When the Europeans came to India, they partly tried to adjust themselves by giving presents and cajoling the local rulers as well as by using force to secure their cooperation. The latter helped them in materialising their covert desires. Among the Europeans, the Portuguese were the pioneers who reached India towards the closing years of the fifteenth century after the discovery of new sea route.

They had set up their factories and fortress in various parts of India and reaped huge profits through eastern trade. Further, the Portuguese tried to monopolise the entire spice trade on the Indian Ocean during the sixteenth century, particularly the Coromandel Coast. Subsequently, the Dutch entered into the Asiatic waters as a competitor to the Portuguese. The Dutch were quite successful in challenging the claim of the Portuguese and fought a number of naval battles. The English, Danes, and the French, after establishing their companies, entered into this subcontinent with the zeal to get a share in the Coromandel Coast trade by the turn of the seventeenth century. A glance at the existing milieu in connection with the political aspects will help a researcher in evaluating the impacts of the Dutch commercial trade competing with other Europeans nations in Coromandel Coast. An attempt has been made in the following pages to analyse these points.

The arrival of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean in 1498\(^1\) not only revealed the Indian Ocean to Europe, but revealed Europe to a new world, provoking a variety of local responses. To achieve trade between the Indian Ocean and Europe, the Portuguese, ironically, were forced to work within the old Indian Ocean trade

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network. The Portuguese, who had discovered the Cape route, promptly monopolised it and even asked the Pope to legitimise the arrangement. The result was that for a whole century, until this arrangement was successfully challenged by the Dutch and the English in the 1590s, the only merchant group engaged in trade between Europe and Asia along the all-water route was the Portuguese. The Portuguese claim to an armed domination of the maritime trade of the Indian Ocean found an even more striking expression in the instructions issued to Pedro Alvares Cabral, the commander of the fleet which sailed for India in 1500.

This maritime empire later acquired the name of Estado da India (State of India). Its commercial policy and political ideology have been studied intensely, though not always from the same point of view. In so far as the foreign trade of the Indian subcontinent is concerned, the aspirations and the activities of the Estado da India represented several institutional innovations founded on their imperial ambitions.

The Luso–Dutch conflict which extended from the close of the sixteenth century to the Hague Treaty of 1669 has been aptly described by C. R. Boxer as ‘the real First World War’. Portuguese and Dutch not only fought out their quarrels on the battlefields of three continents and on the waves of the seven seas. The beginning of the seventeenth century marked the zenith of the Portuguese Carreira da India.  

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* The Voyage from Portugal to India and India to Portugal via Cape of Good Hope.
trade. By the 1590s, the Dutch had emerged as a formidable menace to Portuguese commercial interests in the Cape region, India and Southeast Asia.

On 25 February 1603, the ship *Sta. Catarina* was attacked by two vessels under the command of Dutch Admiral Jakob van Heemskerk. The incident reflects a widely publicised step in what was to escalate into a more violent mood of hostility between the two seaborne Atlantic nations in Asia. By this time the Dutch policy against the Portuguese commercial empire in the Indies had crystallised into a definite plan. This was nothing less than the capture and destruction of the major strongholds controlling the trade routes. The plan took a long time to execute, but its goals were pursued with unremitting vigour and determination.

The Dutch attempt to dislodge the Portuguese from a position of power began with individual attacks on their shipping and was quickly extended to their possessions on land. Within a few years of its foundation, the United Company felt strong enough to undertake the blockade of Goa and Malacca from the sea. In the Spice Islands, *Amboina* was captured in 1605.

**Luso-Dutch Struggle in Southeast Coromandel Coast**

The struggle between the Portuguese and the Dutch East India Company (or VOC) of the southeast Coromandel Coast centred in essence on the Portuguese attempt to dislodge the Dutch from their fortress at Pulicat in central Coromandel.

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In about 1600, the settlement of Sao Tome de Meliapor was at the height of its importance as a commercial centre.\textsuperscript{14} It was an open settlement, without walls and open on the land side as well as to the sea.

It comprised at least two distinct quarters, of which one was largely inhabited by private Portuguese (perhaps some six hundred in number), mestizos, and Armenians, with imposing houses built of stone, and dominated by the church of Nossa Senhora da Luz. The other quarter was separated from the first by a tiny stream; this was the principal Hindu settlement, in which one finds resident the adhikari, representative of Vijayanagara, who collected customs duties at the port.\textsuperscript{15}

Hence, in 1605, when the Dutch entered the Coromandel scene, they found a balance of forces: Portuguese power on certain limited sea lanes against the still overwhelming military superiority of the local political structure over settlements like Sao Tome and Nagapattinam.\textsuperscript{16}

The first Dutch ship actually to reach Coromandel was the VOC yacht Delft from the fleet of Admiral Steven van der Hagen, which made at least three voyages to the coast from Aceh in 1605–1606. On its first voyage, the Delft seems to have made straight for Masulipatnam,\textsuperscript{17} but on its second foray (in early 1606) it passed along the length of the coast, captured a ship near Nagapattinam and arrived off Sao Tome on 25 April. The Dutch made their intentions clear directly by capturing three merchant vessels anchored off the beachfront; despite the pleadings of the

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid.} pp.195-196.
owners, the Delft’s commander burnt two of the ships, and then proceeded to Pulicat. Here, arriving on the night of 26 April, the Dutch were cordially received and they negotiated for several days with the Shalibandar and other local officials, seeking a factory site. However, the negotiations bore no fruit, partly on account of the overly suspicious attitude of the Dutch and partly due to the considerable Jesuit influence at the Chandragiri court\(^\text{18}\). Following this incident, for several years the VOC had no direct access to Pulicat or to the central Coromandel textile-producing region. In 1608, the Dutch resumed attempts to settle factories in southern and central Coromandel. The Dutch factor Jacob de Bitter\(^\text{19}\) successfully negotiated in November 1608 for a factory site at Devanampattinam, in the territory of the Nayaka of Senji. Through Senji\(^\text{20}\), the VOC gained access to the courts of Velur and Chandragiri\(^\text{21}\), and this at a time when it appears that the Jesuits were in disfavour there. Thus, with no countervailing influence of significance at Venkata II’s\(^\text{22}\) court, the Dutch in April 1610 obtained permission to settle at Pulicat. On settling their factory at Pulicat, the VOC commenced directly to procure textiles in the weaving villages of the vicinity. Several Company employees were left to reside in the port, in a house that was only superficially fortified, since the Dutch had no permission at the time to build a fortress.\(^\text{23}\)

By 1610, Venkata II, the titular Vijayanagara emperor and Chandragiri raja, was already some seventy years of age, and his death was expected at any moment. The situation in the court and in the central Coromandel plain was seething with tension, since no clear succession had been established; two clear factions existed, one


\(^{19}\) K.A. Nilakanda Sastri, *Further Sources of Vijayanagara History*, Madras, University of Madras, 1946, p.263.


dominated by Velugoti Yachama Nayaka, who had proved a successful field commander in the wars of the decade 1600 to 1610, the other by Gobhuri Jagga Raya. The Portuguese of Sao Tome maintained closed contact with Yachama Nayaka and with Narpa Raju (Nararrajao), a brother-in-law of Venkata, whom they hoped might help them in their attempt to remove the Dutch factory at Pulicat. To counter Portuguese influence, two VOC missions were sent to Velur soon after the factory at Pulicat was set up, in May and August 1610 and on the latter occasion the Dutch were actually requested by Venkata, at Portuguese bidding, to move to another site. This they refused to do, having already beaten back a desultory attempt in May by Portuguese shipping to attack them at Pulicat.24

The Dutch for their part were more worried by problems in Golconda25 than at Pulicat. The new director, Wemmer van Berchem, and his predecessor Jan van Wesick26 ignored the protests of the Pulicat factor, Adolf Thomasz, and left there for Masulipatnam; thus, when a summons arrived from Velur demanding the presence of a VOC representative at the court to answer certain Portuguese accusations, there was no one at Pulicat to make a counter-representation at court. It seemed to the Dom Frey Sebastiao de sao pedro Bishop of Sao Tome that the time was ripe for a strike; Dutch credit at the court was low, and the prevailing political uncertainty could be relied upon to divert attention from intra-European rivalry. Thus it was that on 12 June, the Dutch factory at Pulicat was surprised by a force of Portuguese and mesticos including the Bishop Dom Frey Sebastiao de sao pedro in a motley fleet comprising a galliot, a champana, and twenty-five small coastal vessels. This fleet entered the Pulicat River, attacked the Dutch factory, which despite its not being

24 Ibid.p.198.
26 Om Prakash, The Dutch Factories in India 1617-1623 A Collection of Dutch East India Company Documents Pertaining to India, New Delhi, Munshiram Manoharal Publishing Pvt Ltd, 1989, p.70.
seriously fortified, put up strenuous resistance for several hours. Finally the Portuguese entered the premises, where in their own words they encountered a good prize of patacas (gold coins), rials of eight, cloves, mace, sandal, tin, sulphur, arms, silks, textiles, artillery, etcetera. In the encounter, two or three Dutchmen were killed and some others, including the factor, Adolf Thomasz, were carried off to Sao Tome. As for the Portuguese, they burnt down the factory and returned to Sao Tome, ‘where they were received with great joy and celebration’. They also had the relief of knowing that once again, their anchorage was free, and theirs to use.27

The VOC’s director of the Coromandel Coast factories, Wemmer van Berchem, sailed into Pulicat only in November 1612 and inspected the burnt-down factory site. We have noted how at least a part of the blame for the debacle of June must fall on his shoulders. Equally, one must give him credit for the recovery affected by the VOC in Pulicat. During the Portuguese action at Pulicat in June 1612, an army led by Obba Raja, described as the ‘chief field-general of the King’ of Velur, had been present in the vicinity but had taken no action. This we can attribute both to local indecision on account of the factional infighting and to real disgruntlement over the Dutch decision not to answer a summons from Velur. At any rate, it was clear enough to Venkata as indeed to all factions that the balance between Dutch and Portuguese was an important card to be played, so that when van Berchem landed at Pulicat, he was fairly well received. The director made his way to the Velur court, where with a lavish display of presents, he was able to obtain a far stronger concession than that in 1610. Importantly, he was also able to have it confirmed by both factions, not only the King and Narpa Raju, but Jagga Raya and his brother Eti Raja, who were in control of important palaiyams in the Pulicat region, including the major fort of Ramagiridurgam.28

The new grant, of 12 December 161229, gave the Dutch the right to maintain a fort at Pulicat, to be constructed by Venkata’s chief queen Erravi30 at her expense, and various other rights, some of which deviated significantly from those granted in 1610. Perhaps the most important of these was that the Velur authorities now specifically ceased to take upon themselves the business of maintaining peace between Dutch and Portuguese. The Dutch, it was stated, may ‘attack, capture, and enter hostilities in the road of Pulicat, San Tome and other ports and places of the said King with Portuguese ships and goods, without any objection being raised or any force being used [against the Dutch by local forces]’. The justification given for this was that the Portuguese in India did not honour the truce signed between the King of Spain and the States-General of the Netherlands. Thus, in early 1613, the construction began of the Dutch Casteel Geldria,31 which in the six decades following was to be the Dutch headquarters on Coromandel, as well as a major centre for the procurement of the Pintado32 textiles, so much in demand in the VOC’s Archipelago trade33.

In fact, in late 1612 and early 1613, while Van Berchem was in the process of negotiating with Gobburi Jagga Raya34, he encountered two Brahmin intermediaries sent from San Tome, who promised Jagga Raya 100,000 varahas if he would withdraw his support from the Dutch. This attempt failed, however, and by 1613,

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29 Sinnappah Arasaratnam, Merchants, Companies and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast 1600 -1740, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1986, p.64.
32 Vijaya Ramaswamy, Textiles and Weavers in South India, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2006, p.64.
both Goa and Lisbon had arrived at the same conclusion: that the Pulicat enterprise\textsuperscript{35} was much too serious a business to be left to the Portuguese settled on Coromandel. In the Council of State at Goa, it was decided that the Estado should adopt as one of its highest priorities the expulsion of the Dutch from Pulicat once and for all; Pulicat was described as the \textit{chave do Sul} (the key to the Southeast Asian region), a phrase that was to be repeated ad nauseum in subsequent years.

In 1616 William Methwold, the English traveller, observed that the Dutch in Pulicat were like a bad neighbour to the Portuguese settlement in San Thome.\textsuperscript{36} On 27 January 1616, the Dutch once again laid siege to San Thome and returned to Pulicat without success. “The Portuguese attacked the Dutch in Pulicat in 1617 and this time they burnt two marakkayar ships that helped the Dutch to carry on trade from Pulicat.” Thus the Dutch–Portuguese rivalries around Pulicat continued till 1619.\textsuperscript{37}

Nagapattinam was the first port that the Portuguese encountered on Coromandel\textsuperscript{38}. The Portuguese in the 1590s settled to the south of Cuddalore in a port to which they gave the name Porto Novo\textsuperscript{39}. In this they were encouraged by Muttu Krishnappa\textsuperscript{40}, the Nayaka ruler of Chingee who controlled the region. Porto Novo is located at the mouth of the Vellar, one of the relatively minor rivers that intersect the Coromandel plain on their way to the Bay of Bengal. The port has two

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other names, the one *Parangippattai*\textsuperscript{41} (usually translated as Europeans town, but in fact “Franks” town, with *Frank* here to be understood as Portuguese), in Tamil, and the other Muhammad Bandar,\textsuperscript{42} as it is termed by the Muslim traders resident there.

In this sense, the emergence of Porto Novo on the Coromandel scene as a major ‘country trading’ port (in the sense of being used by non-Company shipping) was scarcely the result of an overnight change or a commercial explosion.\textsuperscript{43} The period from 1610 to 1660 was characterised by the intermittent hostility between the Dutch Company and the Portuguese settled in the region.

Antonio Coelho, a fidalgo,\textsuperscript{*} was appointed in 1621 as Captain in San Thome and was vested with the responsibility of ousting the Dutch from Pulicat. This is evident from a letter dated 24 February 1621, requesting the support of a big armada to counter the growing Dutch influence in the Coromandel. He informed how aggressive the Dutch were and further lamented that the Dutch were indulging in intrigues in order to sow the seeds of suspicion in the minds of local rulers about the Portuguese as well as among Muslims and Hindu traders. The Dutch in the meanwhile attacked San Thome in August 1623. Some Portuguese soldiers were sent from Kochi to join the ships of the Coromandel to fight the Dutch.\textsuperscript{44} The Dutch, however, captured San Thome in August 1623 and this was possible because there was no proper administration in the settlement with virtual anarchy all around. The Portuguese felt the need to appoint a fidalgo to enforce law and order among the Portuguese residents. However, the Dutch were in occupation of San Thome only


\textsuperscript{*}Petty noble man or a Portuguese gentleman, literally “son of a some body”.

for a short period as the settlement was recaptured by the Portuguese on 23 September 1623.\textsuperscript{45}

Diogo de Mello de Castro was appointed Captain of San Thome in 1625. To attack the Dutch in Pulicat in 1627, he mobilised a contingent of 200 men and a few ships in Mylapore. The money required for the purpose was remitted on 4 April 1627 to India from Portugal for equipping an armada in the Coromandel. The forces mobilised were not found adequate to face the attacks from the Dutch side. In a letter written to Filipe III (1621–1640)\textsuperscript{46}, the king of Portugal, by the Viceroy of Goa in 1628, it was said that an armada was sent to San Thome of Mylapore to fight the Dutch. The Viceroy further stated that he had spent 20,000 pagodas\textsuperscript{*} (equal to 60,000 xerafins\textsuperscript{**}) to take the Dutch settlement of Pulicat. By way of further assistance he sought sanction for an additional 12,000 pagodas from the King.\textsuperscript{47}

Further, the salary for the Portuguese army and additional expenses incurred in the Coromandel was also passed by the Revenue Council of India in Goa on 9 March 1629\textsuperscript{48}. Accordingly on 20 March 1629, 12,000 pagodas were given to Diogo de Melle de Castro, the Captain of San Thome towards the expenditure to be incurred in connection with the attack of the Dutch fort of Pulicat.

In the 1630s the power of the Portuguese was definitely in decline throughout Asia and an attack on Nagapattinam by the Nayak of Tanjore in 1632\textsuperscript{49} further

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{45} S. Jeyaseela Stephen, \textit{Loc.cit}.p.175.
  \item \textsuperscript{46} Ibid.pp.175-176.
  \item * The local name of the gold coin called pagoda by the Europeans was varaha or hun.
  \item ** Standard silver coin of Portuguese India valued at 300 reis. The word xerafins derived from Persian ashraf which meant gold coin weighting 150 grains.
  \item 49 V. Vriddhagirisansan, \textit{The Nayaks of Tanjore}, New Delhi, Asian Educational Services, 1995, p.95.
\end{itemize}
weakened their position in Coromandel. The regular cruising of the Dutch ships against the Portuguese along the Coromandel and Ceylon coasts yielded a large and steady income. The booty seized from Portuguese ships during 1630–1632 was valued at 24,851 florins, while during the same period the Dutch suffered a total loss of 1,260 florins through Portuguese counter-cruising. One Domingos de Camara succeeded Diogo de Mello de Castro as Captain of San Thome on 11 February 1632. Although various captains were appointed from time to time, they were not successful in dislodging the Dutch from Pulicat as the Dutch commerce was growing well. In the meanwhile (on 23 June and on 29 July 1634) the Bishop of Mylapore wrote two letters to the Viceroy giving an appraisal of the Dutch affairs in the fort of Pulicat and also about the Portuguese.

As the Portuguese were desperately in need of the support of the king of Vijayanagara to drive the Dutch away from Pulicat, they approached Venkata III (1630–1641), the ruler of Vijayanagara in 1633 by sending Fr. Alexio Mexia, the Jesuit in San Thome. He pleaded with the king of Vijayanagara on behalf of the Portuguese Captain of San Thome to return the Dutch fort in Pulicat to the Portuguese. On hearing from Fr. Alexio Mexia that the king favoured the Portuguese, the Captain of San Thome sent rich presents to the king of Vijayanagar.

In order to drive away the Dutch, an agreement was signed between Conde de Linhares (1629–1635), the Portuguese Viceroy and Venkata III, the king of Vijayanagara. The king assured to assist the Portuguese by mobilising forces and attacking the Dutch settlement of Pulicat from the land while the Portuguese were to launch the attack from the sea. The Portuguese in return promised to pay the king

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of Vijayanagra 30,000 xerafins, twelve horses, and six elephants for the assistance to be extended by the king. A fleet of twelve ships was sent by the Portuguese to attack the Dutch settlement of Pulicat. Necessary ammunition, horses and elephants were agreed to be given and they were also received at San Thome. It was also decided to attack the Dutch on 17 March 1635. The Portuguese Viceroy ordered the aldermen of Nagapattinam on 17 March 1635 to join the armada to attack Pulicat. The King of Vijayanagara, however, failed to act according to the agreement. The Dutch had easy access to San Thome since their merchants were trading there, which helped them to know what was happening there. Therefore, the Viceroy Dom Filipe Mascarenhas (1641-1651), in a letter addressed to Antinio Amaral de Meneses, the Captain of San Thome, ordered that all the Dutch merchants who had been permitted to trade in San Thome should be driven out. However, the knowledge the Dutch already had about the Portuguese settlement helped them to put it to good use. The Dutch attacked San Thome in 1641 in retaliation for disturbing their commercial operations in the port of Pulicat. The Portuguese Captain of San Thome, however, joined hands with the Dutch and this made the Portuguese Viceroy to write that year that he (the Captain of Mylapore) seemed more a factor of the Dutch than an officer of Your Majesty. Thus the Portuguese settlement of San Thome had to struggle for its own survival against the Dutch.53

Joaode Sousa Pereira, the next captain of San Thome in his letter dated 4 December 1642 to the Viceroy of Goa requested that a garrison be kept at San Thome as a precautionary measure to face the attacks of the Dutch who had planned to capture the town in the near future. The Portuguese who had been trading on the Coromandel Coast could not tolerate the Dutch for cornering away a substantial portion of their profit from trade. The Dutch hostility towards the Portuguese in

course of time was not confined only to San Thome but spread all over the Portuguese settlements on the coast.54

With the end of the Ten Years Peace in 1652, Nagapattinam was once again in a precarious position, with the Dutch making concerted attempts to capture the port and with no aid forthcoming from Goa. Thus on 23 July 1658, facing the prospect of bombardment by a Dutch fleet under Jan van der Laan, the Portuguese surrendered their fort and agreed to leave the town on condition of being allowed to carry their moveable possessions and families with them. And so it might be argued, with Sao Tome no longer a seriously functioning port and Nagapattinam in Dutch hands, the independent trade of the Portuguese on Coromandel came to an end.55 Not satisfied with the capture of Nagapattinam, Laurens Pit and Rijcklof van Goens colluded in 1661 to conquer San Thome before the peace with Portugal was concluded in Europe. But the news somehow leaked out and San Thome was taken under the protection of the Golconda king, who sternly warned the Dutch against any attack on his proteges. The Company, therefore, had to change its tactics and after some negotiation Qutb Shah agreed to expel the Portuguese from San Thome and permit the Dutch to establish a factory there. Accordingly in April 1662 General Neknam Khan laid siege to the town, while the Dutch on their own initiative sent three ships to block the sea-passage so that the Portuguese were forced to surrender on 1 May 1662. But the Golconda authorities ignored the assistance given by the Dutch and the only advantage which the latter derived from the whole business was the final expulsion of the Portuguese from the coast as a political power. Later when Golconda got into trouble with the Goa authorities over the question of San Thome and Qutb Shah’s ships were attacked in the Arabian Sea, the Company’s help was sought on the false plea that the Portuguese settlement had been conquered really for

54 Ibid.
the sake of the Dutch. The Company evaded such requests and decided not to open a factory at San Thome. By 1667 the Portuguese definitely gave up all ideas of recapturing the town. Most of the old settlers now took shelter at Madras or Porto Novo and from there carried on a certain amount of trade, mainly with Sumatra and Siam. But its volume was not large enough to cause any serious worry to the Company. By the mid-1660 the Portuguese had ceased to be a factor in Coromandel trade so far as the Dutch were concerned.

The Anglo-Dutch Rivalry

The Dutch–Portuguese relations on the coast more overtly hostile, the competition with the English East India Company implied a far more serious threat to the Dutch East India Company’s commercial interests.

As early as 1611 the English East India Company had established a factory at Masulipatnam and, a little later, also opened trade at Petapuli. In June 1613 an English ship, the Globe, visited Pulicat in the quest of trade but had to leave disappointed as van Berchem reminded the local authorities of the exclusive trading rights already granted to the Dutch. In other places the Dutch tried to buy up all available cargo as far as practicable before the arrival of the English ships, but were often hindered in this effort by the inadequacy of their capital resources. The order of the States General, however, required them to follow a friendly policy and not to obstruct in any way the trade of the English. Van Berchem promised to abide by this order though he would have preferred to oppose the establishment of any further English factories in Coromandel. The conflict between state policy and local commercial interests, a familiar and determining influence in the history of European trade with Asia in the seventeenth century, thus, became evident even in the initial stage of the Dutch Company’s activities in Coromandel.

In 1617–1618, the English were in despair over the trade prospects in Coromandel, which the Court of Directors considered “distasted as unprofitable”. Yet at times the Dutch felt rather badly the pressure of English competition. The rivalry of the two companies forced up the price of indigo at Masulipatnam and gave the Indian cultivators and middlemen a superior bargaining position until an agreement between the English and the Dutch altered the situation.

While the rivalry between the English and Dutch companies in Asia was plagued by outright commercial wars like the frequent conflicts in the European theatre, the Dutch were tenacious in their efforts to eliminate foreign competitors from the Spice Islands of Indonesia.\textsuperscript{57}

The Dutch had stressed the principle of the freedom of the seas. Their great legal luminary, Hugo Grotius, had published his famous book \textit{Mare Liberum} in 1609, but only a few years later he was sent to London to defend the Dutch claim to the exclusive control of the Indonesian Spice Islands\textsuperscript{58}. In November 1617 the Dutch declared war on the English in the Moluccas, Banda and Amboina, the Company followed a policy of cautious vigilance on the coast, and there were no actual hostilities. In fact the Coromandel factors, with their hands sufficiently full with the Portuguese, would have preferred more friendly relations with the English. Their earlier eagerness to expel the English at gunpoint checked by a contrary state policy had given place to a willingness to co-exist at a time when the two nations were at war. The Dutch Company, conscious of the power of their rivals, was evidently seeking the establishment of a limited dual control on the buyer’s market, which


would have eminently served its ultimate purpose of reducing the bargaining power of local suppliers and eliminated the effects of powerful competition.

In June 1619 a ‘Treaty of Defence’ terminated the Anglo-Dutch war and inaugurated a partial partnership between the two companies. Among other things, the companies were to share the trade of Pulicat as also the expenses of Fort Geldria. A detailed agreement to regulate the Pulicat trade and joint management of the fort was drawn up at Batavia in April 1621 and on 9 June 1621, the English came to the southern port, abandoning their Petapuli factory in order to reduce expenses.60

Naturally, such co-partnership could not run for long, as it affected the very basis of the role of merchant capital. Ousting of one from the field of “business” evidently remained the historical course for the other.61

The English in the East also felt that this co-operation with a powerful rival would only mean numerous encumbrances and surrender of legitimate rights. As early as March 1622 the English Council at Batavia reported to London that the partnership with the Dutch in Coromandel was working very badly and asked the home authorities to “consider whether to be free from them may not be more beneficial for your trade than to live under their subjection and take their leavings”.62

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The ‘massacre of Amboyana’\textsuperscript{63} and the subsequent withdrawal of the English from the Moluccas, Siam and elsewhere practically closed for the English many markets for Coromandel cloth in Southeast Asia. The authorities in London were now inclined to listen to their subordinates’ plea for the termination of the Anglo-Dutch partnership in Coromandel and on 1 July 1623 the English withdrew from Pulicat.\textsuperscript{64}

In 1624, an attempt was made from Batavia to open up trade on the Indian littoral in the territory of Thanjavur Nayak. This venture was prompted by the report of that district given by an Englishman, John Johnson, who had come out in one of the Danish ships. As a result an expedition was arranged to Thanjavur, under captain Bickley and Joseph Cockram to make investments in pepper, calico and other commodities. But the experiment proved to be a failure because of the bribes given by the Danes, and when the English refused to fulfil the demand of 7,000 rials to use the port of Karaikal. So the negotiation failed.\textsuperscript{65}

The policy now recommended by Batavia to Coromandel was to leave the English in peace “so long as they do not first give trouble”. But in matters of trade the Dutch tried to oust the English from the Coromandel spice market by undercutting prices. Only the price of pepper was kept high enough to prevent the English from buying up supplies for Europe. \textsuperscript{66}English attempts to open a new factory in south Coromandel, at Pondicherry, were foiled through the influence of the Company’s middleman, Malaya. In 1626 the English received the assistance of a


local headman known as Armuga Mudaliar\textsuperscript{67} to acquire the settlement at Armagon (Durgarazpatnam)\textsuperscript{68} securing the right to establish a factory,\textsuperscript{69} to the exclusion of their rivals, despite Dutch machinations.

Armagon soon threatened to grow into a serious rival of Pulicat, and the English efforts to draw away the textile manufacturers from the latter place were successful to some extent. But through shortage of capital they failed to provide adequate employment for the textile workers thus lured away. The weavers of Armagon had to secure permission from their nayak to work for the Dutch in order to maintain themselves. In 1629 there was a serious danger of armed conflict between the two nations when the English forced provision boats sailing from Orissa to Pulicat to go to Armagon instead. This was stopped only when the Dutch offered the Indian boats the protection of their armed frigates. The same year the Dutch and the English were forced to co-operate at Masulipatnam in the face of a common danger. But such an alliance, forced by exigencies of circumstance, was essentially temporary.\textsuperscript{70}

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Dutch enjoyed a position of distinct advantage over their European rivals in Coromandel. The English with their limited resources and comparative inexperience were still lagging far behind. The Dutch had arrived on the scene a few years earlier and, profiting by this fact, now jealously guarded their trade secrets.\textsuperscript{71}

\textsuperscript{69} William Foster, \textit{The English Factories in India 1655-1660}, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1921, p.34.
The relationship between the two companies continued to be friendly, but there was a strong undercurrent of hostility, especially after the conclusion of the Anglo-Portuguese treaty of 1635. 72 The Portuguese in fact expected the English cooperation in a mutual offence/defence alliance against the Dutch. On his arrival in 1633, William Methwold as the president at Surat requested the assistance of Father Alavaco Tavares, Provincial of the Jesuits at Daman, for an agreement between the two parties. The famine of 1630–1632 created an alarm in the minds of the English and in January 1635 Methwold visited Goa for negotiations with the Portuguese authorities and at last on 10 January an accord was signed. The agreement brought out friendly relations between the two and a union of arms against the common enemies in India. 73 The Dutch suspected that the English were plotting against them with the Portuguese and had a hand in their troubles with the sar-i-khail. But the techniques adopted by the Dutch in their rivalry with the English were mainly commercial rather than political or military in nature, and centred in efforts to prevent their competitors from procuring Coromandel cloth with a view to undermining their spice trade.

The English had adequate capital which, however, was not a frequent occurrence at this stage: they, like the Asian merchants, would purchase cloth somewhat indiscriminately in order to capture the market and prices went up in consequence, to the great inconvenience of the Dutch. 74 At times, the Company used its political influence to exclude its competitors from the cloth market and for quite some time the Pulicat region, which was farmed out to Malaya’s relations, was out of bounds to the English, whose contract with the Kanchipuram weavers for procuring

cloth was also undermined through Dutch intrigues. Lack of capital hampered all English efforts to counteract such hostile manoeuvrings and in 1640, the year in which the Madras factory was established by the English, the Coromandel factors, while fully aware that English trade might seriously affect their position in future, confidently reported to Batavia that they had little to fear until their rivals had more capital.

The Dutch factors of Pulicat, writing early in 1641, stated that the English settlement, which formally consisted of fifteen to twenty fishermen’s huts had then about seventy or eighty houses, occupied by persons driven from San Thome and neighbouring towns by bad trade or by hope of employment in Madras.

On August 1641, Day left for England. It was during Day’s absence that Andrew Cogan (Chief of Masulipatnam) transferred the seat of Agency from Masulipatnam to Fort St. George on 24 September 1641. Thus, Madras became the chief agency of English factories on the Coromandel Coast and Andrew Cogan became its first agent.

The danger of increasing English investments on the coast took quite some time to materialise. Meanwhile the superior resources of the Dutch frustrated all efforts of the English Company to extend its trade southwards and were often a serious hindrance to the procuring of return cargo. The English factories in Coromandel did their best to maintain a hold on the market and enjoyed a short-lived advantage in north Carnatic during the Company’s troubles with Chinanna in

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During 1649 to 1652, the Dutch records report an improvement in the state of English trade on the coast, but as the English themselves recognised, it was “of small consequence in respect of the Dutches vast traffique in these parts.”

The position of the English in Coromandel deteriorated considerably after 1652, despite the fact that for a time they enjoyed a certain advantage over the Dutch, thanks to their friendly relations with Mir Jumla. In 1653–1654, all English factories on the coast excepting Masulipatnam and St. George were abandoned as being unprofitable. Early in 1653 the news of the Anglo-Dutch War in Europe reached Coromandel and though no actual hostilities took place on the east coast, the English ships practically stopped sailing for fear of the Dutch until peace was once more established in November 1654. During 1657–1658, the English Company’s troubles with Mir Jumla, which led to actual attacks on Madras, further helped the Dutch to maintain their ascendancy. The principal events of 1663 were the conclusion of peace between England and Holland, the death of Nawab Mir Jaffar and negotiations with his successor (Shah Abdullaah of Golconda) Neknam Khan.

Anglo-Dutch rivalry in Coromandel was not confined to the sphere of commerce in this period. In August 1665 Batavia communicated to the coast factors the news of the outbreak of the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665–1667) with

79 Ibid.
80 Ibid. pp.xxv-xxvi.
instructions to do all possible damage to the enemy. But three yachts sent from Pulicat under Peter de Lange to capture the English ships, anchored off Madras, merely succeeded in seizing near Masulipatnam a small ship belonging to an English private trader. This action was taken by the Golconda authorities as an unlawful violation of the peace of the harbour and temporarily involved the Dutch in serious difficulties. But Batavia was inclined to ignore the warnings of Indian powers against hostilities in their harbours or near their coasts. Accordingly, in June 1666 the Dutch ships posted near Madras to keep watch on enemy shipping pursued an English ship, the Constantinople Merchant, to the harbour of Masulipatnam with the intention of capturing it. As the Masulipatnam factors feared an attack on the Dutch factory by the numerically superior English garrison, Pulicat decided to postpone any decisive action until further orders from Batavia. But the officers responsible for this decision were subsequently summoned to Batavia to answer charges of disobeying instructions. This measure was partly meant to impress the Golconda authorities with the seriousness of the Company’s intentions against the English, and the accused were eventually acquitted. In 1668, instructions received from Holland again enjoined that enemy shipping should be attacked in neutral harbours, but much to the relief of the Coromandel factors, the news of peace with England came soon afterwards.\footnote{S. Krishnaswami Aiyanger, ‘The Character and Significance of the Foundation of Madras’, \textit{The Madras Tercentenary Commemoration} Volume, eds., Madras, Asian Educational Services, 1939, p.48.}

by this success, the Coromandel factors now fully approved of Batavia’s recommendation that in time of war no heed should be paid to Golconda’s prohibition of hostilities in her waters. But no further hostilities with the English took place before the termination of the war in 1674.88

By the late seventies the situation had definitely changed in favour of the English. The Dutch, now inadequately supplied with capital, had to depend on credit for a large part of their business. The English, on the other hand, were supported by increasing supplies of capital from home and could afford to make large purchases for Europe. In 1678, for instance, the capital imported by the English, as estimated by the Company, amounted to 3,000,000 florins besides 600,000 imported by the private traders; the capital supplied to the Dutch factories for the same year was probably around 2½ million florins. By now, the Dutch openly admitted that the ascendancy in the Coromandel trade had passed to the English. The situation had two particular implications for the Dutch Company. First, they could no longer procure from Coromandel cloth of the right quality in adequate quantity and warnings to the middlemen prohibiting the supply of cloth to the English directly or indirectly was of no avail. The Masulipatnam market was now fully under English control, while the Dutch Company was heavily in debt there. A second consequence of the English ascendancy on the coast was that the Dutch were also ousted from the market for Coromandel cloth in Europe. The English procured new varieties of patterned piece-goods in accordance with samples sent from Europe. Dutch efforts to follow their example were handicapped by inadequacy of capital. Samples of guinea cloth purchased by the English on the coast were sent to Holland in 1681 to see whether they would secure enough profits. But the profits fetched by this item, 35% on the unbleached and 63% on the bleached varieties, were considered inadequate,

and it was decided to stick to the usual purchases which gave more profit. Later, in 1683, the policy was modified to some extent and the purchase of the comparatively less profitable varieties authorised, in order not to cede the European market entirely to the English. The English private traders and interlopers, particularly the latter, who were satisfied with even lower rates of gross profit per unit than the English Company, were considered the most dangerous competitors of the Dutch. As a net result of this increased capital investment by their rivals, the Dutch entirely lost their control over the Coromandel market.

The two major European powers on Coromandel, the English and the Dutch, reacted in broadly similar ways to the political turmoil and the opportunities it provided. The hinterland powers also reacted to both these European powers in a similar manner. Both European powers were ready to defend their trading privileges through every change and, in the process, to expand on their privileges and their presence. As will be seen later, this did not necessarily lead to an increase in trade and investment; in fact the contrary may be argued, but it certainly led to an increase in physical presence and military power. The English liked to contrast their own reliance on the protection of Asian rulers, on negotiated trading contracts, and open competition with Asian or other European merchants with the violent coercion and enforced monopolies allegedly practised by the Portuguese and the Dutch. In 1685 the English Company asked whether the Dutch have not ‘killed thousands of Indians for one that ever dyed by the English hands’. At the beginning of seventeenth century, the Dutch were by far the better poised to expand their trade into a political presence. But by the end of the seventeenth century they were stretched to the limit

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in Asian waters and they decided to concentrate their energies on the southernmost part, adjacent to the island of Ceylon.

The central and northern Coromandel now free for them, the English, after problems with the eastern trade monopoly brought about by the revolution of 1688 and the change of government, were now better able to back up their trade with armed power. Fort St George, from being a besieged outpost unrelated to its hinterland now became a centre for a landward thrust, a thrust aided and abetted by elements in local society, though also opposed by others. The Dutch, though presented with similar opportunities in Pulicat, did not seize them but retreated to the isolation of their fort and declined in influence and in commerce in north and central Coromandel. Their areas of expansion were Nagapattinam and south-westwards, in the Bay of Madura and the Palk Straits, where they had emerged by 1740 as the dominant coastal power.91

The change in the position of the Company vis-a-vis the English was not the result of any basic alteration in the economic situation or the pattern of trade. Formerly, the Dutch with their larger capital and their command over the Southeast Asian market had an advantage over their rivals. Their chief weakness then, as later, was the heavy burden of administrative and military expenses which forced them to trade exclusively for a high margin of gross profit per unit. Dutch decline was imminent when alternative opportunities for private gain, available via the ascending English East India Company, allowed Dutch colonial servants to evade their own patrimonial chain and encouraged its organisational breakdown. So long as they controlled the Coromandel cloth market by virtue of superior capital resources this weakness was not a very great handicap, for they could afford to bind up the manufacturers and middlemen and make them procure the required commodities

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strictly according to specification. They lost their position of advantage when their chief rivals, the English, surpassed them in the volume of capital import.\textsuperscript{92} The inadequacy of capital created a vicious circle. It prevented the Dutch from procuring cloth at profitable rates; this in turn undermined the profits in Europe and Asian markets, though this was by no means the only reason for the shortage of capital. As a net result, the English captured both the buyer’s market in Coromandel and the seller’s market in Europe by virtue of their larger capital. The English had found in Europe an alternative market for Coromandel cloth which was potentially much bigger than the Southeast Asian market; so long as they could provide enough capital, they could control the source of supply. In the economy of the region, the commerce of the English replaced that of the Dutch as the most decisive external influence.

**The Dutch and Danes**

The Danish East India Company (1616\textsuperscript{93}) secured the cession of Tarangambadi (Tranquebar) port from the Raghunatha Nayaka of Thanjavur in 1620\textsuperscript{94}. The text of the agreement, dated 20 November 1620, also allowed the Danes to farm the revenue of a neighboring village and gave them the right to fortify Tranquebar. This fort, Dansborg, became in subsequent decades the real centre of Danish operations. The Dutch could do little to prevent it. By 1625, the Danes secured freedom of trade at Masulipatnam, took Pondicherry in lease and established a factory at Pipli in Bengal. It appeared, commented Governor Marteen Ysbrantsz, “as if they wanted to buy up the whole world”.


With little capital and less support from home, the Danes, as competitors of the Dutch, had only a nuisance value. Still their offer of high prices for saltpetre, indigo and Coromandel pepper pushed up the prices of these commodities, while their intrigues often caused serious hindrance to Dutch trade. Having a smaller burden of expenses to bear, they also sold Coromandel cloth at comparatively cheap rates in Sumatra and Celebes and thus spoilt the market for the Company. They were friendly to the Portuguese and carried Portuguese cargo on their ships from Bengal to Coromandel, which the Dutch cruisers were powerless to prevent. Between 1626 and 1628, relations between the Company and the Nayaks of Thanjavur steadily worsened, largely on account of the Danish failure to pay due on the village they farmed. The Danes were, as a consequence, forced to turn for aid their ostensible rivals, the VOC. In 1628–1629, they approached the VOC with an offer to sell Tranquebar fort to them but this was turned down by Governor-General Coen. Notwithstanding Portuguese attempts to put in their own bids of the fort (fomented in large measure by the Conde de Linhares, who had just arrived from Lisbon as Viceroy of the Estado), a compromise was finally struck in 1630, under which Achyutappa Chetti or (Malaya), a powerful merchant of the area as well as a close associate of the VOC, agreed to finance the day-to-day running of the fort, and to garrison it with Dutch assistance. Malaya administered it apparently until his death with the help of a few soldiers supplied by the Dutch. But the Danes continued to import cloves, sandalwood, radix china, tortoise shell, sugar and silk stuffs from Macassar and bartered these for Coromandel cloth, and also traded coast tobacco for Bengal sugar which was then exported to Persia. Their import of cloves did adversely affect the price of the commodity in Coromandel, and the Dutch had to undercut prices to retain their hold on the market. The secret Danish–Portuguese entente was a source of still greater embarrassment. In 1641, the Danes, reduced once more to a precarious position, renewed their periodical overtures for the transfer of

Fort Dansborg to the Dutch. The Company entered into these negotiations with great caution and was guided by Batavia’s recently formulated obiter which required all intercourse with the rival nations to be reduced to a minimum.

By the middle of the 1640, the activities of the Danes in Coromandel ceased to have even a nuisance value so far as the Dutch were concerned. With little support from home and an irregular trade with Java and Macassar, which hardly covered the expenses involved, the Danes were once more forced to resume their interminable negotiations for the transfer of Dansborg to the Dutch. The authorities both at Batavia and in Amsterdam were now seriously interested in the deal, particularly after the Muslim conquest of the northern Carnatic, because they wanted some place to fall back on in case the Golconda government prohibited the Company from holding forts in their territory. But the Danes, still expecting the arrival of adequate capital from Europe, failed to come to a decision and after the capture of Nagappatinam, the Company also lost its interest in Dansborg.

The relations between the two nations on the coast in the 1650s were, however, closer than ever before. To the great chagrin of the Portuguese, the Karaikal factors were allowed to reside in Dansborg in 1653 as a precautionary measure. Arrangements for the delivery of Karaikal cloth to Tranquebar, for which 1% duty was paid to the Danes, worked very satisfactorily and the Company employed twelve soldiers for the protection of the Danish fort. In 1657, there was a temporary hitch owing to the seizure of a Danish boat by the Company, but eventually the Dutch decided to return the boat and maintain their garrison at Dansborg, lest the fort might be taken over by the English. The trade of the Danes was evidently allowed to survive on sufferance and this was a small price to pay for a political and military alliance against powerful enemies.
In 1659, Laurens Pit wanted to withdraw the Company’s soldiers from Dansborg, but eventually allowed the Danes to retain a small Dutch garrison provided they paid for its upkeep. At times, as in 1673, their supplies of painted cloth affected the prices at Bantam, while their import of copper to Coromandel caused a glut in the market. In the main, however, Danish trade counted for little.

The Dutch and French

It was the cherished object of Dutch policy to exclude, so far as practicable, all other European nations from a share in the Coromandel trade. The Dutch established their factories at Tirupapuliur in 1608 and at Pulicat in 1610. In 1618 they abandoned their factory at Tirupapuliur because of the civil war among the nayaks of this region, so they shifted their commerce to Pondicherry. Later in 1620 they left the Pondicherry lodge and settled at Devanampattinam (Tenganapatanam). In the second half of the seventeenth century, they again appeared at Pondicherry for procuring textiles and continued to remain there from 1664 to 1670.96

Early French efforts to open trade with this region were frustrated mainly as a result of this policy. In June 1617 the ship St. Michel, belonging to La Compagnie des Moluques, organised by the merchants of Dieppe, Rouen and St. Malo, anchored off Pondicherry and wrote to the Dutch at Tirupapuliur enquiring about trade prospects. The French received only a hostile reply and their attempt to secure trading rights in Gingee were foiled through Dutch machinations. But they did eventually succeed in opening trade with Pondicherry. As Pondicherry produced no cloth and the Dutch prevented supplies from Tirupapuliur, the French were, however, soon forced to leave Coromandel. In 1621, a Frenchman sent by Beaulieu,

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the commander of a French fleet which had sailed from Honfleur, tried to secure trading rights at Masulipatnam and failed, apparently owing to Dutch intrigues.

The commander of this expedition Augusten de Beaulieu started his return voyage along with Moutonorenci on 1 February 1622, leaving L'Hermitage to his assistant Andre Jocet who made the coastal navigation under the name of Petite Esperance between the islands of Sunda and Malacca. He was massacred by the Dutch. Guillaume Gauthier de la Terrerie, successor of Andre Jocet with a cargo of one million, was also captured by the Dutch. But Augustin de Beaulieu reached the port of Havre in France on 1 December 1622.97

When cardinal de Richelieu became the powerful Finance Minister of France, he realised fully well the importance of the French Commerce in the East. He was also concerned very much with the Dutch and their jealously against the French interests in the Far East. And so the crafty Richelieu put to good use his diplomacy and in 1624, Richelieu lent the French support to the Dutch against the house of Austria; in exchange, he obtained from the Dutch favour of non-interference in the French trade in the East and West Indies and released the French merchants from harassment by the Dutch.98

Jean Colbert took office as Finance Minister of France. Colbert naturally desired France to be in the forefront of the prosperous countries of Europe by securing a right place in international trade. Therefore, he strictly followed the mercantilist policy. Later this policy came to be known in France as Colbertism. Colbert planned to form a group of powerful, rich and strong companies protected

by the Royal Government like the Dutch Company to establish colonies and to carry on regular trade with India.99

Nearly five decades later, in 1670, the French East India Company appeared on the coast and made its debut at Masulipatnam. The Company did not have much to fear from the French as commercial competitors though the latter secured the right to duty-free trade in the Golconda kingdom. But the repercussions in Europe of the Franco-Dutch wars on the coast constituted a threat to the Coromandel factories and the Company’s shipping. When in July 1672 the French forcibly seized the town of San Thome from the Golconda authorities and Golconda forces laid siege to the town, the Dutch felt seriously concerned about their future security, and their fears were aggravated by the French attack on the Masulipatnam harbour. Following two decisive defeats in February and March 1673, the Golconda army practically abandoned their seige of San Thome and withdrew to a safe distance. But for the intervention of the Dutch, the San Thome episode would have ended in a decisive victory for the French.100

In June 1673 Rijcklof van Goens, appointed admiral and superintendent for the war against the French both on the east and the west coast of India, arrived before San Thome with his fleet from Ceylon and induced the Golconda authorities to resume the siege while the Dutch blockaded all outlets to the sea. The French Viceroy de la Haye, who had gone south with some of his ships, tried to run the blockade without success and it was only some weeks later that he managed to evade the Dutch men of war and re-enter San Thome.101 As the Golconda authorities were still lukewarm about continuing the war against the French, van Goens left San

Thome in June 1673. The second siege of San Thome began in September 1673 when van Goens not merely organised a naval blockade but sent a large contingent to help the Golconda force besieging the town. The local Muslim officers were still reluctant to take part in the campaign and were at times positively obstructive. The siege was apparently carried on chiefly because of the insistence of the Dutch. Eventually, it was recognised that the defences of the town were too strong for any successful assault and the only hope of the besiegers lay in starving out the French. So the siege now took the form of a prolonged trial of patience, with occasional skirmishes and foraging expeditions by the French. As the supply of food ran short, a steady stream of deserters from the French camp came over to the Dutch. Francois Martin, who later founded the French settlement at Pondicherry, induced Sher Khan Lodi, the Bijapur governor of upper Gingee, to enter into an agreement for secretly supplying provisions to San Thome. When war broke out in Europe between the Dutch and the French, the Dutch joined hands with the Sultan of Golconda and blockaded the port of St. Thome by sea, while the Sultan sent his forces and attacked the French by land to drive them away from the port. In this situation, Bellanger de l’Espinay wrote to de la Haye in January 1674 to send an assistant to him. In compliance, Francois Martin was selected and sent to Pondicherry. Martin worked with de l’Espinay in good faith to overcome the difficulties and to manage the opponents. About a month later, de la Haye surrendered San Thome to the Dutch on condition that he and his men would be allowed to sail to France on ships lent by the Company. Accordingly, on 6 September 1674, the French vacated the town (see details in the Appendix D) and the Dutch and the Golconda forces moved in. San Thome once more passed into the hands of Golconda and Qutb Shah decided to destroy the city, so that it should not attract the undesired attention of any European nations in future. The Dutch were rewarded by exemption from all tolls.

102 S.P. Sen, French in India: First Establishment and Struggle, Calcutta, University of Calcutta, 1947, p.336
payable at Masulipatnam and a grant in perpetuity of the township of Palicol. Besides, the victory at San Thome meant a tremendous accession to the Company’s prestige. It did not, however, lead to the expulsion of the French from Coromandel nor imply any basic improvement or alternation in the Dutch position on the coast.

Only Francois Martin remained at Pondicherry with sixty Frenchmen. On the strength of the letter issued by Sher Khan Lodi on April 1674, he built up the French factory strongly at Pondicherry and became the first governor of that factory on the Coromandel Coast.104

In 1689 a war broke out between English and Holland, and in August 1690 the combined Dutch and English fleets fought an indecisive action with the French of Madras. In August 1693 the Dutch appeared before Pondicherry with a large fleet, and captured it after a siege of twelve days. In 1694 there was a report of French equipment of nine ships for India, and it was ordered that additional precautions should be taken at Fort St. George and Fort St. David. By the treaty of Ryswick in September 1697, the Dutch restored Pondicherry to French.105

In the eighteenth century, the Dutch East India Company (VOC) had a well established network of trading establishments and commercial links in Coromandel. As a result of the transfer of its capital from the Pulicat to Nagapattinam in 1691, there was a shift of activity away from central to the south and to the North. The wars of the period 1740 to 1763 were a major hindrance to Dutch trade. During the war of the Austrian Succession (1741–1748), the Dutch exports of textiles from the Coromandel declined markedly. The trade picked up in 1747 but never reached the heights of the earlier years.