without heir that included two \textit{desams} of Randuttara. According to the political system of Malabar, a share of the income of a subject who died without heir went to the ruler.\textsuperscript{118} The principality of Randuttara was under the control of the Acahnmar which they obtained from the English East India Company for 60,000

\textsuperscript{115} Logan, \textit{Malabar…}, p. 347.

\textsuperscript{116} Logan, \textit{A collection of Treaties…}, No. LXVI, p.44.

\textsuperscript{117} Logan, \textit{A collection of Treaties…}, No. LXV, p.43.

fanams\textsuperscript{119} and they obliged to pay the amount together with the interest for after every five year to the English. The influence of the Prince Regent Kunhi Ramar in the affairs of Randuttara strained the relation between him and the Achanmars. Byfeld, the chief of Tellicherry smoothly handled the situation. The cessation of hostilities with France had strengthened the position of the Tellicherry factors in Randuttara. The chief Byfeld persuaded the Prince Regent to sign an agreement on 10th January 1749. The Prince Regent agreed to become part of the agreement between the English factors and the Achanmars.\textsuperscript{120}

**Revenue of the Local Chieftains**

In the absence of a paramount power and presence of internal quarrels in the royal family of Kolathiri, his vassals were able to become independent. Hence the political system in Kolathunad was quasi-feudal in character. In Malabar the landholders lived as hereditary tenants and they employed serfs to cultivate the land. There was no payment of land revenue, rather they gave feudal services to their lord.

Like the governmental authority these feudal chieftains secured their income from their own private domains, estate properties, poll tax and professional taxes from their subjects. Moreover, royalties on certain spices of high quality like pepper and cardamom that were grown in their region, the vessels and ships stranded on the Coast, various occasional as well as festival

\textsuperscript{119} Logan, *A collection of Treaties*…, 31.

\textsuperscript{120} Logan, *A collection of Treaties*…, No. XLVI, P. 33.
contributions and various fees for protection were levied from dependants and strangers. Till the advent of Tipu Sultan this system continued in Malabar. After the Mysore invasion these landholders were compelled to pay the revenue or surrender their lands. In 1792 Thomas Munro was appointed in the service of Malabar for settling the revenue collections in Malabar and Canara. He was the first propounder of the ryotwari settlement in Malabar.

Marco Polo found that in the kingdom of Ezhimala, the native people looted and seized the ships which anchored on their way to other countries for trade. But they received the ships with great pleasure if it anchored in their port for commercial purposes. The custom of taking ships and cargoes of ships wrecked on the coast continued down to the British period. The English factors at Tellicherry entered into treaty with the local chieftains for exempting English vessels from such seizures.


122 Panikkar, Malabar and the Dutch…., p. 113.


124 Marco Polo, The Travels of Marco Polo the Venetian, (trans.) John Masefield, New Delhi, Asian Educational Services, 2003, p. 381.

125 Panikkar, Malabar and the Dutch…., p. 114.
**English Expansion in Kolathunad**

In the beginning of the English expansion in the sixteenth century they made alliances with the Dutch to protect their interests in the East. In 1619 they entered into a treaty. This treaty constituted what was termed as a “Council of Defenses” composed of equal number of members of both the companies to settle the proportion of naval and military force. In this settlement both the English and the Dutch contributed equally the necessary force for the protection of the common trade of both the nations. At the same time two thirds of the spice trade of the Moluccas was assigned to the Dutch and one third to the English. The speculation of disparity in this treaty practically made the two Companies politically equal but commercially unequal and this led to disharmony and even violence.\(^{126}\) In the beginning the English East India Company was first weakened by the license granted to individuals for private trade, contrary to the exclusive privileges of the Company.

In 1648 the Kolathiri offered all necessary arrangements for the English pepper trade in Kolathunad.\(^ {127}\) In a letter to the English dated 12\(^{th}\) April 1628, Kolathiri expressed his desire to invite English to Kolathunad.\(^ {128}\) But at that time the English was very cautious because of the presence of Portuguese at Goa. They were already engaged in capturing native junks from different parts of the Indian Ocean. From the sea coast of Kolathunad they captured native junks. The

\(^{126}\) *Annals of the Honorable East India Company* ...., p. 31.

native junks which they captured from the sea coast of Kolathunad then kept in
the bay at Ezhimala. At that time the English had a tiny centre of administration
at Valarpattanam.\textsuperscript{129}

From the last half of the seventeenth century onwards the English began to
conduct trade activities in Malabar. The Malabar rulers became very keen to help
them and were prepared to deal with them.\textsuperscript{130} Even from the early period the
English paid full market price for the commodities for attracting the traders.\textsuperscript{131}
They exempted all manufactured goods from duty.\textsuperscript{132} The company afforded all
facilities for shipping.\textsuperscript{133} The wise and liberal policies followed by the English
East India Company attracted both the native rulers as well as the local people.
This gave an impetus to the rapid development of the English in Kolathunad.

The commerce of the English East India Company was carried on in ships
of two descriptions. One of them was the property of the Company. The officers
of these ships were appointed by the Directors and could get promotion according
to their seniority.\textsuperscript{134} They were paid very small salaries but allowed to private

\textsuperscript{128} William Foster, \textit{The English Factories, 1624-1629}…, 1909, p. 261.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{130} Arsaratnam, \textit{Maritime India}…, p. 102
\textsuperscript{131} Innes, \textit{Madras}…, p. 52.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{134} \textit{The East India Company and the Maritime Services}, London, 1834, p. 10.
trade in the Eastern Seas. The other ships were the property of the private parties and were chartered by the Company for a certain number of voyages. The officials of these ships were appointed by the owners of the ships from a list of qualified persons.

Grigby, the English factory chief at Calicut, entered into an agreement with the king of Kolathunad for the establishment of a new factory at Valarpattanam, five miles north of Cannanore. The location for the factory was on a small hill, which the local people called kotta kunnu. The king also agreed to lower the custom duty to two and a half per cent on all goods bought and sold in Cannanore market and an annual subsidy of 200 sequins (ducats). A cousin of the Kolathiri was not in support of the English settlement at Valarpattanam. In 1671 three fourths of the Nair soldiers, who were the supporters of this prince made an attack on custom houses of Cannanore. The Prince feared an attack from the cousin of the king on the fort at Kotta Kunnu. So he arranged additional twenty Nairs for the protection of the fort. In August 1673 this Prince in charge of the place around the English factory at Valarpattanam deceased. Thus the

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136 *Maritime Services...*, p. 10.

137 Fawcett, *The English Factories*, I, p. 288


English factory suffered a lot by the death of this prince, a strong supporter from the royal family.\textsuperscript{140}

In Calicut the situation was not favourable to the Company where they seized a native ship of Sheik Marcar, a prominent merchant of Calicut. The Muslims numbered forty, headed by Kazi surrounded the English factory at Calicut.\textsuperscript{141} Thus a severe hostility developed between the English and the Muslims. The English felt uncomfortable and wanted to change their old factories and to find out new suitable places for their factory settlements. Kolathunad was a better producer of quality spices, especially pepper, cardamom and cinnamon and the custom duties and expenses were more affordable to the company in Kolathunad than in Calicut and Cochin. Even if the English decided to leave their factory at Valarpattanam, they preferred a suitable place under the administrative purview of Kolathunad. Thus in the Surat council they preferred Dharmadam as the best place for the establishment of a new factory in Kolathunad.\textsuperscript{142} It was only two and half league to the South of Cannanore.\textsuperscript{143}

Kolathunad provided two strategically important centres to the English – Tellicherry and Dharmadam. In 1682 they opened a factory in Tellicherry. Tellicherry was the nearest place on the coast from Waynad. The place in

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid, pp. 320-21.

\textsuperscript{141} Ibid, p. 322.

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid, p. 334.

\textsuperscript{143} Ibid, p. 334.
between Periya pass and Waynad produced the finest Cardamom in the world.\textsuperscript{144} Besides, the countries of Kottayam and Randuttara, the neighbouring regions of Tellicherry, were the best pepper producing areas of north Malabar.\textsuperscript{145} These places were not directly under the control of Kolathiri. In fact the English were more attracted to strategically important places like Tellicherry.

The migration of certain local Muslim traders from other parts of Kolathunad to Tellicherry showed the importance of that place during the English period. The best example for this is the migration of the local Muslim trader Aluppi Kakka from Chovva, five mile towards South-Eastern direction from Cannanore, to Tellicherry in the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{146} This was also indicative of the declining stage of Cannanore port in the sixteenth century and the rise of Tellicherry in its place as a major centre of commercial activities.\textsuperscript{147}

Consequently the English secured the consent from Vadakkilamkur, the prince regent and the \textit{de facto} ruler of Kolathunad to construct a fort at Tellicherry.\textsuperscript{148} Thus in 1708 A.D. the English built a fort in Tellicherry.\textsuperscript{149} The feudal chieftains of Kolathunad viewed the settlement of the English East India

\textsuperscript{144} Logan, \textit{Malabar}..., p. 347.

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{147} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{148} Issue of an order by Prince Vadakkilamkur of Pally Palace in 1708, No. III, Regional Archives Calicut (hereafter RAC), p. 2.

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid.
Company as a menace to their existence. They showed their resentment by leading an attack against the English in Tellicherry. Besides, Unamen Thampan,\textsuperscript{150} one junior prince of Kolathiri royal family caused some destruction to the Tellicherry factory. The English complained and the prince Vadakkilamkur again granted many more rights to the English East India Company around Tellicherry fort to ensure their protection.

The English settlement at Tellicherry became a threat to the Dutch in North Malabar. Tellicherry had more accessibility to the hinterlands of Western Ghats. So the merchants can easily bring cardamom, turmeric and many other items, which grew only in the foothills of Western Ghats, to Tellicherry than to Cannanore. Therefore, the establishment of English factory at Tellicherry became a death knell to the Dutch trade in Cannanore. Tellicherry had many advantages. It is near Waynad, the fertile hinterland of Kolathunad and Kottayam, an important marketing centre. That was why the English chose Tellicherry for their settlement. The strategical, commercial, geographical, and traditional importance of Tellicherry provided safe and secure commercial facilities to the English.

In 1734 the prince of Palli Kovilakam verified and confirmed the grants given by his predecessors to the company.\textsuperscript{151} He further extended the privileges to the English by issuing an order that granted the company the right to erect a

\textsuperscript{150} Thampan was a title belonging to the junior male member of the Kshatriya family. Unamen is the short form of Udaya Varman. The short forms like Unaman, Kunjoman, Kunjaru, etc were pet names of the princes, used only in the inside of the Palace.

\textsuperscript{151} Issue of an order by the the Prince of Palli Kovilakam, No. XXIII, RAC, p. 14.
fort at the entrance of the river Valarpattanam.\textsuperscript{152} This enabled the company to enjoy the exclusive tariff of pepper and cardamom. Besides, ‘Cunhamado’,\textsuperscript{153} another prince of Palli Kovilakam, also granted the company the right to build other forts at Edacau te, Maddacara (Madakkara) and Randuttara.\textsuperscript{154} Unlike other trading companies like the Portuguese and the Dutch, the English were lucky to secure a large number of privileges from the ruler of Kolathunad. In the seventeenth century disputes among the five branches were a regular feature of the Kolathiri royal family. The king was only a nominal head. His regents possessed more administrative powers.

In the eighteenth century the kingdoms of Kerala like Travancore, Kolathunad, Calicut and many other native rulers received English support to expel the Dutch and other foreign powers from Kerala. That shows the growing influence of the English on the native rulers of Kerala. Unlike the other pioneering companies, the English adopted friendly policies in Malabar. They maintained good relations with the local rulers and merchants. Nor did they impose their religious ideologies on native communities.

Besides, the Mysore invasion under Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan reduced the power and authority of the rulers of Malabar. Most of the rulers of Malabar took refuge in Travancore. In Kolathunad the whole branches of Kolaswaroopam

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{152} Ibid.}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{153} Cunhamado in British records. Most probably Kunjammavan in Malayalam.}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{154} Issue of a grant by prince Cunhamado of the Palli Palace in 1736, No. XXXI, RAC, p. 19.}
\end{footnotesize}
migrated to Travancore. During the time of anarchy in Kolathunad the English adopted a policy of neutrality. Then they were the ‘silent’ observers of the situation in north Malabar. Later by the treaty of Seringapatam signed on March 19, 1792, Tipu Sultan formally ceded Malabar to the English East India Company.\textsuperscript{155} Thus the hegemony of the Mysore rulers for over a quarter of the eighteenth century came to an end and the new phase of English expansion started in Malabar.

**Revenue Policies of the English after the Settlement with Tipu**

Thomas Munro, a cadet in the Madras army, was the real founder of the ryotwari settlement in Malabar. In 1792 he was employed in settling the revenue issues in Malabar which had been ceded by Tipu Sultan to Lord Cornwallis and there he formed his ideas of a direct settlement with individual land holders.\textsuperscript{156} The rulers of Malabar, who came back from Travancore, appealed for an annual pension from the English East India Company in return for the surrender of their kingdom to the Company. The British considered the appeal of the rightful sovereigns of Malabar. The government of Bombay appointed a commission for a complete enquiry into the affairs of Malabar.\textsuperscript{157} They appointed the senior merchant of Tellicherry Mr. Farmer and Major Dow, the commissioner of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{156} Wheeler, *India Under British Rule* ..., p. 133.
\item\textsuperscript{157} *Ibid.*
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Bombay for this purpose. They started their programme effectively with the blessings of Lord Cornwallis, the Governor General. The then Kolathiri had already conceded to the supremacy of the English East India Company. The English East India Company agreed his demands and allowed the Malikhana allowance of Rs. 25000 to the Kolaswaroopam. Of this amount Rs. 9000 for the Kolathiri himself, Rs. 3500 for Chirakkal Kovilakam branch, Rs. 500 for Udayamangalam branch and Rs. 12000 for all other branches.

As per the norms of the commission appointed by the government of Bombay, Ravi Varma Raja, the last ruler of the Kolathiri family entered into an agreement with the English East India Company. The treaty was signed by Kolathiri Ravi Varma Raja and the officials of the British government, William Gamual Farmer, Esquire and Major Dow on 12th October 1792.

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158 Ibid.

159 Ibid.

160 Ibid. p. 70.

161 It is an annual pension given by the British Government to the Royal Families of Kerala. Later the Government of India continued this system started by the English East India Company.

162 The branches of Kolaswaroopam received this amount from the Government of India. The eldest male member of the whole family receives the amount through the district collector of Kannur. Personal records of Ayillyamnal Kerala Varma, late member of Ennakkad Palace.

163 Personal records of Ayillyamnal Kerala Varma, late member of Ennakkad Palace.

164 The Treaty signed by the Ravi Varma Raja of Chirackal and the representatives of the English East India Company, No. LXXVIII, RAC, p. 370.
treaty Kolathiri Ravi Varma Raja ceded his kingdom to East India Company. Thus the Company became the rightful sovereign of Kolathunad.165

Conclusion

In short, the advent of the European trading companies changed the commercial as well as the political situations of Kolathunad. The traditional trade activities conducted by the Muslims, Malabar Chettis, Kanara Chettis, Guajaratis and some other Brahmin groups in Kolathunad continued until the last half of the eighteenth century. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the royal family of Kolathunad suffered from internal wars and intrigues. The survey and analysis conducted with the support of significant documents reveal the fact that, the beginning of colonial penetration started with the arrival of Vasco da Gama in the last decades of the fifteenth century, passed through the next three centuries under the control of other European Companies and finally in 1792 Malabar including Kolathunad became part of British colonial empire.

During the period of European ascendancy each European Country claimed monopoly over spices and introduced pass systems which curtailed the freedom of native traders. They entered into treaties and engagements with the rulers of Malabar as well as other European countries and authorities to protect their monopoly on Malabar spices and at the same time to guard the flow of commodities to Malabar from other parts of the world. In the sixteenth century,

165 Ibid.
Cannanore under the Portuguese and in the seventeenth century, Tellicherry and Mahe under the English and the French respectively, played a leading role in the trade of pepper and other spices in Kolathunad. The emergence of Cannanore as an international port-city and the selection of Tellicherry by the English in Kolathunad were important developments that happened during the colonial occupation.

The Portuguese and the English developed Cannanore and Tellicherry in Kolathunad as the best market places for Malabar spices, especially pepper. In the sixteenth century Kolathunad became a battle ground of European rival forces. The country witnessed the development of Portuguese trade, penetration of the Dutch over them, and a little effort made by the English and the French during the early part of the eighteenth century to occupy a firm footing in Kolathunad for the promotion of their trade activities by expelling the Portuguese and the Dutch from Cannanore. In this context we cannot deny the role played by the royal family of Kolathunad. The king and his nephews who acted as regents of the king and who exercised authorities over different spheres of administration invited the Europeans and granted them various concessions to develop the commercial activities on international standards as went on in their neighbouring country of Calicut under the Zamorin. Thus we conclude that the political system of Kolathunad had undergone convolutions during the time of European penetration and at last the Kolathunad polity disappeared under the English domination.