INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The Indian Ocean region has played a vital role in the world’s commercial and maritime activities. This ocean as a great highway and source of food and raw materials served as a vital force in linking a variety of people, culture and their economy. The Portuguese traders who had the head start enjoyed a monopoly of the sea-borne trade between Asia and Europe, which mainly consisted in the export of spices from India, Ceylon and the Spice Islands. The Dutch acted as the principal distributors from Lisbon, port of Portugal. In 1580, Portugal’s Union with Spain forced the Dutch to seek a direct access to the spice markets in South Asia.

This new European thrust into the spice trade was organized by the national monopolist companies. The most important of these were the English East India Company (EIC) founded in 1600, the Dutch East India Company (VOC) founded in 1602.
In 1602, the Danish East India Company, founded in 1616, the Dutch West India Company, founded in 1621, the French East India Company, founded in 1664, The Ostend Company (Austria), founded in 1715 and the Swedish East India Company founded in 1731.

In 1600, John Van Oldenbarnevelt, advocate of Holland, the most influential political figure of the time persuaded the states of Holland to appoint a commission of five, which recommended union of all the companies on the basis of a national monopoly. Finally, on March 20, 1602, the States-General passed a resolution by which companies trading with the East Indies were amalgamated into one “United Netherlands Chartered East India Company”. The company was given a charter by the States-General of Netherlands, valid for twenty-one years, which gave the Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) (“United East India Company”) monopoly on Dutch trade between the straits of Magellan and the Cape of Good Hope, “with authority to wage defensive war, negotiate treaties of peace and alliance, and build fortresses”. By this way the Dutch succeeded in establishing trade contact on the Coromandel Coast of South-Eastern India.

The Dutch were the second European nation to come to India. The Dutch emerged as a prominent commercial power in South India during the Seventeenth

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and the Eighteenth centuries and established several settlements along the South Coromandel Coast. 11

The region in the coast of South Coromandel had attained a high degree of commercialisation because its products occupied a unique place in the Euro-Asian trade. 12

In the early years of the 17th century, there were two main reasons which motivated the Dutch East India Company to concentrate their hold in the South Coromandel Coast. They are

- When the Portuguese organized their eastern possessions under three governments (Goa, 13 Cochin 14 and Colombo 15), Coromandel was not included in any of them. Their two semi-autonomous settlements in the Coromandel Coast (San Thome, Nagapattinam) were not strong. 16 Under Portuguese, the Coromandel Coast played an unimportant role in their commerce and was less subject to their monopolistic control.

- The increasing demand for Indian textiles in the markets of East Indies which were cheap and available in the South Coromandel Coast attracted the attention of the Dutch East India Company.

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11. Sinnappah Arasaratnam, Merchants, Companies and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast 1650-1740, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1986, p.82.
Another important consideration was that the strategic location of Coromandel in Eastern trade. From the ports on the east coast of the Indian peninsula the countries round the Bay and on the shores of the Indian Ocean were all quite easily accessible. The Coromandel acted as a chief centre, could conveniently facilitate trade with other countries round the Bay. Besides, the overland routes which connected Coromandel with other parts of India offered a chance of securing the products of Western India and other parts of North India without going to the additional expense of opening factories with those regions.

Pulicat (1610) was the first settlement of the Dutch East India Company in South Coromandel. The Headquarters on the Coromandel was called Geldria, the Pulicat fort. The Dutch East India Company established a gunpowder factory at Pulicat in 1620. Thus, the Dutch built their commercial empire around Pulicat. The Raja of Chandaragiri (Venkata II 1586-1614) had permitted them to trade at Sadras an area noted for its fine muslin, and in the territories of the Nayak of Gingee were Tengnapatam (Devenampatnam) and Tirupapuliyur, as well as a third agency at Kunimedu and a fourth at Porto Novo on the north bank of the Coleroon River. The Dutch captured Nagapattinam in 1658 which became their capital. The Dutch possessed a number of factories at Kilakkari, Mannappadu and Cape Comorin on the South East Coast of Coromandel Coast. Tuticorin was a large and prosperous city.

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17 Sanjay Subrahmanyan, Improvising Empire: Portuguese Trade and Settlement in the Bay of Bengal, 1500-1700, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1990, p.197.
20 C. S. Srinivasachari, A History of Gingee and its Rulers, Annamalai Nagar, Annamalai University, 1943, p.113.
It had a fine harbour where the Dutch could anchor their larger vessels in the stormy season. Here they built a ship repair yard, several warehouses and a small fort. The Dutch General Van Goens secured the monopoly of the pearl and conch fisheries off the Tirunelveli coast.24

The Dutch East India Company involved in trade on the eastern coast of India in the first place in order to procure Coromandel Coast coarse cotton textiles at source. These textiles were the principle medium of exchange throughout the Malay Indonesian archipelago.25

As early as 1612, Hendrick Brouwer, a future Governor – General of the East Indies, had described the Coromandel Coast as the “left arm of the Moluccas” and the surrounding islands because without textiles that come from there, the trade in the Moluccas will be dead.26

The VOC was interested in not only the export of textiles but other commodities like saltpetre, cotton yarn, indigo, diamonds, rice, and even slaves, which demanded the attention of the Dutch East India Company.

Review of Literature

Quite a few Indian and Foreign Scholars have done research works on Dutch East India Company. However, such research works are not abundant and most of the books on the subject are of general nature. The following are some of the important works connected with the present study.

Kristof Glamann (1958) in his *Dutch – Asiatic Trade 1620 -1740*, has analysed the organization of the Dutch East India Company, its relations with the bureaucracy and the nature of its monopoly. The work also covers the principal areas of trade in terms of the principal groups of commodities, the main changes which took place over the period, the method of lading the ships and the organization for receiving and selling the goods in Netherlands. However, an in-depth study of the role of the Dutch East India Company in the Southern Coromandel Coast is missing in this work.

Tapan Raychaudhuri (1962) in his *Jan Company in Coromandel, 1605-1690; A Study in the Interrelations of European Commerce and Traditional Economics*, narrated the rise and decline of the Dutch East India Company on the Coromandel Coast of India and also gave an overall picture of the Coromandel trade system.

C.R. Boxer (1965) in his *The Dutch Seaborne Empire: 1600-1800*, has given the narrative account of the rise and growth of the Netherlands’s provinces. The author explored the contribution of the civilians particularly the ruling class and the lower classes in achieving the domination of European sea-borne commerce as well as the expansion of the Dutch overseas. It helps the present study to understand the challenges faced by the Dutch East India Company while establishing their settlements in South India.

C. Owen Kail (1981) in his *Dutch in India* explains early Dutch activities in Tamil Nadu particularly the manner in which territories were acquired from Indians and construction of the Forts, Factories, etc. And this work speaks about monopoly of pearl fishery and conch fisheries Tirunelveli coast.
Sinnappah Arasaratanam (1986) in his *Merchants, Companies, and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast, 1650-1740*, has given the interesting account of the South Coromandel ports like Pulicat, Nagapattinam, Porto Novo, Nagore. The work also discusses the role of recognizable social groups like artisans, agricultural castes and fisherman in the maritime trade. This work explains the stand of the Coromandel shipping merchants and their challenges with their counter partners of the European Companies. This work helps to develop consistent background knowledge on the southern ports.

George D. Winius and Marcus P. M. Vink (1991) in their work *The Merchant-Warrior Pacified: The VOC (The Dutch East India Company) and Its Changing Political Economy in India*, have divided the work into three chronological chapters, each representing a period or phase of the Dutch presence in India: the monopolistic phase (1600-80), the competitive phase (1680-1748), and the period of disengagement and decline (1748-95). He made an attempt to document the general survey of the period and the Dutch activities in relation to other European rivals. Subsequently, the various regions in India where the Dutch had a commanding presence are examined in respect to relations with Indian rulers and populations as well as to relations with non-Indian competitors.

Om Prakash’s (1998) work *The New Cambridge History of India: II.5: European Commercial Enterprise in Pre-Colonial India* presented a clear picture of the Indian economic structure in the pre-colonial period the changes in commodities and volume of trade over time, the sophisticated indigenous banking system, the trading and manufacturing sectors which benefited from bullion imports and the increasing demand for Indian manufactured goods and the intra-Asian trade.
S. Jeyaseela Stephen’s (1998) *Portuguese in the Tamil Coast Historical Exploration in Commerce and Culture (1507-1749)* speaks about the early commercial activity of the Portuguese in the South Coromandel Coast and also deals with the Luso-Dutch rivalry in the Coromandel Coast. This work helps to develop further study of the maritime trade on the South Coromandel Coast.

M. N. Pearson (2003) in his work *The Indian Ocean* has discussed in detail the nomenclature and the role of Indian Ocean oceanic networks. The work also traced the unique efforts of the Portuguese, the English and the Dutch in the Balance of trade in East Indies.

Holden Furber (2004) in his work *Rivals Empire of Trade in the Orient, 1600-1800*, has analysed the history of the European companies (Portuguese, Dutch, English, French) Expansion in Asia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the Indian Ocean. It also throws light on the rivalries between the Dutch East India Company and other (Portuguese, English, French) European companies. This work helps the present study to develop a perspective on the growth of Dutch Maritime dominance in the Indian Ocean region.

Sanjay Subrahmanyam (2004) in his work *The Political Economy of Commerce, Southern India, 1500-1650*, deals with the South Indian maritime economy, especially the Dutch trade in the Coromandel Coast. Besides, the expansion of the Dutch East India Company in the Coromandel region such as Tirupapuliyur and Ginjee also traced. It also explained the Dutch interests in textiles trade in South Coromandel region and how the VOC sent ships with goods directly from the Coromandel factories to the Netherlands.
Kenneth McPherson (2004) in his The Indian Ocean: A History of People and the sea, narrates the world constituted by trade links and commercial networks established over several centuries, and tells us about the peoples, cultures, and economy of the Indian Ocean.

Objectives
The study has the following objectives:

1. To trace the background of the Dutch trade in India.
2. Understand the motivation of the Dutch East India Company in establishing their factories in Tamil Nadu.
3. Analyse the reasons for the failure of the Dutch in gaining political advantage in Tamil Nadu.
4. Assess the impact of the Dutch trade and commerce in the Tamil country.
5. To find out the social and economic impact of Dutch trade in Tamil region.

Data Collection
The Source materials for this thesis are collected from the various libraries and archives in and out side of the Tamil Nadu. To mention of few, state Archives of Tamil Nadu, Chennai, National Archives of India, New Delhi, Nehru Memorial Museum Library, New Delhi, Vidya Jothi Library, New Delhi, National Library Kolkata, Historical Archives, Panaji, Goa, Besides this, published works, periodicals and journals are used as the secondary sources. The sources for this study are mainly collected from the Pondicherry University Library, Puducherry, French Institute of Pondicherry Library, Puducherry, Romain Rolland Library, Puducherry, British Council Library, Chennai, C.H. Mohammed Koya Library, Calicut, Tamil Nadu State Oriental Manuscript Library Chennai, Connemara Public Library, Chennai, Maraimalai Adigal Library, Chennai, Madras Institute of Development Studies, Chennai, Madras University Library, Chennai, Roja Muthaiah Library, Cheanni,
Methodology

The present study adopts the grouping of facts in chronological order with the use of heuristics of primary, secondary and tertiary kinds of information. Accordingly, the natures of events are narrated in logical order. Analysis and interpretation with traditional historical method is the mode of research exposition.

Chapters

The thesis consists of six chapters excluding Introduction and Conclusion.

The first chapter narrates the salient features of the Coromandel Coast, and also political conditions of India and South India in the Seventeenth century. And it describes the emergence of the Nayaks in South Coromandel. It also deals with the arrival of the Dutch and the socio-economic conditions, and Hinterland of the Southern Coromandel Coast.

The second chapter deals with the historical background of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and the Establishment of Dutch Supremacy in Asia and Dutch trade with Western Coast of India and South Coromandel Coast. The work also traces the condition of the Dutch ports and factories in the South Coromandel Coast.

The third chapter elucidates the cross-cultural contact between the Dutch and the South Coromandel Coast. Dutch relations with the Nayaks of Gingee, Madurai Nayaks, Thanjavur Nayaks, Sethupatis of Ramnad, and alliance with Poligars in
Tirunelveli and Dutch Relations with Periya Tambi Maraikkayar in South Coromandel Coast are analysed.

The fourth chapter explores the commercial rivalries of the Dutch with, Portuguese, English, French, and the Danish East India Company in the South Coromandel Coastal areas.

The fifth chapter deals with the Dutch East India Company’s trade in the South Coromandel Coast at ports like Pulicat, Sadras, and Nagapattinam. And also describes Dutch trade with commodities of Pearl fishery, Diamonds, Spices, Pepper, Rice, Slave, Indigo, Gun Powder, Textiles. It also sheds light on the role of Merchants in Dutch trade.

The sixth chapter describes the socio-economic impact of the Dutch trade on the South Coromandel Coast and the role played by the Dutch ‘Chief Merchants’ in the South Coromandel. Dutch introduced the Joint Stock Companies, “Putting out System”, Dutch Legal institutions, Dutch coins in the South Coromandel. It also describes shipbuilding technology in the South Coromandel coastal region and Dutch religion and administration of the Dutch Company in the South Coromandel Coast.

In conclusion, a comprehensive and a critical assessment of Dutch East India Company is Provided.