CHAPTER—SIX

The Armenians in Madras, 1680–1750

One of the most prolific merchants of Madras, an orthodox Catholic by faith, a community of individual merchants not representing any country, a small community but prosperous by its professional trade, the Armenians are the transnational community during the 16th to 19th century. Although the Armenian merchants were in India since very long past, their presence in the Coromandel Coast is not very clear. Although they kept visiting the place, their first settlement could be dated in the 1660s. The first clear reference about the Armenian community in the English record dated back to the 1680s. In 1688, the Armenian signed an agreement with the English East India Company, dated 22nd June, 1688, that permit them to formally freely settle and trade in Madras and any other English port settlements in India. The Armenians in Madras were one of the richest merchants. They traded between Madras and other parts in India and also with other countries especially with the South East Asian countries, Middle East countries and also with the Western World. Their trading networks spread far and wide. It ranges from both sea and land trade. As they did not represent any national Company, they could make their presence felt in almost every port. Besides trading on various commodities on freights the European ships, many of the Armenian merchants have also owned ships; their freights consisted of themselves as well as the goods of others. This chapter will deal with the various aspects of life of the Armenian community in Madras. However, to begin with, it will be pertinent to take a brief account of the Armenian community of India as background information.

Armenians in India

It is difficult to establish precisely when the Armenian started visiting India. In South India, the first Armenian named Thomas Cava was said to have landed on the Malabar Coast in 750 AD. during the reign of Sheo Ram, the ruler of Craganore. Not only did he amass huge fortune through trading in muslins and spices, but also proved as a able diplomat and ‘saviour of the Christains’. He built a town near Cragamore and obtained a copper plate document from the King which granted the Christians religious, commercial and social freedoms and other privileges in Malabar. Therefore, he turned out to be the
protector of the Christians. He was also said to have discharged the office of a bishop.¹ The coming of Thomas Cava by sea was a rare visit of Armenian merchants in India during that time. Generally, the Armenians came to India by land routes, mainly through the North Western passes. It was also rare because until the 16th century any reference of Armenian merchants in India was scanty.

In the 16th century, there were ample references of the Armenians in some important port towns in India such as Goa, Diu, Patan, Cambay and San Thome and in many other inland trade marts like Ahmedabad, Agra, Lahore, etc.² Persia usually served as the transit point for the Armenians for their trade with India. Ormuz was the main port of sail to India. However, their chief trade was carried on the land route through the north western region of the Indian sub continent. They exported primarily indigoes while their import items in India consisted of precious stones and other luxury goods.³ Nonetheless, with the dawn of the 17th century, their pattern of trade with India began to transform. There was a remarkable shift of trade routes from land to sea and the volumes and items of trade tremendously increased. The Armenians began to play a crucial role in the overseas trade of India with other parts of the world. This was contingent upon not only to the general movement of the people towards the littoral region but was also mainly contingent for two important changes in the political circumstances; on the sea as well as in the overland routes.

The first major change was contributed by the change in political circumstances in the India's North Western frontier region. After the death of Akbar in 1605, the region was thrown in turmoil due to the rivalries between the Mughals and the Shah of Persia for the control of Kandahar. This resulted not only into tensions between the two power centres but also suffered the land trade passing through the region immensely. The entire land trade in this part often came to a halt. Consequently, all the trade had to be diverted through Surat, the Chief entrepot of Gujarat.⁴ This situation continued during the reign of Aurangzeb. Therefore, the Armenians who were the major constituents in the trade

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¹ Anne Basin, Armenian settlement in India, p.44
³ Anne Basin, Armenian Settlements in India, p.200
⁴ EFI, 1637-41, p.227.
between India and Persia through the frontier region naturally suffered the most. They now diverted their trade through the sea route.

Fortunately, this changing circumstance in the overland politics was coincided with the favourable political changes on the sea for the Armenians. During the 16th century, the Indian Ocean trade was virtually under the Portuguese monopoly in which the Armenians could not play an important role. However, by the turn of the 17th century, the Portuguese monopoly over the Indian Ocean trade was finally declined with the coming of other European powers. The English and the Persians had, by capturing the island of Ormuz in 1622, destroyed the century-old Portuguese monopoly of Arabian Sea trade. The Armenians were fast in realising this changing scenario. Through their shrewed diplomacy at the Court of Persia and with the European Companies, the Armenians affected their new role in the sea trade between India and Persia and later in other sectors as well.

The smooth change-over of the Armenian trade from overland to sea trade was also helped by the co-operative attitudes of the English Company, who found the services of the abled Armenian merchants with their expertise on local trade, languages and customs, indispensable.5 More importantly, the English were keen to exploit the silk trade of Persia which the rulers of Persia had given to the Armenian traders a monopoly in its trade.6 Moreover, the Armenians' co-operation was considered to be more advantageous for the Company on several other aspects. Such aspirations were clearly spelt out in the Company's letters to its officials in India. For instance, it asked the Fort St. George government to encourage the Armenians by observing the contracts it made with the Armenians in 1688 and other treaties as, they expected, would grow into a 'famous superstructure' and 'augment the English Navigation as well as his Majesties (of England) customes'.7 Besides this partnership, they hoped this would lead the English to 'discover a multitude of new goods that will turn to great advantage'. It also asked the officials to make great use of the Armenians for the Company and for themselves in some places where the English had no factories. Further, the Directors at home also expressed their willingness to use the Armenians for negotiations with the local Indian courts as

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5 EPI, 1624-29, pp.307, 320.
7 Dispatches from England, 1686-92, p.137.
they did their business at the court 'with small expence and much more effect than hiring a poor vakeel' who spent 'more money.'

To its Bengal factor, the Company directed that as the Armenians could travel much further inland to the Gangetic valley and they should be considered to be 'the fittest to be employ' to provide commodities for the English. It hoped that if the 'thrifty experienced armenians' were allowed to 'break the ice' first in buying and bringing commodities from the Gangetic valley by way of Bengal on ship for Europe it belonged to the Company once it reach there 'without being at any disbursements or hazard of the sea, paying them only 30 per cent advance on the prime cost.'

8 Above all, the English found the Armenians were the most suitable to employ as they did not represent any particular country or national government during that time. Rather, they were considered to be 'an innocent harmless people, that will not be apt to contend or plead law' with the English. By far, the most important factor for entering into partnership with the Armenians was mainly due to their expertise in trade with India. This is clearly spelt out in one of the Company's letter to the government of Madras in which it said that the Armenians were 'certainly sober, frugal and very wise in all the commodities and places of India.' Therefore, the Directors at home, having considered all these advantages for the English Company, asked its servants in India to strictly performed every parts and articles of the Contracts concluded with the Armenians and caused nothing to discourage them in any respect.

Thus, the fulfillment of their mutual interests forged ample opportunities for the Armenians to actively participate in the Indian Ocean trade. Initially, they were given passage, their freights were allowed to be taken in European ships and several other privileges were given to them. This successful changeover resulted in the increase of trade and immigration of the Armenians in India. 9 This could be inferred from the fact that almost all the important European travellers in India in the 16th and 17th centuries such as Palsaert, Mandelslo, Thevenot, Tavenier, Manucci, etc. had noticed their presence in India. If in the 16th century Lahore, Agra, Cambay, Goa and Diu, were the

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8 *Dispatches from England*, 1686-92, 1688, p.150.
9 *EFI*, 1637-41, p.106.
main places where the Armenians can be seen; in the 17th century, they could be found practically all over India.

In the North, the Armenians started visiting Patna for the goods brought from Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet and also the Bengal silk for exports to Central Asia and Persia.\textsuperscript{10} Towards the second half of 17th century, they started their business in Bengal, where they settled in Hugli, Chinsura and later in Calcutta.\textsuperscript{11} Between Agra and Surat, the Armenians were also seen at Ajmer in Rajasthan.\textsuperscript{12} In the Western coast, Surat, Bombay, Cambay and Chaul, continued to be the trading hubs of the Armenians in the 17th and 18th centuries. In the Coromandel Coast the Armenians were also well established at the turn of the 17th century. Their presence in Madras will be particularly dealt in the following pages. However, before we begin, it would be pertinent to include the Armenian Contracts with the EIC.

The Contracts between the Armenians and the English Company

In 1658, we have two Armenian merchants, MosesMegtrop and Jacob Amer, negotiating with the authorities of the English East India Company in London for their passage and freighting of their goods to India or British ships.\textsuperscript{13} It was accepted similarly, Khojah Kirokos, the brother of Khojah minas, the richest Armenian merchant of Surat, before owing to India was in London where he held Parleys with the directors of the EIC.\textsuperscript{14} However, of the various agreements reached between the English and the Armenians, the treaty of 1688 was the most remarkable for the Armenians of India. It was dated on 22nd June, 1688. The preamble declared that after a long conference between Sia Joshiah child on behalf of the English Company and Khojah Panoos Kalandar, an Armenian merchant of Isphaham and Sir John Chardin and Knight, both on behalf of the Armenian nation, it was agreed that:

- The Armenian nation shall now and at all times hereafter, have equal share and benefit of all indulgences this Company have or shall at any time hereafter grant to any of their own adventure or other English merchants whatsoever;
- They shall have free liberty at all times hereafter to pass and repass to and from India on any Company’s ships. On as advantageous terms as any freemen whatsoever;

\textsuperscript{10} Tavenier, II, p.204.
\textsuperscript{11} Basil, Armanians Settlements, pp.202-203; Seth...pp.304-305.
\textsuperscript{12} Foster, Letters recieves by the EIC from its servants in the East, 1616, IV, p.244-277.
\textsuperscript{13} Basil, p.207, where she cited Sainsbury, A calendar of the court minutes, etc of the East India Company, 1655-59, London, 1916, p.220.
\textsuperscript{14} Seth, p.294.
They shall have liberty to live in any of the Company's cities, garrisons, or towns in India, and to buy, sell and purchased land or houses, and be capable of all civil offices and preferment in the same manner as if they were Englishmen born; and shall always have the free and undisputable liberty of the exercise of their religion. And we hereby declare that we will not continue any Governor in our service that shall in any kind disturb or discountenance them in the full enjoyment of all the privileges hereby granted to them, neither shall they pay any other or greater duty in India than the Company's factors, or any other Englishman born do or ought to do;

They may voyage from any of the Company's garrisons to any other ports or places in India, the South Sea, China, of the Manillas in any of the Company's ships, or any permissive free ships allowed by the Company; and may have liberty to trade to China, Manillas, or any other ports or places within the limits of the Company's charter, upon equal terms, duties and freights with any free Englishmen whatsoever.15

This agreement no doubt laid the foundation of Armenian relationships with the English Company in India and other parts of Asia. It also served as the bedrock on which large number of the Armenians started to take up sea trade on a large scale. Copies of this contract were sent to its various factors and governors in India in the same year. In Fort St. George, it was received on 3rd July 1689. However, it seemed that such contract was not immediately declared in Madras which compelled the Armenian inhabitants to insist the President to confirm to them. In 1690, the principal Armenian inhabitants of Madras requested the President to declare the contract reached between them and the EIC in England.16 Therefore, a formal confirmation of the Contract was made on the 14th of April 1690 when the Armenian appealed to the President.17 The President and the Council declared to observe the Contract and Agreement and ‘promises and confirme all other liberties and privileges specified in their said Contract with the Honourable Company’ and to assist and encourage them in their trade and religion and ‘for the good and comfort of themselves and improvements of the place.’18 Therefore, unlike the Portuguese or the other European nationals, the Armenians were given a distinct position as the English men themselves were. In the following pages, we will see how these privilege positions were realised in Madras.

**Armenians in Madras**

The Armenians presence in the Coromandel Coast could be dated back to the early 17th century. They were said to have been very influential at the Court of the Golkonda. This

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16 D&CB, March 6, 1690, p.19.
18 D&CB, April, 14, 1690, p.26.
is inferred by the fact that when the Dutch envoy Wenmer Van Berchem arrived at the court of the King of Golkonda, an Armenian merchant from Masulipatnam complained that the Dutch had seized his vessel Tanassary in that part of the kingdom because it carried Portuguese cargo. The king insisted and secured the release of the cargo of the Armenians much against the wishes of Berchem. This shows that the Armenians were already operating their trade in the Coromandel and even owned a ship during the early 17th century. To the surprise of all one Markus Erezad, an Armenian, was made the Governor of Mylapore or St. Thome in 1662 after it was captured by the Golkonda King, Abdullah Qutub Shah. The same person was said to have sent a valuable gift to Charles II of England requesting him to present a ship in return. Therefore, the two instances make it clear that the Armenians were already there in the region even before the establishment of Madras and during its early years. Therefore, it is felt that when the English established their settlement at Madras, some Armenians could also have settled down there or else settled nearby it.

In Madras, the Armenians were said to have settled permanently by 1666 although the oldest Armenian tomb belonged to the year 1663. However, it was quite surprising that no mention of Armenians of Madras were made in the Company’s record until 1689 when ‘Srnr. Gregorio and some others of the chieftest of the Armenian merchants’ were acquainted them of the favourable agreement the right Honourable Company had made with their nation. Consequently the Armenians requested the President and Council to confirm the contracts in Madras in 1690. Thus, it would appear that Srnr. Gregorio Paroan and Joseph De Marke and some other Armenians had already inhabited Madras by the time the Contracts reached Madras in 1689. However, as the record made no precise accounts of the numbers of Armenians in Madras it is difficult to comprehend on any exact calculation. But it appeared from the petition and other running accounts that the Armenians have increasingly inhabited in Madras during our period of study.

20 Seth, pp.604-605; Basil, pp.44-45.
21 Basil, pp.605-606.
22 Seth, p.579.
23 D&CB, July 3, 1689, p.62.
The number of Armenians became clearer in 1693 when one Cojee Gregory and ten other Armenian merchants petitioned to the President to redress the grievances of their chief writer who has been convicted by the Mayor's Court on the accusation made by his caste group (Chetty) over his business which was 'not comprehended in the points delivered in by them.' The petition was signed by nine principal Armenian merchants of Madras. They are Estivo Marco, Gregorio Lazario, Cojee Saphar, Cojee Ajutam Baltezar, Gregorio Param, Amijan Abraham, Abram Isaac, Avatum Joseph and Pedro de Jesus.24 We did not know whether they have already settled down at Madras before the Contract of 1688 was made but it is assumed that most of them must have came after it, probably in response to call of Senr. Gregorio Paroan, one of the first Armenian merchants of Madras. One estimate has put it that the population of the Armenians in Madras by 1693/94 was 200 by whom the Company got 'money in everything they eat or drink or trade for as well as by the ground rents of the houses they live in.'25 However, this figure seems to have been misprinted as by that time the Armenians population in Madras could not have been more than 20 or 30 persons. This is said due to the fact that the number of the Armenian merchants in Madras did not crossed more than 30 as by the computation of their names mentioned in the records. For instance, in 1697, as it appeared from their petition to the company, there were nine prominent Armenian merchants viz; Joseph de Marcos, Narei David, Gregorio Paroan, Aviet Gaspan, Stephen Marcos, Ignacio Marcos, Saffar de Zachariah, Serraad David and Amir John.26 Even by including their family members it might not cross a hundred marks. What is more confusing is that when wall tax was proposed to be collected from the inhabitants of Madras the Armenians sought for exemption as there were only two Armenians permanent inhabitants of Madras, the rest being seafarers not permanent inhabitants of Madras. Even by 1718, when the Company proposed to raise money of one percent from the inhabitants of Madras they found only six permanent Armenian inhabitants of the town. When the Armenian pleaded for exemption the government decided that 'as they are Christians, and but six in number

24 D&CB., November 2, 1693, p.151.
26 D&CB, June 3, 1697, pp.58-59.
in the place we thought fit to exempt them from being taxed with the black inhabitants. However, this figure should not surmise the presence of many Armenians in the town for trade even if they are not permanent settlers. In fact it should be noted that the Armenian business was carried on a closely knit global networks of family or kinship enterprises which necessitated them to spread out from coast to coast. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

The Armenians in Madras generally settled down in the ‘black town,’ amongst the Indian inhabitants. It is difficult to locate the exact location of their houses but as their numbers are less it was possible that they scattered amongst other inhabitants. The settlement of Armenians in the black town is shown by some contemporary account. For instance Thomas Salmon (1699) said that ‘to the northward adjoining the white Town stands a much larger, called the Black Town, where the Portuguese, Indians, Armenians and a great variety of other people inhabit.’ According to Hamilton, ‘the Black Town is inhabited by Gentows, Mahometans and Indian Christians, viz, Armenians and Portuguese, where there are Temples and churches for each religion, every one being toleratened; and every one follows his proper employment.’ In 1717, when Farucksiyar’s Gusbardar came to Madras to deliver a Seerpaw, the Company decided to receive and lodge in a handsome manner, and for that, the large Armenian factory house in the Black Town was fitted up and hired at eight pagodas per menseems. It is not known when the Armenians began to settle down in the ‘white town.’ The first reference of purchase of lands by an Armenians was somewhere before 1728. In this year, Coja Petrus, an eminent Armenians merchant of Madras, bought a lodging near the Choultry gate. Before that, he was said to have bought ‘some godowns’ behind that laodgings. By 1730, the names of nine eminent Armenian merchants appeared in the list of ‘constant inhabitants’ of Madras whose houses were located in the ‘white town.’ They were Coja Ameresat, Coja Agaperez, Coja David, Coja George, Coja Gregory, Coja Petrus; Coja Parcedon, Coja

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27 D&CB, 27 November 1718, p.206.
28 Thomas Salmon, Modern History, or the present state of all nations, (1724); his description is around 1699/1700; cited in Love, Vestiges, II, p.75.
29 Hamilton description of Madras during his stays in Asia as Commander for supercargo between 1688-1723 in his A New Account of the East Indies, 1727, cited in Love, Vestiges, III, p.87.
30 D&CB, 26 December 1717, p. 203.
31 D&CB, 23 September 1728, p. 134.
Sarkis and Coja Troce.\textsuperscript{32} It seems that many more Armenians continued to buy plots in the ‘white town’ so much so that in 1743 the English government officially ban the ‘purchase or inhabit any house or houses or godowns or other buildings within the walls of the White Town’ to any foreigners or strangers other than the natural subject of the King of Great Britain.\textsuperscript{33} In any case, all the Armenian inhabitants of the ‘White town’, except Coja Petrus, were expelled from there after the rendition of Madras in 1749 as many of them were Catholics.\textsuperscript{34} However, unlike the Portuguese, they were permitted to sale their houses to any European Protestants.

The increasing number of the Armenians in Madras is also shown by the fact that they started purchasing plots and houses at the St. Thomas Great Mount areas for which they even incurred the suspicion of the English government. It was recorded that Coja Saffur ‘with others of his nation intend to associate and form themselves into a factory at the Mount, and make St. Thoma their Fort, as appears by their having in the late governor Pitts’s time, bought and built several houses their, which they might both to have done without leave of the Governor and Council.\textsuperscript{35} The matter was also reported to the Directors at home that ‘the Armenians become numerous and opulent, have the sole trade to Manila, believe they are endeavoring secretly to get the government of St. Thoma, if they should openly do it must rent it for the Company to prevent the lessening the customs of Madras no fear from the Portuguese they are so dwindled away.’\textsuperscript{36}

Their growing number can also be inferred from the fact that the first Armenian Church was built in 1712 near the Bride Gate on the northern side of the black town.\textsuperscript{37} It was first built by the English as per the Contract of 1688 which specified that ‘when over 40 or more of the Armenian nation shall become inhabitants in any of the garrisons, cities or towns belonging to the Company in the East Indies, the said Armenians shall not only have and enjoy the free use and exercise of their religion, but there shall be also allotted to them a parcel for ground to erect a Church thereon for the worship and service of God in their own way…and that we will also at our own charge cause a convenient church to

\textsuperscript{32} D\&CB, December 1730, p. 157.
\textsuperscript{33} D\&CB, 22 August 1743, p. 144.
\textsuperscript{34} D\&CB, 18 November 1749, p. 2; 22 November 1749, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{35} D\&CB, January 13, 1710, p.7.
\textsuperscript{36} Dispatches to England, 1701-02 to 1710-11, February 8, 1711, p.147.
\textsuperscript{37} Basil, p. 47.
be built of timber...also allow 50 pound per annum during the space of seven years for the maintenance of such priest or minister as they shall choose to officiate. This meant that by 1712 the number of Armenians have already crossed 40 persons.

On the kinship business: the Armenian Cojahs of Madras
One of the fascinating aspects of the Armenian trading system was their transcontinental network through what can be called the ‘kinship business’ or ‘family firms’. Unlike the European companies who were under their Sovereign or semi-sovereign in themselves, the Armenian trade, especially in the Indian Ocean was based mainly on private or family enterprises. Therefore, it is not difficult to reconstruct the trading network of the Armenians of Madras being connected with the other Armenian of their near relation in other places. This fascinating aspect of the Armenian trading system was also noted by John Fryer who said: ‘The Armenians being skilled in all the intricacies of trade at home and traveling with these into the remotest kingdoms, become by own industry, and by being factors of their own kindred’s honesty, the wealthiest men.’ Besides, this family network, they also jointly entered their business in collaboration with other local businessmen.

Coja Gregory Paroan, the principle Armenian inhabitant of Madras was said to have his factors in Bengal, at the Mughal Court, at Surat, etc. John De Marcos was his factor in Bengal. He was also said to have ‘an acquaintance with Issa Cooly, an Armenian merchant resident at the Moguls Court’. It seems that Cojee Gregory also kept his son-in-law as his factor at the Mughal Court or Camps or at Surat. Coja Simon was his factor in Pegu. It is not clear whether Coja Jehoikim de Gregorio was the son of Cojee Gregory Paroan. In case of being his son it can be said that Coja Jehoikim must have taken over the business after his father’s death. This rich family owned four ships during Gregory’s time. They are Salamatrou, Jerusalem, Goodhope, and

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42 D&CB, February 14, 1689.
43 D&CB, June 5, 1690.
44 D&CB, May 10, 1694.
Besides, Jehoikim also jointly owned ship *Santa Cruz* with David Marcos family and ships *St. Marke* with Mr. Chardin and Cojee Stephen Marcos. Coja Jahoikim later purchased another ship *Virgin Mary*.

Another prominent Armenian family in Madras was the Marcos family-David Marcos, Stephen Marcos, Ignatius Marcos and Joshep de Marcos. There was also one John de Marcos in Bengal who was the brother of Joseph de Marcos. This rich Armenian merchant family was mainly based in Madras. They traded mainly in the overseas trade especially with the Manila, Pegu and Bengal beside several other places. David Marcos jointly owned ship *Santa Cruz*, with the Gregories and others and ship *Cojetan* exclusively. Stephen Marcos also jointly owned ship *St. Marke* with Mr. Chardin and the Gregory family and ship *St. Joan de Canterbury*. With other Armenians, Cojee Stephen Marcos owned ship St. Jude.

Another principle Armenian family was the Cojee Mall Cawn-Zachary family. They were also one of the richest families in Madras who traded mainly with Manila, Malacca, Pegu, Bengal Surat, Persia and Europe. Coja Zachariah was in fact a part of the wide ranging network of commercial transactions from Europe to Manila. Being in the Middle of this network, he formed the key to the success of the system. He came to Madras in 1714 from Amsterdam representing his father Coja Avetik of Isfahan. Surhad was his factor at Amsterdam. He traded on multiple accounts with Gregory, Aga Pera and Issa Gully of Madras. Since 1714, he had a partnership account with Marcatoon Yahoopa (Mallcawm of Fort St. George record), another factor of Avitik. His factor in Bengal was Coha Nazar Jan. The fact that Zachary took over the post of Alderman after Coja

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45 D&C, February 20, 1695. Gregory bought it for 520 pagodas from the Company.
46 In 1697 this ship belonged to one David Marcoa and Cojee Zachariah but in 1715 it belong to Cojee Jehoikim and by 1718 belong to Cojee Aratoon. This whole families must have jointly owned this whole this ship which usually plied to manila and Pegu, see D&C, June 4, 1697; September 10, 1715; April 8, 1618.
47 D&C, September 24, 1694; Feb & 25 June, 1717.
48 D&C, April 28, 1714.
49 D&C, April 28, 1714.
50 D&C, June 4, 1694.
51 D&C, May 10, 1694.
52 D&C, June 30, 1706.
53 Bhattacharya, JESHO, p. 284.
Simon left for Pegu and Issa Cooly after Zachary left shows that they were related in one way or the other. They were recorded to be relatives.\textsuperscript{57} Also, Zachary was the son-in-law of Coja Mal Cawn.\textsuperscript{58} Zachary was said to have owned ship \textit{Silliman}.\textsuperscript{59} He also jointly owned ship \textit{Bon Voyage}\textsuperscript{60} with Mall Cawn and Coja Simon and another ship \textit{Santa Cruz}\textsuperscript{61} with the Marcos and Gregorys.

Coja Mall Cawn was also one of the richest Armanian merchants in Madras. He was, as said earlier, the factor of Zachary Father Coja Avetik in Madras and the father-in-law of Zachary. This family connection made them to operate as one firm. However, Mall Cawn seems to have also made his private fortunes in trade besides working with the Zachary family. He was said to have owned five ships. He had jointly owned ship \textit{Bon Voyages} with Zachary and Simon, But ship \textit{Mashes},\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Messiah},\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Bombajee}\textsuperscript{64} and \textit{Brigantine Santa Maria},\textsuperscript{65} seems to have been owned by him exclusively.

Another Armenian merchant which came frequently in the record was Coja Saffur de Zachariah. Going by the surname, it is probable that he must have been the son or relative of Zachary who came later in Madras. Coja Saffur was one of the signatories of 1697 in a subscription to the President for not trading with the interlopers.\textsuperscript{66} He had two factors named Aga Ascar and Johannes probably in Bengal and Manila.\textsuperscript{67} Coja Saffur owned one ship \textit{St. Pedro} with Coja Awanes, had also owned one ship \textit{John Lewis}. These two eminent merchants were regarded to be ‘troublesome’ Armenians in Madras. Coja Awanes had in 1704 prevailed upon the Faujdar of Mylapur to arrest another Armenian Coja Timore which troubled the English President and Council.\textsuperscript{68} Similarly, in 1710 Coja Saffur had also bring another trouble to the Council when he was accused to ‘assumed power to himself as if he was Havildar’ of St. Thome Great Mount. Coja Saffur had been known as ‘an important troublesome fellow to all the English in general who have

\textsuperscript{57} D&C\&B, September 28, 1718, p. 171; September 31, 1719, p. 177.
\textsuperscript{58} D&C\&B, October 27, 1715, pp. 131-132.
\textsuperscript{59} D&C\&B, July 14, 1719.
\textsuperscript{60} D&C\&B, 6 April 1713; 28 March 1718; and 14 April, 1720.
\textsuperscript{61} D&C\&B, June 4, 1697.
\textsuperscript{62} D&C\&B, April 21, 1714.
\textsuperscript{63} D&C\&B, September 10, 1714.
\textsuperscript{64} D&C\&B, April 4, 1716.
\textsuperscript{65} D&C\&B, June 22, 1720.
\textsuperscript{66} D&C\&B, June 3, 1697, pp. 58-59.
\textsuperscript{67} D&C\&B, June 3, 1697, p. 54.
\textsuperscript{68} D&C\&B, pp. 15; 24; 26; 27; -28;29;50;57.
resorted to the mount for their health, of which there has been several instance too many to be innumerate... with other of his nation intend to associate and from themselves into a factory at the Mount, and make St. Thoma their Fort." Both of them were mainly diamond merchants who have supplied most of the ‘rarities’ to the local courts.

Further, we have another eminent Armenian merchant of Madras, Aga Pera, son of Coja Panuse Calendar, who struck the Armenian Contract with the Company in London. He came to the place by the turn of the 18th century. He came over to Madras from Surat. The first reference of him in the Fort St. Georges Record was in 1706 when he complained to the Madras Council against one Armenian Coja Surhaad, the factor of his father, for the adjustment of their accounts. Again, Aga Pera also had his factor in England named, Coja Babba di Sultan. Under his patronage, Khoja Thaddeus Aga Piri & Co. Brothers, a merchant firm, was established at Fort St. George who appointed Coja Aveat as their factor in Pegu. He was said to have owned ship *St. Austin* and ship *St. Stephen*.

Besides, there were several other Armenian merchants in Madras who were related to the aforementioned principle merchant in one way or the other. One prominent among them was Coja Phanose who owned two ships *Santa Maria* and *Massalaman* (with Tonapa Mudiliar). Again, one Coja Aratoon had also owned ship *Mossack*. There was also one Cojee Harap who owned ship *St. John*. Coja Milton also owned sloop *St. Maria* and Coja Jacob John owned Brigantine *Santa Maria*. Besides there were also some more Armenian ships which we cannot identify its real owners. Further there are some more Armenian merchant who run their business mainly by chartering other ship or acting as a *Noquedah* (ship Master). The names of Armenians who served as *Noquedah* are: Cojee Evan Mark, Cojee Abraham, Coja Issa Cooly, Aga Nuree, Cojah Chatoon,

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70 D&C&B, December 13, August 29, 1706, p.75.
72 Bhattacharya, Armenian European; JESH. 2005, p. 287.
73 D&C&B, May 28, 1711.
74 D&C&B, April 8, 1713.
75 D&C&B, September 9, 1701.
76 D&C&B, June 29, 1714, pp. 89-90.
77 D&C&B, March 13, 1707.
78 D&C&B, August 8, 1694.
79 D&C&B, March 6, 1716.
80 D&C&B, March 12, 1720.
Coja Narrado, Coja Paulo, Coja Cassen, Coja crewes, Coja Sattore, Coja Tassaree, Coja Taperu, Coja tassu, Coja Hallee, Coja Paraud, Coja Pagose.\textsuperscript{81} They acted in this capacity not only in Armenian ships but also in other’s ships. They worked in their own or in collaboration with other merchants. In the capacity of Noquadah the eminent merchants of Madras did also undertook several voyages overseas for their trade and others affairs. This is most prominent with the South East Asian countries and to Macau and Manila.

Therefore, it is clear from the above account that the Armenian business were mainly carried out in the form of their own family firm by assigning several factors in all important trading enterports. In this way, they could interlink their trading network almost across the globe. However, this trading system seems to have brings about many conflicts among them. In the following pages, we will look into the prominent conflict that has arisen out of this kinship system.

\textbf{Conflict and resolution among the Armenians in Madras.}

Besides several other cases of conflicts among the Armenians of Madras, we will deal with some cases that came for the consideration of the Council at Fort St. George. In June 1696, one Joseph de Marcos, an Armenian inhabitant of Madras, submitted a petition to the President against one Cojee Gregorio who was the factors of his elder brother, John de Marcus of Bengal. He urged the Council to compel the said Gregorio to go to Bengal to render an account of 12 years factorships to John de Marcos. However, the said Gregorio requested the President that he may determine his account in Madras before his people. The Council therefore resolved that it be referred to ten or twelve Armenians for their opinion whether Gregorio be ‘by Custom of the [Armenian] Nation oblige to go and render his account to John de Marcus in Bengal.’ However, it is not known how the case was later decided as there was no further account of it in the records.

Again, on 19 March 1704, another important case came to the consideration of the Council involving two Armenians inhabitants of Madras, the governor of St. Thoma and even the Nawab Doud Khan and his Buxee. The Governor of Madras acquainted the Council that one Coja Timore was arrested and imprisoned by the Governor of St. Thoma at the instances of Coja Awan, another Armenians inhabitance of Madras. The reason for

\textsuperscript{81} This list are collected from the shipping list in D&CB, 1690-1720.
the arrest was that Coja Timore, being an Attorney of one of Armenian in Persia, had
demanded the account from Coja Awan which was delayed by the later by making
several excuses. Therefore, he sued to the Mayor’s Court with the help of Coja Gregorio.
As per the judgment of the court Coja Awan had finally delivered some sealed papers up
to Coja Gregorio which was later lodged in the said Court. When Coja Timore went to
St. Thoma for some business, Coja Awan followed him and prevailed upon the governor
of the said place to arrest and imprison him. This has brought about consternation in
Madras and even caused to strain their relationship with the local officers.

As both the Armenians were the inhabitants of Madras, the English governor
sent Mulla and Brahmin on 28 March to demand him but they were told that a cowl of
Pardon for Coja Awan be first issued and that the paper lodged in the Court must be
delivered to the governor of St. Thoma. The Council considered the reply and rejected
both the demands and a proposal was made to revenge the said Governor of St. Thoma
for his “insolence” interference. Considering the ill consequences it could cause to
Madras in future it was decided that the case shall be prosecuted in Madras. Further
consideration in the case was referred to another meeting.

In response to the insolent behaviors of Coja Awan, the Governor had ordered to
guard the house of the former so that no one could take or bring anything. Coja Awan had
also prevailed upon the Nawab and his Buxee to intervene for him. The two willingly
took over the case as Coja Awan was their business partner who mainly supplied jewels
and other precious goods to them. Just as the Council resolved to write to the Nawab
about the incident, before they resolved to use force to fetch Coja Timore from St. Thoma,
they received two letters from the Nawab and his Buxee on the same subject. The Nawab
Doud khan wrote that Coja Awan was ‘a person that does business’ with them who used
to supply ‘jewels and stands indebted’ for a considerable sum of money. He demanded
that the English government should order his ‘people not to meddle’ with Coja Awan
assets. 82 In the vein his Buxee also wrote to the President. 83 The Governor responded by
informing them the matter in details and justified what he did on the effects of Coja
Awan. From this reply, it appeared that the said Awan was also indebted to several

82 D&CB, April, 3, 1704, p. 26.
83 D&CB, April, 3, 1704, p. 26.
persons of Madras to the tune of 6000 to 8000 pagodas. They were earlier reluctant to come as they have large effects in the country but when a strong warning even at the cause of expelling them from the Madras was served on them they give in. In the meantime, Coja Gregory and two Attorneys of Coja Usuph informed to the Council that there was 37 Bales of goods proper for Manila in the house of Coja Awan which belonged to Coja Usuph. They requested that they be shipped on board as ‘they are dyed and chay’s goods, so that lying another year would much impair their value.’ The Council agreed to the request provided five thousand pagodas is left to the Company as security. The matter was resolved during the meeting of the Governor and the Faujdar of St. Thomas in Madras. Accordingly, Coja Timore was later released on 6th July, 1704. On his request Coja Timore was given 10,074 pagodas from the money sold on Coja Awan’s goods besides the house where Coja Awan lived was also given to him as it appears to be of Coja Usuph’s house. Likewise the bales belonging to Coja Usuphs and 3 & half bales belonging to Coja Phanusves were also ordered to deliver to Coja Timore. And all those goods properly belonging to Coja Awan were also ordered to be sealed and lock up in separate room. Further the sums were later delivered to him from the effects of Coja Awans.

On 29 August 1706, Aga Pera Calender, son of Coja Panuse Calender, had complained to the Council against another Armenian, Coja Surhaad Isreal, inhabitants of Calcutta. He complained that his father had employed Coja Surhaad Isreal as his factor about 20 years ago and accordingly gave him a stock to trade according to the customs of Armenians. However, after the death of his father the said Surhaad Isreal refused to adjust his account with him. So, he requested the council to acquaint the English Agent of Bengal, either to send Surhaad Isreal to Madras or send someone with sufficient power to adjust the account with him. The council agreed to write to Bengal accordingly.

84 D&CB, April, 4, 1704, pp. 27-28.
85 D&CB, April, 1704, p. 29.
86 D&CB, June, 24, 1704, p. 54.
87 D&CB, July 6, 1704, p. 57.
88 D&CB, July 6, 1704, p.57; June, 24, 1704, pp.60-61.
89 D&CB, August 23, 1704, p.74; August 23, 1704, p.68; 1704, p.71; December 21, 1704, p.139; April 18, 1706, p.32.
90 D&CB, December 13, August 29, 1706, p.75.
On 24 October 1706, Elias Calloose, the Vakil of Coja Surhaad, gave a petition against Aga Pera Calendar for goods and money he had taken belonged to Coja Surhaad. He complained that his master Coja Surhaad had shipped 49 chests of opium and 10 Bales of fine Cossacks besides a bill of lading, invoice and letter from Bengal which Aga Pera had secretly took possession of it and despite continuous request he refused to deliver to him. He also alleged Aga Pera of taking 450 Tomans from Gregory Panus in Persia which in altogether amounted to ten thousand pagodas. He also said that his master had ordered him to pay Mr. Addison, 6000 pagodas out of the said goods. He therefore, requested the Council that Mr. Addison be paid first even if there was any pending amount to be adjusted between the two.\(^91\)

In response to the above petition Aga Pera gave another counter petition to the Council in which he dismissed the complaints of Elias Calloose, the factor of Surhaad, as ‘sly and malicious insinuation.’ He said that Coja Surhaad had send the said goods to him to dispose and remit thereof. He produced the letter of Coja Surhaad to the President in this regard. He also said that Surhaad, in his letter, acknowledged his debts to him amounting to ten thousand Tomans, which is 3 lakh rupees and he desired him to go to Bengal to make up his account. But he said that he refused as he wanted the account to be settled in Madras as he ‘has so happily experienced the honours, justice and integrity of the English government in this part.’ As for the money in the hand of Gregory Phanus and Elias Calloose, he requested them to be deposited ‘in the court for part satisfaction of Coja Surhaad debt’ to him. As for the goods, he had taken in possession, he plan to send them in other places where they may turn to a better account, which is the constant and known customs amongst the Armenians wherever their Gomaster refuses to make up accounts’.\(^92\) As the records are silent about the decision taken in the Council it is difficult to reconstruct the final shape of the matter. However, it is possible that Aga Pera could not recover his lost as Coja Surhaad was said to be also in considerable debts to the Company which they also could not recover. But by bits Aga Pera continued to recover his money by seizing Surhaad’s affect that passed through Madras. One case came in 1709.

\(^{91}\) D&CB, October 1706, p.96.

\(^{92}\) D&CB, October 24, 1706, pp.96-97.
On 13 January 1709, Auga Pera complained to the Governor and Council that there were letters in the hand of Mr. Henry Johnson from his Vikil Coja Surhaad in Bengal and some other effects for him on board the ship. But Mr. Johnson refused to deliver to him without order from the Council/Board. The Board, thereby ordered that the said letters and effects be delivered to the Governor which are consigned to Coja Surhaad in Bengal as 'Auga Pere having formerly proved his being his Vikil and by the customs of their nation can seized the effects or letters of any Vakeels wherever they can find them.'

On 19 November 1711, one Coja Awanes delivered a petition against Aga Pera where he insisted the latter for the payment of his share of ten thousand one hundred rupees which Awanes father had paid for him for the lost ship Johan. Awanes father and Aga Pera and one Neugurby were owners of the said ship Johan which was lost on the sea. Coja Awanes claimed that Aga Pera refused to pay the said amount to him or at other times and he would write to his father and enquire the truth of the matter. Aga Pera was accordingly summoned where he was told to give his answer in writing about the accusation. On 13 December the same year, all the papers relating to the disputes were translated and ordered to be examined by the Messrs. Frederick Davenport and Banyon and give a report accordingly.

On 23 September 1712 the widow of Coja Gregory had delivered a petition to the Council against Cojah Nichola for lending to the French Company of 10,000 pagodas from the money left by her deceased husband without her consent. She also complained that Nichola had also lent 2500 pagodas to the French Company belonging to her youngest daughter on the same manner. Therefore, she prayed that their money should be delivered to them immediately the said Nichola departed from Madras. When the matter was taken up it was found the Nichola had indeed lent the money with her consent. As the said Nichola could also produced evidence that he cannot be obligated to pay any money to her he was set free.

93 D&CB, January 13, 1709, p.13.
94 D&CB, November 19, 1711, pp.163-164.
95 D&CB, November 1711, p.166.
97 D&CB, September 23,1712, pp.196-198.
98 D&CB, September 25,1712, p.198.
Thus, much conflicts and contradictions occurred in the trading systems. The Armenians were made adhere as merchant entrepreneurs during the period of our study. Perhaps, this was the only defect that was met with the system. Otherwise under this system of factorships on the family line was to the great advantage of the Armenians upon which they could overwhelm other merchant capitalists. Although the Armenian custom prescribed for under this system, personal integrity and tactfulness was always wanting in many cases.

**Trade and trading networks of the Armenians**

Trade and trading networks of the Armenians were one of the most fascinating aspects of the Armenian inhabitants of Madras. Armenians of Madras were by far one of the most prolific merchants in the region. We have said that the Armenians were the merchant individuals not belonging to any Company and King. As India serve one of the sources as well as the transitional point of trade in the oceanic network, the Armenian trading network can be most clearly seen from the point of Madras records. Besides, their merchandises included almost all tradable items depending upon the destiny of their trade. It can be said that most of the Armenians of Madras amassed huge fortunes mainly from their trade within the Indian Ocean networks. The fact that several Armenian merchants carried their goods through their own ship signify their increasing volume of trade vis-à-vis it profitability. We also found many instances of Armenian chartering the English and Danish ships for their goods not only for Persia and Europe but also within Indian Ocean trade. In the following pages we will see on the various aspects of their business.

As far as their trade items were concerned, we have very few accounts from the records. Perhaps, the single most important trading goods from India was cotton textile products from Coromandel and later also from Bengal. This cloth items formed major parts of their shipping goods for the ports of South East Asia such as Pegu, Tannascarim, Malacca, Aceh Ganjam, Siam, and even up to Manila port, etc. Of these, Manila and Pegu formed the important port of call for the Armenian merchants. We have already noted in the previous chapters that Armenians and Portuguese were mainly used as ‘cover’ in the Manila trade by the English Company. The Armenians were late comers in this sector but they seemed to have engrossed the trade with Manila during the later
period so much so that other merchants have implored the directors at home who demanded an answer from Madras Council.\textsuperscript{99} However, they were told that the trade to Manila is carried by the Portuguese or Armenians or Moors, no European of our Church can go their so that the complaint of that trade being engrossed by the Armenians is not so well founded.\textsuperscript{100} The importance of this route has been already mentioned and need not be repeated here. However, we may briefly mention here that Manila trade is the source of much of the silver and gold highly prized in India for investment. These items were exchanged mainly with Indian cotton textile products which were shipped in large volumes, a good which were again transshipped to American continent. Hence, Armenians amassed their huge fortune by dominating this important trade route.

However, the Armenians merchants were accused of trading with several other European Companies such as French and Dutch in contrary to the contracts they made with the English. Therefore, in 1724, the Company took stringent rules against the Armenians. They were ordered that no inhabitants of Madras would be allowed to freight any foreign ships for Manila until the ships of the Company were filled.\textsuperscript{101} Earlier, they were ordered not to trade with any other European Company failure with severe punishment was to be awarded.\textsuperscript{102} But when such orders were floated the Council took this exceptional stance against them in contrary to the Contract.

The next in importance for the Armenian merchants was the Pegu trade. The importance of this sector was due mainly to it supply of diamond and other precious stones. Several items of trade also came from this place. We have already mentioned them and need not be repeated here. Nevertheless, some important affairs involving the Armenians in this sector may be discussed here. In 1724 two Englishmen were murdered in Pegue by one Armenian Zachary. The Directors were so displeased one English officer for reaching an understanding with the murderer and directed the President to demand as the King of Pegu for justice against Zachary.\textsuperscript{103} Again, in 1725, the Madras Council come to know that the Armenians and native merchants were building many ships in Pegu that the Company’s shipping was greatly affected. The storehouse keeper was

\textsuperscript{99} Dispatches from England, 23 Jan 1729, para. 54.
\textsuperscript{100} Dispatches to England, 19 Jan. 1730, para. 65.
\textsuperscript{101} D&CB, 1724, pp. 66-67.
\textsuperscript{102} D&CB, 1724, pp. 52-53.
\textsuperscript{103} Dispatches from England, Feb, 14, 1723, para. 43.
ordered not to sell any anchors for Pegue and raised the price for cordage which was meant to go there. Such decision was also in favour of the Directors at home who wrote that, 'the reason (as you state the case) of your stopping as Armenians ship designed for Manila seems to us justifiable."

The trade with Tenassarim was also substantial. Here, goods like elephants, elephant tasks, and rice, etc. were imported in exchange with Indian textiles. For instance, in June 1691, the customer informed the Council that several elephants were brought from Tenasarim by the Armenians. He informed that the Armenians did not pay custom because they had not yet valued them and desired the Council to decide therein. Upon examination of their sizes, the Council ordered their values at 400 pagodas per elephant and demanded five percent customs accordingly. Again, in January 1692, Senior John DeMark, an eminent Armenian merchant of Madras, arrived from Tanasarim with Tin, Copper, Tutenage and Elephants. This ship also contains several of the King of Siam's servants sent for Pondicherry 'to treat with them about their affairs.' The Council was also informed that there were two elephants and about 150 chests of copper belonging to the king of Siam. As the said king was indebted to the Company, the government decided to seize them.

Likewise, the lists of things traded by the Armenian merchants were many and diversified. This can be seen for the various accounts. In March 1693, the warehouse keeper was ordered to buy for the President six half pieces of scarlet from the Armenians and three half pieces of Aurora 'they imported upon the Sampson' and 100 sheets of China paper of Cojee Abram. Again on 9 March, ship Santa Cruz belonging to the Armenians came from Bengal with a cargo of 'rice, sugar, etc.' and Ship Senhora de Rosara also came from Pegu and Atcheh with a cargo of 'wax, ganjee, elephant's teeth, horse, etc.' In June 1693, one Amir John Armenian produced a bill of lading for 11 Bales of boardcloth deliverable to him at Fort St. George by Ship Sampson but as the said ship had taken them already to Bengal, he therefore, requested the Council, to delivered the said cloth

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105 Dispatches from England, December 1, 1725, para. 51.  
109 Ibid, March 9,1693.
there. In July 1693, two Gorsbandars from Prince Azzum Tarras complained to the Council that Cojee Gregory had not provided the provisions 'required for the Prince use' which includes 'Persia fruit rarities and other for the Prince.' In 1674, when one Armenian ship St. Marke was apprehended for exporting 40 bags of salt peter, a contraband goods. He seemed to carry amongst his 'bags of sugar of which above two thousand has been shipped off.'

On 7 March 1798, Cojee Panus and Cojee Saffur Armenians informed the Council that three Bales of "Gurrap" were brought ashore from their ship which was part of their Bengal Cargo designed from Manila, "against their order and by mistake". They requested the Council to be retaken in the ship without opening or paying custom. We also know that there Coja Awans traded with jewels with the local courts in huge amount and when his house was opened there 37 Bales goods proper for Manila. On 24 October 1706, Aga Pera was said to have received consisting of '49 chests of opium, and 10 Bales of fine Cossacks' belonging to Coja Surhand, his factor. On 2 August 1715, Aga Pera Calendar produces an old Contract with the committee of the old company for the sole trade in garnets requesting to load four chests on board the Kent. They informed the Company at home that Agra Pera had send 15 chest of garnets for which he was paying ten percent customs and would send in January their costs and where they procure. In fact, the Directors at home were also curious to know from where those garnets come from. The President wrote to them, dated 26 January, 1716 that the garnets sent by Aga Pera was ‘dug up between gulkondah and Metchlepata, cost 30 rupees a maund and near half as much charge in coming to Madras.'

On 3 September 1717 one ship belonging to the King of Acheh was seized by the English government of Madras as a reprisal for the quality of gold and other goods taken from ship Messiah in Acheh by the order of the King. It was sold at Public outcry. On

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111 D&C B, July 10, 1693, p.107; July 1, 1693, p.103.
112 D&C B, September 24,1694, pp.102-103.
114 D&C B, April,3,1704, p.26; April,1704, p.26; June 24, 1704, p.54.
115 D&C B, October 1706, p.96.
116 D&C B, August 2, 1715, p.89.
117 Dispatches to England, 1714-18, dated 13 September, 1715, p.84.
118 Dispatches to England, 1714-18, dated 26 January, 1716, p.92.
119 D&C B, September 3, 1717.
13 July, 1719, a notice was put at the sea gate for all persons that had any claims or demands to make on the Aceheh prize.\textsuperscript{120} Besides other, Cojee Zachary, an Armenian, claimed that he and some others were also concerned for the stock of 12000 pagodas on the Messiah. Cojee Zachary was asked to give exact account of his gold seized in Aceheh within 10 days.\textsuperscript{121} The Aceheh prize fetched pagodas 5418; 33 fanam; 64 cash. Zachary and other (i.e. sunca Rama and Mal Cawn, etc) got 3527 pagodas. However, the actual lost from the ship was to the tune of 9010 pagodas.\textsuperscript{122} This shows considerable amounts of gold among the trade items of the Armenians, Cojee Zachary and others.

Therefore, it become clear from the foregoing accounts that the Armenians had traded on several items of tradable goods in their mercantile world. In fact the Armenians were famous for their trade in diamond and other precious stones beside their profitable trade in bullions and silvers from Manila and Macau. Besides, the Armenians also traded in good amounts of spices, indigo, sugar, textile goods, saltpeter and other rarities from Persia and Europe. All the other goods seemed to have formed part of the goods required to exchange with their main item of trades. In fact, only the Armenians were said to have trade in Ruby. For instance, in one of the dispatches to England the Company at home was told that ‘Armenians generally drive that trade who will pay nothing if they can help it the custom if paid at landing which might in private would yield 4 times what it doth.’\textsuperscript{123}

As far as the trading networks of the Armenians were concern it extended from Macau (China), Manila, Malacca, Ganjam, Aceheh, Tanaserry, Siam, Pegu, etc., in the east to Bengal, Coramendel, Malabar, Goa, Bombay, Surat, in India and this extended westward to Persia, Central and Western Asia and to Europe. In the east, in Manila (Philippines) the Armenians have the sole trade.\textsuperscript{124} Manila was so important for trade during that time as it was transit point from where American bullion passed through. It was under the control of the Spanish with whom the English have bad relation during that time. Nor do many of the other European nations have good rapport with the Spanish.

\textsuperscript{120} D&CB, July 3, 1917, p.118.
\textsuperscript{121} D&CB, September 14, 1917, p.170.
\textsuperscript{122} D&CB, November 1719, p.203.
\textsuperscript{123} Dispatches to England, 1701-02 to 1710-11, General letter of fort St. George dated 19 February, 1702, p.8.
\textsuperscript{124} Dispatches to England, 1701-02 to 1710-11, General letter of Fort St,George dated February, 1711, p.147.
government. However, the port could be easily accessible for the Armenians for their trade as they did not belonged to any country and King. Therefore, Armenians became the natural choice to trade with Manila. We have seen that at least on ship belonged to the Armenians have visited Manila every year for procuring bullion and other trading items. For instance, between 1700 to 1710 ship Santa Cruz was seen to have traveled to and fro between Manila and Madras each year beginning its voyages by around June-July and returning in Madras by early months of the next year. In 1704 another ship St. Joan de Canterbury, belonging to the Armenians was also sailing out for Manila.

Similarly, Macau in China, although it was not as frequented as other places, was also visited especially by the Zachary family. Goods from here were raging from silk, silver, etc. For instance we have seen ship St. Maria arriving from Macau on 13 February 1709 and sailing it back to it on 12 May 1709. In 1709 ship Santa Cruz was also seen to have arrived from Macau.

However, the most frequented place of trade for the Armenians in the South East Asian countries was Pegu beside other places such as Acheh, Malacca, Ganjam, Tanaseey, Batavia, etc. The main trading items from these places ranges from diamond and other precious stones to spices, elephants, ivory, timbers, etc. The Armenians had brought all these items to India in exchange of several goods from India such as textiles products, and other rare items brought from Persia and Europe. These goods they brought from South East Asia countries were distributed in India, Persia and Europe. Most of the Armenian’s ships were plying in this section.

In India, Bengal was the most frequented place for the Armenians of Madras. Besides, goods from the Coromandel, the Armenians also collected goods in Bengal from where they took them to the South East Asian countries for exchange. Not only that the Armenians had also purchased goods from Bengal for selling in Persia and Europe. Goods procured from Bengal consisted of indigoes, saltpeter, sugar, rice and several varieties of textiles products, etc. The following table will show Armenians trading.

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125 See for instance D&CB, 8 March 1704(for its arrival) and 24 June, 1704.
126 D&CB, July 1, 1704.
127 D&CB, 23 Feb &12 May, 1709.
128 D&CB, 8 Feb, 1701.
Table 6.1: List of Armenian shipping to various ports from Madras (1721-1740)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ships</th>
<th>Noqedah/owners</th>
<th>destination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1721</td>
<td>Bon Voyage</td>
<td>Coja Simon (o)</td>
<td>Pegue</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sta Cruce</td>
<td>Coja Nathermaul (N)</td>
<td>Ganjan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sta Maria</td>
<td>Coja Meertam (N)</td>
<td>Pague</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sta Marcus</td>
<td>Coja Arahem (N)</td>
<td>Bengal</td>
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<tr>
<td>1722</td>
<td>sta Cruca</td>
<td>Coja Ngarmaul</td>
<td>Conimeer</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Coja Ngarmaul</td>
<td>Gnajan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sta Maria</td>
<td>Cojee Meertan</td>
<td>Pague</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salamut</td>
<td>Coja Garsoon (N)</td>
<td>Bengal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>St. Ann</td>
<td>Coja Tasquela (N)</td>
<td>Gaule</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Eli</td>
<td>Cojee Simeon (N)</td>
<td>Pague</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sta. Cruce</td>
<td>Cojee Auge Noore (n)</td>
<td>Pague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1723</td>
<td>Sta. Cruce</td>
<td>Cojee Nathamal (N)</td>
<td>Connimur</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sta. Messiah</td>
<td>Cojee Ambrose (N)</td>
<td>Gnajan</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sta. Messiah</td>
<td>Cojee Ambrose (N)</td>
<td>Ganjam</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ben Voyage</td>
<td>Cojee Tessally (N)</td>
<td>Malaeca</td>
</tr>
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<td>1725</td>
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Sources: See footnote 129

Besides, we also know that the Armenians were also deeply involved in the overland trade especially to the local courts. For instance, we know that one Cojee Gregory had regularly sent goods to the courts of the Mughals, Golkanda, etc. In 1694

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129 D&CB, extracted from 1721-1740.
when Issa Cooly was negotiating at the Mughal Court for procuring Husbullhokoom to call off the stoppage of trade in Bengal and Surat for the Europeans, the President wrote to him to make use of money out of Aga Pera’s goods which he “has sent...to considerable amount into your hand...and we shall repay him in Madras.” We also know that Coja Awans was a considerable jewels merchant who traded with the local courts and have indebted to many of the official hierarchies.

As far as their freights are concerned the Armenians usually freighted their goods in the ship of others such as the English and Danish Companies and the local merchants besides using their own ships. For instance, in 1701, the Armenian merchants were said to have freighted the Company ship Phoenix for Persia or Surat whichever places they want to take their good. Again, in 1703 Coja Eadgan and Coja Gregory Armenians submitted a petition to the Governor and Council of Fort St. George on behalf of Coja Surhaad and other Armenian freighters of ship Colchester, the Company ship, against the Captain of the ship. In their petition they said that Coja Surhaad and other have freight ship Colchester for 38 thousand rupees from Bengal to Persia and back to Madras or Bengal. On 6 August, 1713, the Governor and Council received a letter from the Danish governor of Tranquenbar saying that they have sent their Company ship to Madras which arrived from Persia “which was freighted in Bengall by one Soltangull, an Armenian” who was accused of ‘defraud them’ to the tune of 39232 rupees.

Another case that comes to mind was the complaint against the English at Mughal court by some Armenians, received through a letter written to him by one Armenian Padre, Serno Churdeech from the Mughal’s Camp dated 27 April 1698. He told the Council that a Muslim and 3 or 4 Armenians (one being Cojee Abaanus), freighters of the ship Queda Merchant belonging to Calendar’s son, Aga Pera, bound from Bengal to Surat was robbed by the pirates at the sea.

Therefore, it is clear that the Armenians had freighted the ship of others too. Especially the Armenians wholly depended upon the ships of the English and the Danish

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130 D&CB, March 26 1694, p.30.
132 Letters from Fort St. George,1700-01, dated 15th April and 24 June,1701. pp.36 &47.
133 D&CB, August 24,1703, pp.62-63; August, 25, 1703, p.64.
134 D&CB, October 20, 1713; April 19,1714, p.56; July 15,1714, p.12.
135 D&CB, May 23, 1698, p.57.
Companies for their goods for Europe, Persia and for the Western Indian Coast. By the turn of the 18th century the Armenians become prosperous and were often abused and being abused by the English government at Madras. However, it would be enough to say that the Armenians have enjoyed one of the most respected status among the inhabitants of Madras during our period of study. This aspect will be deal later. In the following pages an attempt is made on the roles of Armenians in negotiating the Company's affairs at the courts of the local rulers.

**Armenians as political negotiators**

As far as the roles of the Armenians on political negotiation for the Company and also for the local rulers to the Company are concerned we have certain instances where they interceded for them. This privileged status were given to them as they were conversant in the local languages especially their knowledge of Persian as well as English. In December 1692, one Cojee Gregory Armenian went to the President Hegginson and asked for his assistance to help Aliverde Khan released from his imprisonment at the Gingee fort by the Marathas by lending them some money for which his brother-in-law requested him to do so.\(^{136}\) The President declined the request.\(^{137}\) When Allivarde Khan himself had written to Cojee Gregory and Cojee Abanus, they again requested the President for the same.\(^{138}\) But being highly skeptical upon the designs of the two Armenians the Council again declined.\(^{139}\)

Although the Council expressed its deep suspec in alluding to the Armenians request they were altogether indispensable when some negotiation had to be done at the local courts. In January 1694, when the council received ‘many uncertain reports and opinions among the Moormen and inhabiting or traveling here [Madras], as well as our black servants concerning Assid Cawn, and Zulfiker Cawn, it is thought necessary to understand the truth of their being in or out of favour.” The task of getting details automatically felt on Cojee Gregory who ‘having an acquaintance with Issa Cooly, an Armenian merchant resident at the Mogulls Court, doth undertake to write to him and in 30 or 40 days time receive and answer, as well as to that particular as what else has come

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\(^{136}\) D&CB, December 3, 1692.

\(^{137}\) Ibid, p.19.

\(^{138}\) D&CB, January 23,1693, p.31.

\(^{139}\) D&CB, January 23,1693, p.31.
to his knowledge at the Court relating to the English at Suratt and Bengal.\textsuperscript{140} Cojee Gregory has done his job. He was intimated by Issa Cooly that his quarries would be investigated.

Seeing one influential Armenian in the Mughal Court, the Council also thought it proper and prudent to request him in procuring the King’s Husbullhookum to call off the stop on the European trade in Bengall and Surat. It was due to the shrewd diplomacy played by Issa Colly, an Armenian, at the King’s Court that such Husbullhookum was procured sooner than expected. It should be noted that Issa Coolly was the factor of Coja Gregory in the Mughals Court through whom he used to send large amount of goods for trade. So, the role of negotiating with the Mughals Court was entirely entrusted to him through Coja Gregory.\textsuperscript{141} It seemed that the money taken for the Husbulhookum from Cojah Gregory account was not paid immediately by the Company. When he demanded in July 1694, the Company issued him a bond the ‘said sum of rupees 6238 ½ reckoned at the rate of 333 rupees for one hundred pagodas.’\textsuperscript{142} This money was paid only on 6 September 1694.\textsuperscript{143}

Concerning the procurement of Phirmaund from the Mughal Court in October 1694, Cojee Gregory received letter from his son-in-law from the King’s Camp telling him that ‘Emaun Cooley could not proceed in the business of the Phirmaund because he wanted money to defray the first necessary court charges.’ Therefore, Cojee Gregory, upon hearing all these advised the President that if Issa Cooly is employed in the business of getting a Phirmaund and ‘give security for the repayment of the cheque he would in short time effect it.’ However, the Council decided upon to see the outcome of the first mission with Emaun Cooley and only when he fail can they only decide upon employing Issa Cooly.\textsuperscript{144}

Another Armenian, Amir John was used by the Company to negotiate with the Nawab at the camp. This time the complaints were of the Allebuxes injuries to the Company, robberies and to get Parwanas but Wottunchund delayed for want of more

\textsuperscript{140} D&C\textsuperscript{B}, January 9, 1694, pp.171-172.
\textsuperscript{141} D&C\textsuperscript{B}, March 15, 1694, p.20; March 15, 1694, pp.20-21; March 26, 1694, p.28; March, 1694, pp.28-29; March 26, 1694, p.30.
\textsuperscript{142} D&C\textsuperscript{B}, July 26, 1694, p.81.
\textsuperscript{143} D&C\textsuperscript{B}, September 6, 1694, p.94.
\textsuperscript{144} D&C\textsuperscript{B}, October 25, 1694, p.117.
presents. After reaching the camp, Amir John kept informing the Company what
conspired at the court and what progress took place there. On 28 March, Amir John
informed the Council that the Nawab demanded 10,000 pagodas and Wottumchand 5000
rupees for settling the business of Tevenapatam. The Council resolved that Amir John do
proceed to finish the treaty and Ramapa and Venkaty be sent to assist him.145 However,
this was objected by Cojee Gregorie so that the business was entrusted wholly to Amir
John.146 The letters sent by Amir John were usually in Armenians which someone of
translate them in English. Amir John had informed that the Nawab demanded 8000
pagodas for him and 2000 for other officers.147 On 7 May, Amir John wrote again that the
Nawab made further samples about changing the words in the parwanas which the
Company wanted him to alter. The Council advised him to draw upon bill if the need
arise.148 On 23 May, he informed that the Nawab refused Perwasas according to the
changed word but Emaun Cooly and Wootum Chand tell him he will grant all at last.149
On 17 June, Amir John sent the draft of Perwana from the Nawab without any change
and a demand of 10,000 pagodas for it. He was again asked to insist further and he was
given liberty to spend 10,000 pagodas if the Nawab grants that or better.150 On 7 July,
Amir John informed that the Nawab had at last agreed to give the desired parwanas for
Fort St. David and it was ready and that the demanded 10,000 pagodas be immediately
sent as the Nawab was about to attack Tanjore and he himself was ill and couldn’t stay
longer.151 The money was sent by bill of exchange on July 8.152 On September 9, 1698,
Amir John had informed that he will be proceeding to Madras with the Perwasas on 9th
September on which he was ceremoniously welcome by the President and Council along
with the various inhabitants such as the English, Armenians and Hindus at the garden.153
Thus, after almost one year in the Nawab’s camp, Amir John had procured the Perwana
for Fort St. David.

146 D&CB, March 28, 1698, pp.34-35.
147 D&CB, May 3, 1697, p.50.
148 D&CB, May 3 1697, p.56.
149 D&CB, 1697, p.57.
150 D&CB, 1697, p.69, p.71.
151 D&CB, 1697, p.77.
152 D&CB, 1697, pp.79-80.
153 D&CB, September 9, 1698, p.102.
With regard to the procurement of Phirmaund from the Mughal courts was concerned on 8 January, 1709, Mr. Lewis, Aga Pera (Armenians), Narrain and Surapau were summoned in the Council to consider the weighty affairs negotiation with the king, who approved of the answers to the letters [for the Phirmaund] and what has been done in the preparation of a present to be sent him his arrival at Gulcondah. On 17 February, Mr. Lewis, Berlin, Aga Pera, Sarapau, Narrain, the Mulla and Bramany were again summoned and petition for King Shah Alam and letters for Khan Bahadur and Khan Caumaun were read before them and approved for dispatch. On 19 February, they were again summoned and letters to Zulfikar Kha, Khan Caumaun, Prince Mausadin, Nawab Dound Khan Etc, were read and approved. Again, on 27 June, Aga Pera, Surapau, Narrain, Mulla and Bramany were summoned to consider sending the present to Matchilipatnam. But it was resolved that the presents should not be sent until they hear that the king’s messenger came to the place. On 1 July, they were again summoned and letters to Isuph Khand Khan Bahadur were read to them and approved.

Again, when the Council was informed that the king’s Gurbanadar (messenger) had already arrived in Matchilipatnam, Aga Pera, Surapan, Narrain, Mulla, Collaway and Venkaty Chetty were summoned in the council to consider the matter. It was agreed that part of the presents be sent there and part of it which were cumbersome be sent through Bengal or Surat by ship. As there was also a demand for 6 elephants, Aga Pera and others were entrusted to procure them from the elephant brokers.

On 6 September 1709, sending goods to the Mughal king was considered in the Consultation and the following opinions were given: Aga Pera, Narain, Colloway Chetty and Mulla by way of Golconda; and Serapa by way of Bengal and Patna; and Paupa Bramany by way of Bengal and Patna if the king, had gone to Delhi and by way of Golconda if he was at Arampore.

As the Governor heard that the king was gone from Aurangabad toward Delhi, he summoned the Council and others to consider the matter. Aga Pera, Serapa, Sunca Rama,
Collowy Chetty, Vinicatty Chetty, and Paupa, all felt that the king’s presents be immediately sent. Therefore, it was resolved that the presents be sent immediately. 161

On 22 September 1713, a general letter from Bengal was read saying that they did desire to send presents to the Mughals under the leadership of Mr. John Surman and Cojah Surhaad, but deferred it till the Fort St. George Council had given a ‘thought thereon.’ 162 In fact, Cojah Surhaad, the cousin and factor of Coja Panuse (and later to Aga Pera, his son), was sent to the Mughal’s court for procuring a Phirmaund for the English Company in India. He was very well acquainted with the king Faruksiyar during his previous mission to the Nawab of Bengal in the 1690’s. On 19 November 1713, the Madras government received another letter saying that the chief shroff at the king’s court had demanded considerable amount from Cojah Surhaad and they have laid aside all thoughts of sending him with the present as the Duan of Mursidabad began to bring troubles to the Company’s affairs. They also said that they have order the gentleman at Patna to send their vakil to the Mughal’s court “to prepare the way for the present.” 163

Again, on 7 December, another letter from Bengal said that they have received an order from the Court for the safe passage of the presents there. The dastak read that ‘Coja Surhaad merchant, Ambassador for the English being about to bring some presents from Houghly to the court, you (Gomortas, Subas, Phousdars, rahedars, etc.) are to take care and give him your safe conduct till his arrival at court’. However, the English government expressed its skepticism over the expression of Coja Surhaad ‘English Ambassador’ notwithstanding his debts to the chief shroff of the court. It was speculated at the Board that Cojah Surhaad must have inserted the word through his friends at the court. However, the Council hoped that it will not bring any ill consequences to the affairs. 164

On 8 March, another letter dated 18 January 1714 from Bengal intimated that they have received a Hosbullhookum from the Court ‘from enjoying their wanted freedom in trade’. They also said that they have pitched upon John Surman, John Pratt and Edward Stephenson, with Cojah Surhaad to accompany their present to the Mughals. 165

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161 D&CB, September 9, 1709, p.71.
162 D&CB, September 22, 1713, p.131.
163 D&CB, November 19, 1713, p.173.
164 D&CB, December 7, 1713, pp.179-180.
165 D&CB, March 8, 1714, p.31.
After a protracted effort was made at the Mughal Court by Cojee Surhaad and others for securing the Husbulhookum, the Company was very desirous of possessing the Divy Islands for many advantageous reasons. Considering that there was no port for harbouring the ship on the coast of Coromandel because of which they were compelled to harbor their ships in Arakan, Pegu and Sri Lanka in winter and leave the coast, except in Bengal, in monsoon season. As Divy Island was at most suitable position for a harbor the English Company was very keen to rent or possessed it. Therefore, in 1717, the Company had decided to take the Island by any means, including force if necessary. Besides, the local inhabitants near the Divy Island had also repeatedly insisted the Company to immediately settle down in the island as the Nawab Mubarez Khan was present nearby.  

However, the company felt that such a hasty move will cause troubles from the local potentates, officers, especially one Upparow renter of Divy Island was seemed to have created disturbance the region by that time. However, various steps were taken ‘in order to obtain a peaceable possession of Divy Island with all possible expeditions’. Besides making various arrangement for the occupation of divvy Island, by sending armed forces, the President proposed to the Board that the best way to possess the Island was by peaceful means upon taking the confidence of the Nawab and other officers in and around Machelepatnam. Therefore, the Board on 4 November 1717 decided to ask Aga Pera, the chief Armenian merchants of Madras who was at that time in Machelelpatnam, ‘to transact the affair with the Nabob and other officers and to be permitted to give as five thousand pagodas for a sunhood for our peaceably taking possession of Due Island without loss of time’.  

Accordingly, a letter was dispatched to Aga Pera on 5 November informing him to the resolution taken in the Board. Aga Pera replied it on 3 December 1717. It seemed his answer was not affirmative. The President was asked to write a private letter ‘to desire his answer when he will accept of the trust, already offered him in relation to the aforementioned affairs’. As Aga Pera did not reply, the case was again taken up on 26 December 1717. It was agreed to defer the delivery of the Mughals letter to the Nawab of.

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166 D&CB, September 2, 1717, p.137.
167 D&CB, September 2, 1717, p.137.
168 D&CB, November 4, 1717, p.178.
169 Ibid, p.89.
170 D&CB, December 5, 1717, p.189.
Golkonda until the Board ‘hear whether Aga Pera will accept of our commission lately offered him concerning the affairs of Divvy Island’.\textsuperscript{171} It appeared that Aga Pera had finally accepted the commission to transact the business with the Nawab and other Officers. This can be inferred from the various letters that went to and fro between him and the President.\textsuperscript{172} However, we did not know of the progress that he took to such task. However, it seemed likely that Aga Pera, being a good friend and knowledgeable person with the Nawab and other officers including the Faujdar of Machilipatnam, must have transacted the business expected of him.

By their good relations with the officers of the local courts, the Armenians had also even taken some of their cases to the court directly by themselves without the assistance of the English government. For instance, in July 1695, some Armenians were beaten and wounded by the officers of the Junkanner of Ipere for the reasons unknown to us. The Armenian inhabitants of Madras demanded a satisfactory explanation and redress for the wound from the Nawab through Ajee Mohamad Ali. For this they sent an emissary to the king’s Camp on their own. They also intimate the matter to the President and Council of Madras on July 4, 1695. The case was taken up on 4th July in which four prominent Armenians of the town appeared before the Council and gave the detail accounts of the circumstances leading to the quarrels. However, the council decided to take any amicable solution after fully taking the accounts of the quarrels from other sources. This apathy must have greatly dissatisfied the Armenians who, on 5th July, under the leadership of Cojee Gregory, delivered a declaration to the President in Armenian language and attested in Persian and signed by about 30 Persians and Armenians. The declaration was regarding the abuse meted to Amir John, an Armenians, by the Junkanner which was designed to send to “Hadjee Mahomad Allee at the Camp to procure them satisfaction from the Nabob.” The matter was again taken up on 6th July at the Council “wherein it is observed that the Armenians do not apply themselves to us for gaining satisfaction (as all inhabitants ought to do in such cases) and it is thought best to let them take their own course, and sent Narrain the Coppyes of the Attestation to publicly in a quarrel whose success is doubtful being credibly informed that the Armenians whatever

\textsuperscript{171} D\&CB, December 26, 1717, p.202.
\textsuperscript{172} D\&CB, 1718, pp.1,6,18,24.
they pretend, were the first aggressors and gave great provocations to Duans officers.\textsuperscript{173} Accordingly, a letter and the attestation and declaration were dispatched to Narrain who was at the Nawab’s camp telling about the whole story and the decision taken in the council. Although he was asked not to persuade publicly as the Armenians have chosen to send their own emissary he was at the same time instructed to “certainly get the better of the Inkanners and gain an advantage and security to our privileges and that the he Junkanners cannot hinder our other business depending with the Nobels.”

Although the Council at fort St. George had express it skepticism in the success of the Armenians appeal to the Court of the Nawab, they were surprised to see the successful come out. On 13\textsuperscript{th} July, Narrain and Mulla arrived from the Nawab’s and brought several letters and orders with them. Among them was an orders from the Nawab Zulfikar Khan to Maudanat, the Junkanner of Ipere in which he was directed to “act according to the Sallabad” agreed with the Company.\textsuperscript{174} Although the grievances of the Armenians were not particularly redressed an ordered to observe the Sallabad agreed with the Company was enough to redress their plight. It is clear that the Arminians were very influential at the local court than any other community by virtue of which they were often used by the Companies as well as for the redressing of their own grievances.

Again, Armenians were also used to intercede at the Court of Ava. On 8\textsuperscript{th} September 1694, presents provided by Cojee Gregory Paroan and letters to the king of Ava and his four principal governors were sent buy the Antonio Silva ship to Senior Gregory, an Armenian residents in Ava, for the release of Bartho: Rodrigues, his ship, men, and cargo. The said Rodrigues was the Jews Inhabitants of Madras. He was seized by the Governor of Mortivan in the kingdom of Ava, on his way from Attech for Bengal when they landed for wants of provisions. The letters and others were also meant to recover the estate of Andrain Tilbury, Dutchman inhabitants of Madras who died in Pegu and his estate being seized by the governor and secured in the King’s godown.\textsuperscript{175}

\textsuperscript{173} D&CB, July 6,1695, p.88.
\textsuperscript{174} D&CB, July, 11,1695,p.92.
\textsuperscript{175} D&CB, September 8,1694,p.95
The Armenians relationship with the Company

As far as the relationship between the Armenians and the English Government in Madras are concerned, it can be said that it was cordial and courteous as long as the Armenians did not infringed upon the Company’s interest and acted within the expected spheres of their business. However, this could not happen at all time. We have certain instances in which the Armenians were dealt with harshly. But overall it can be said that the Company had taken cautious steps not to discourage the Armenians as they served them much more greatly than any other community. In the following pages, certain instances are taken up to show how the English Government took over the case of the Armenians.

Taking into account its favorable approach, it would be pertinent to begin with the creation of one room of Aldermen in the Corporation (Mayor Court of alderman) on 16 March 1690 where the ‘ablest Armenians’ was to be appointed. It was not clear who was appointed for this post but the fact that the President nominated Senior Gregorio Armenians for the said post and the Council on 23 September 1689 shows that he was appointed for the post. This favour was the first manifestation of fulfilling their commitment in the contract made in England which specifically said that the Armenians should be ‘capable of all civil offices and preferments in the same manner as if they were English men born’. This becomes clearer when Senior Gregorio Paroan was appointed as Justices of the Superior Court of Judicature on 16 June 1690. This Superior Court of Judicature was created for the ‘good of the Government and satisfaction of the inhabitants to the encouragement of trade and merchandize which cannot be without a fee and full execution of Justices’. Besides, three Englishmen and one Tamil (Allingall Pillai), Senior gregorio Paroan “a knowing Judicius Armenian Merchant” was appointed as Justice of the prestigious Superior Court of Judicature “to inquire into causes that happen from his own nation and all other foreigners he being too well verst in their languages and customes.” By virtue of their privileged position now, the Armenians were chosen to represent all the other foreigners settled in Madras. In fact, in 1692, the

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176 D&CB, March 26, 1690, p.22.
177 Wheelers, Annals, I, P.165.
178 D&CB, June 16, 1690, p.43.
179 D&CB, 16, June 1690, p.43.
180 Ibid, p.43.
Directors at home had directed the President and Council of Madras to consider representation of 'heads of the several foreigner casts'.

The post of Alderman created for the Armenians was successively occupied by the eminent Armenian merchants during our period of study. After the death of Gregory the post was occupied by Aga Pera Calander. Coja Simon had occupied the post after Aga Pera. In 1718 when Cojah Simone, left for Pegue on 17 September, Cojah Zachary, his relative was appointed to take his place in his absence. Again, in 1719, when Cojah Zachary left for Pegu, Cojah Issac Cooley, one of the same families, was place in his stead.

As far as their appointment in other post, we have no reference except the two persons appointed for the gunroom crew. On 24 January 1695, it was ordered that Gregorie, an Armenian, be appointed for the Gunroom crew, for which the room was already created on the 17 January 1695. Another Armenian was also entertained in the Gunroom crew on 22 April 1695.

In September 1695, one Cojee Fuckaree, a Muslim and shopkeeper of Madras was seized and confined by Cojee Gregory when he was suspected of running away from the town without paying his debts to the said Cojee Gregory. However, he managed to write a letter to his friends in the Nawabs camp in which he falsely accused Cojee Gregory for robbing his goods amounting to two to three thousand pagodas and later imprisoned him. He asked his friends to solicit the Nawab on his behalf. However, this complaint was also informed to Cojee Gregory by his close acquaintance there which he took it to the President. Accordingly, 'Cojee Fuckree and ten Persian and Moor inhabitants' were summoned and before them accommodated the demands of his creditors [Cojee Gregory], whereupon he was discharged from his confinement. His letter of complaint to the Nawab was read before them as asked them whether he be excused or not. They, 'being willing to excuse there countrymen said he was mad when he did it, but declared it

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182 D&CB, September 28, 1718, p. 171.
183 D&CB, September 31, 1719, p. 171.
184 D&CB, January 24, 1695, p. 12.
185 D&CB, April 22, 1695, p. 55.
was false, and Cojee Fockree himself also signed in the same manner, which attestation is kept to be sent to the Nabob as occasion requires.186

Another case of Armenians came in 1703, when Coja Eadgan and Coja Gregory Armenians submitted a petition to the Governor and Council of Fort St. George on behalf of Coja Surhaad and other Armenian freighters of ship Colchester for 38 thousand rupees from Bengal to Persia and back to Madras or Bengal. However, they received several abuses from the deceased captain Benjamin rouse and later from Captain Alexander Reid. They also charged privileged quota which in total amounted to 5119 rupees. They demanded this amount from the company as means to rectify the said grievances.187

The charge was considered in the Council on 25 August 1703, where the Armenians proved their charges against the Captains. After ‘a mature debate it was agreed that the deceased commanders estate, with the other officers also had loaded more then their privilege, which account is to be adjusted by captain Reid and Mr. Walker in their passage to Bengal, having not time to do it here’. It was also resolved that ‘the Armenians should be paid freight for twenty ton after the rate that they had paid freight for the whole ship. And whereas captain Rouse has no effects on the ship to satisfy his part, it is agreed that we write to Bengall to the President and Council to pay the same into the Company cash, and ....advise thereof to the Chief of Gembrone to pay the same into the Companys cash there out of captain Rouse’s Estate’.188

In March 1713, the Governor and Council of Madras were informed by the chief and council of Surat that Aga Pera calendar, Armenian inhabitants of Madras, has to be paid 5900 rupees to Vituul Panack, the Company broker in the year 1695, from the wrong charged from his account. Aga Pera was accordingly summoned to attend the Board, the charge being read to him. However, he demanded some time to check into his account and promised to give his answer in writing, which was granted. On 30th March, he again appeared before the Board and ‘produced full and ample discharged under the hands of the President and Council in Surat upon the backsides of the several contracts made between the Honourable Old East India Company and his father Cojah Phanoose in England and the said Aga Pera father offering upon oath that he never had any other

186 D&CB, September 17,1695, p.119.
188 D&CB, August 25,1703, p.64.
dealings with the Honourable Company that what related to the said contracts.” Therefore, the Board resolved that the whole affair should be told to the Generall and Council of Surat through a letter.\(^{189}\)

On 6 August, 1713, the governor and Council of Madras received a letter from the Danish governor of Tranquenbar saying that they have sent their Company’s ship to Madras which arrived from Persia ‘which was freighted in Bengal by one Soltangull, an Armenian’. However, they said that they are ‘apprehensive (that) he intends to defraud them of what is their due or account of freight and demorage’. They have already settled in their Court of Judicature of the amount (balance) of 39232 rupees. They sent two of their Company’s servants upon the ship so that the English government assists them in unloading the ship and secured the freighter effects/dues after selling them there. However, upon considering the case, that although they wanted to assist the Danish Company, the freight due date was not yet over and the Armenians had affirmed that he would never submit his account to be settled by the jurisdiction of Tranquenbar, the Council resolved that they ‘should do a great prejudice to the trade of this (Madras) port in tying up our hands from doing the said Armenian justice in case he applys to us after the goods are landed’, if they comply to the Danish request. This resolution was dispatch to the Danish authority. Upon receiving such reply the Danish authority submitted to have their cause decided at Madras board. On 20\(^{th}\) October, several papers relating to the cases were delivered by both parties. Upon considering the various papers the Armenian Soltangull had produced several papers of attestation signed considerably by the Persian, Armenian and Muslim (Moor) merchants of Hugly which ‘absolutely contradict what the dines have represented in their remonstrance’. Therefore, the Board cannot decided upon the case till they advice the governor and council of Tranquenbar “to see if they can procure any attestations in their favour from Bengal from persons that are no way concerned in the case”.\(^{190}\)

In the meantime, Soltangoul die and there was no one to take up his case. As the pressure from Danish government was mounting the case was again taken up in the Board consultation in 19 April 1714. Upon considering the evidence not enough to make

\(^{189}\) D&CB, March 30, 1713, p.51.
\(^{190}\) D&CB, October 20,1713.
‘impartial’ judgment, it was agreed not to precede the case further but ‘to be referred back to the Governor and Council to Tricumbarr with the balance of account of what goods were sold here at outcry according to our agreement when the said goods were landed’.\textsuperscript{191} On 15 July, all the due balance was ordered to be send to Danish Government.\textsuperscript{192}

On 27 October 1715, one Armenian, Coja Mal Cawn, the father-in-law of Coja Zachary delivered a petition of appeal to the council from a judgment made in the Majors Court. In fact, Zachary was indebted to the deceased Mathew Farob who was in turn indebted to Peter De La Gorge. Therefore, to recover his money, Peter de la Groye, sued Zachary in the Major’s court in which Coja Mal Cawn become his bail. The court decided in favour of Dela Groyue and Zachary was to pay his debts and other effects of Mathew Farob to him. This he claimed to Mal Cawn as Zachary was away in Pegu. Therefore, Coja Mal Cawn appealed to the board to postpone the payment until the said Zachary’s his son-in-law return from Pegu in the next season and if he did not come by that time than he will be abided by the judgments. It was resolved that Mal Cawn deposited the said amount until Zachary come by the next season and if he did not turn up by that time the amount deposited should be automatically forfeited.\textsuperscript{192} As Coja Zachary was forcibly detained by the King of Pegu, he could not turn up in the next season. Therefore, Pedro De la Gorge gave another petition requesting to pay him the deposited amount (700 pagodas). As Zachary sent over proper witnesses to take his cause, the Board decided to speedily bring the case to a trial and adjusted in the Mayour’s court with the right appeal to the Board as usual.\textsuperscript{194}

On 1 June 1717, Cojee Satoor requested the board to order the trustees of the deceased William Wayne to deliver him two notes and an endorsed bond he had given to the said William wane in hopes of recovering some money upon his account. His request was granted.\textsuperscript{195} On 30 September 1718, Cojee Zachary produced a bond signed by Mr. William Nanney who made over his salary from the 25\textsuperscript{th} March 1717 to him. By computation, it came to 24 pagodas 16 fanams. Therefore, Cojee Zachary was paid for

\textsuperscript{191} D&CB, April 19,1714, p.56.
\textsuperscript{192} D&CB, July 15,1714, p.12.
\textsuperscript{193} D&CB, October 27,1715, pp.131-132.
\textsuperscript{194} D&CB, April 23,1716, p.55.
\textsuperscript{195} D&CB, June 1, 1717, p.105.
that.\(^{196}\) On 3 September 1717, one ship belonging to the King Atcheen was seized by the English government of Madras as a reprisal for the quality of gold and other goods taken from ship messiah in Atcheen by the order of the Kings. As the king of Atcheen did not reply to the demand letters of 12 July 1716, this ship was seized and all the goods in it were taken out to pay the lost made in Atcheen.\(^{197}\) It was sold at public outcry. On 13 July 1719, a notice was put at the sea gate for all persons that had any claims of demands to make on the Acheen prize.\(^{198}\) Besides others, Cojee Zachary had also claimed that he and some others were also concerned for the stock of 12000 pagodas on the ship Messiah. The board demanded a more exact account of his claims and upon taking the reasons for the seizure of the Gold, it was finally resolved that all claims not concerning with the said gold be rejected. Cojee Zachary was asked to give exact account of is gold seized in Acheen within 10 days.\(^{199}\) The Acheh prize fetched pagodas 5418: 33 fanams; 64 cash. Zachary and others (i.e. Sunca Rama and Mall Cawn and etc) got 3527 pagodas etc. the actual lost from the ship Messiah was to the tune of 9010 pagodas for them where as the total lost form the ship was 11542 pagodas.\(^{200}\)

Regarding the cases on which the English government took a harsh decision upon Armenians there are certain instances for the records. For instance, on 28 June 1693, the Council was informed that two factors, John Evans and William Thomas of Madras went over to St. Thome where they went aboard Ship St. Marke, belonging to the Armenians. They were bound for Bengal. As they were a boarded without the leave of the President they were suspected to have ‘ill designe in Bengall to the Prejudice of the Right Honourable Company’s affaires there.’ They immediately dispatched a letter to the Agent and Council of Bengall to arrest them and ‘kept in the factory till his Excellency the Commissary “General arrivall.” It was because of this that Cojee Gregory; the owner of the said ship was summoned and interrogated. Cojee happened it was done by the Master Cojee Ignatia Marco without the owner’s orders."\(^{201}\)

\(^{196}\) D\&CB, September 30, 1718, p.170.
\(^{197}\) D\&CB, September 3,1717.
\(^{198}\) D\&CB, July 13,1917, p.118.
\(^{199}\) D\&CB, September 14,1719, p.170.
\(^{200}\) D\&CB, November 1719, p.203.
\(^{201}\) D\&CB, June 28,1693, p.102.
On 19 April 1696, there was a ‘strong wind’, probably storm, at the Coast of Coromandel which had cast away seven ship anchoring at Madras road towards St. Thoma shore. The English Government immediately engaged the soldiers, colleys and others to gather all the cast goods from the ships. Cojee Saffur, an Armenian and the Mulla were also sent to the Havaladar of St. Thoma, Hojee Muhammad Ali, for his friendly assistance in securing the goods. But the havaladar decline to accept the recovery of the goods with the order from the Nawabs. A letter was sent to the Havaladar asking him for his reasons for forbidding the recovery of the goods and ships.

On 23 April, the Havaladar came to Madras and sent for the Braminy, Mulla and Coja Saffur to discourse about the wrecks. When they produced the ‘Perwanas’ from the Grand Wazir and the Nawab, the Havaladar ordered his officers not to hinder anyone from saving the goods from all the wrecked ships. However, when the people of Madras try to procure back their goods the next day the havaladar he stopped them again except that of the Armenians. It was recorded that ‘The Governor acquaint that the St. Thoma Avaldar having given order for the carrying away of all the wreck goods of all the ships, the next day stopped all but the Armenian goods, who though they went with Ramapa to treat for all, yet, have since made a private affaire with him fro themselves, and given hi and his officers money, which make the Avaldar expect the same from the others, and would be a breach of our privilege’.

When the Armenians came for boats to fetch their goods, the Governor refused to give them any until all the English goods be also cleared. Again on 30 April, Cojee Panus, the eminent Armenian merchant went to the Council for the boats. However, he was told that “no boats be spared for that purpose till the English goods be also cleared or brought away by force, which could not be done till the owners have taken all out of the sea and brought them together. All these goods could be collected back by September. On 23 September, 1696 the Havaladar return from the Nawab’s camp and informed the

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202 D&C, June 29, 1693, p.102.
203 D&C, April 21, 1696, p.57.
204 D&C, April 23, 1696, p.61.
205 D&C, April 30, 1696, p.61.
206 D&C, April 30, 1696, p.61.
English government at Madras that the Nawab had finally allowed to clear all their wrecks ship.\textsuperscript{207}

Again, on 15 June 1696 the Havildar of St. Thoma and another Protuguese brought a letter from Lewis Francisco Cortenho, the Captain General of St. Thoma, demanding to deliver the four guns he had already brought from Stephen Marcos Armenians. However, Stephen Marcos had already aboard the said guns on the Macau ships. But he was later stopped and the guns were unloaded from the ship. However, when the said Havaldar of St. Thoma came again on June 20, the President answered that since the English have friendship with the Muslim Governor of St. Thoma they ‘could not permit Guns and instruments of war to be carried thither from hence without the Aylarca’s consent expressed in writing’.\textsuperscript{208} Beside the English government did not want to deliver the guns as they are very doubtful about the intention for the new Portuguese Captain General. Especially the new general had claimed to have brought a Commission from the Viceroy of Goa to rebuilt St. Thoma and repopulated it by threatening the Portuguese inhabitants of Madras to repair them in St. Thoma.\textsuperscript{209}

On 31 May 1697 the Armenian merchants of Madras were summoned at the Council to discuss with them on their assisting the interlopers. The Council was informed that some Armenians have assisted the interlopers in Bengal in furnishing them with goods.\textsuperscript{210} On 1 June the Armenians merchants came in the Council in which they were told that “none of them ought to have any correspondence or trade with any interlopers which they all promised to avoid for the future, ad to draw up and sign a writing of advice to all persons of their Nation who should come from parts to Bengall.” Beside, the Armenians were reminded of the general order forbidding all ships to carry any person from Madras without leave.\textsuperscript{211}

Accordingly, ‘after several consultations and debates amongst themselves, the Armenians merchant brought one signed paper in Armenians and another in English on 3 June 1697 the copy reads as: ‘wee the subscribers Armenians here present this day in fort St. George by these presents, do give our word and promise unto the Honourable

\textsuperscript{207} D&CB, September 23,1696, p.111.
\textsuperscript{208} D&CB, June 20,1696, p.81.
\textsuperscript{209} D&CB, June 20,1696, pp.81-82.
\textsuperscript{210} D&CB, May 31,1696, p.55.
\textsuperscript{211} D&CB, June 1697, p.56.
Nathaniel Higgingson Esq. Generall of India and governor of Fort St. George and Company Council, that we are obliged from this day forward in whatsoever port wee shall meet with any interloper wee nor none of us hereunder subscribed will by any manner of way or by any means have any dealing trade traffique of contact with any such interloper nor any of their people....and in whatsoever port wee or any of us shall encounter with any interloper, we hereby oblige our selves and every of us give advise and notice to all other Armenians not to deal, trade, traffique or contract with them but whereas there are many people of other nation who obey no King company nor superior, but are free trading merchants independent of any, so wee conceive ourselves no ways answerable for the actions of others of our nation, to which wee are wayes loyable'. It was signed by nine prominent Armenian merchant of Madras as Joseph de Marcos Narei David, gregorio Paraon, Aviet Gaspan, Stephen Marcos, Ignacio Marcos, Saffar de Zacharish, Serra David and Amir John.\textsuperscript{212}

David Marcos and others owners of ships Santa Cruz and St. Cajetan being now bound for Bengal and staying only for the completion of the said promise were given letter of recommendation to the agent and council of Bengal for 'all the favour and assistance in all respect' of trade in Bengal. The signed promisingly copy was also along with them. The agent was also informed that while Santa Cruz is destine for Manila St. Cojetan is to be back to Madras. As per their request the agent was directed to let them ashore at Calcutta for repair and other necessary assistance. These Armenians were David Marcos and Aga Ascar and Johannes, factors of Jaffar de Zachariah.\textsuperscript{213}

Apart from Armenians, a general order was also issued by the Council and affixed at the sea gate. As the French were assisting the interlopers, the general order was mainly not to trade with the French factories in Bengal. The order read 'it is order that more of the Right Honourable Company’s servants or Europe freeman in Bengal or the coast of Choromandell doe hold any correspondence or commerce with any persons belonging to the French Factories in Bengal by letters or otherwise directly or indirectly.'\textsuperscript{214}

Another case that comes to mind was the complaint against the English at the Mughal Court by some Armenians, on received through a letter written to him by one

\textsuperscript{212} D&C\textit{B}, June, 1696, pp.58-59.
\textsuperscript{213} D&C\textit{B}, June 3, 1697, p.54.
\textsuperscript{214} D&C\textit{B}, May 31, 1697, p.55.
Armenian Padre, Serno Churdee from the Mughal’s Camp. Date 27 April 1698. he told the council that a Muslim and 3 or 4 Armenians (one being Cojee Abaanus), freighters of the Queda Merchant belonging to calendars son, (Aga Pera) bound from Bengal or Surat robbed by the pirates at the sea. However, they complained to the Mughal Court that the English had robbed them of their goods. The King ordered for sending a Husbullhookum with a gusbendar to the governor of Surat, Amanaat Khan, which he must receive the goods from the English at Surat and deliver them to the owners and if they would not deliver them that he would send the English and their delals to the King.215

It was because of such affairs at the Mughal Court that the English Company strived to take very strict rule in tackling their rights. They were of course very speedy in dealing with any suspicious incidents by now. On 10 June 1698 ship with English flag came to St. Thoma road. They come to the captain of St. Thoma house and told them that they come for water and wood. But the Portuguese at St. Thoma had informed the Council that they were suspected to be Pirates. Therefore, the Council engaged several peons and spies to gather intelligence of what passed at St. Thoma and with the ship. Upon gathering several news the Council, being suspicious of the Pirates had published an orders on orders in English, Portuguese, Gentue and Malabar forbidding to truck with them. This strong order was published for public notice.216 The Council had also specifically summoned the principal Armenian merchants of Madras Cojee Gregory, Cojee Panus and Cojee Saffur. They were reminded of their former promise in writing not to deal with any interlopers. They were also informed that in compliance to their promise they were forbidden to hold any correspondence with the said order. On their part, the Armenians promised to comply with the order.217

The Company was very strict about the matter. One Antonio Ferreira De Silva was detained in the custody for boarding in the said ship at St. Thoma. Tao Domingo de Matta of St. Thoma who aboard the said ship, was also interrogated and was forced to signed a penalty of 500 pagodas in case he sold his saltpeter to the said ship. The Council also resolved that if any Portuguese inhabitants of St. Thoma ‘shall buy or sell with the

216 D&CB, June 13,1698, p.66.
217 D&CB, June 13,1698, p.66.
said ship, they shall not admit for the future to come into Madrasse, nor have any dealing with any inhabitants of Madrasse.'

The President also sent a letter to the havaldar of St. Thoma informing about the said ship and declared that it did not belonged to the Company and if any damaged were caused to them or to the Mughals, the English company would not be answerable but the Captain was to blame for all. He also warned that if they further trucked to the said ship he will withdraw from the friendship they have observed for lay.218 On 14 June the Captain of St. Thomas replied that the reception of the English belonging to the ship was done as a matter of common hospitality with the English nation in friendship with Portugal. He also said that they came for water and provisions and denies that the native have traded for saltpeter, but if they do it would be with the natives or the governor.219

In January 1710, another interesting case came in the Consultation of Fort St. George regarding one Coja Saffur, a principal Armenian inhabitant of Madras. Coja Saffur was ordered to be confined within the fort until he gave security of Pagodas 5000 ‘for his forthcoming and good behaviour for the future, for which none of his own nation would engage for him.’ The complaint against him was made by one Lewis Maligue who had a dispute with Antonio Soores de Algeveria on the piece of ground. Lewis Maligue and Antonio Soores de Algaveria in the piece of ground, Lewis Maligue had complained of Coja Saffur’s abuses and insolence’s at the St. Thoma Great mount. He alleged that Coja Suffur had assumed power to himself as if he was Havildar there, in so much that in a controversy between the said Lewis Maligue and Antonio Soares about a piece of ground the said Saffur send him as Prisoner to the Kotwal off St. Thoma which he had certainly done had not said Lewis Malique made his escape.220 In fact Coja had been as most rich men of Madras do, at the Great Mount for quite sometime for resting and health.

Coja Saffur was summoned at the council on 12 January for an explanation. However, Coja Saffur had denied everthing, bur the English government was already well informed of his behaviours at the mount. Coja Suffur had been known as ‘an important troubles fellow to all the English in general who have resorted to the mount of

218 D&CB, June 1698, p.67.
219 D&CB, June 4, 1698, p.68.
220 D&CB, January 13, 1710, p.7.
their health, of which there has been several instances too many to be innumerate.’ The English Government had also believe that the said Coja Suffar with others of his nation intend to associate and form themselves into a factory at the mount, and make St. Thoma their fort, as appealed by their having in the late governor Pitt’s time, bought and built several houses there, which they might both to have done without leave of the Governor and Council, and that they intended to build a gate at the end of the lane and stop up all avenues from all others having any entrance there but themselves, to prevent which growing evil. Therefore, the Company government ‘thought expedient to pull up that insolent weed of ill humour by the root’. It was because of this secession that the Fort St. George Council took the matter seriously. Therefore, Coja Saffur was ordered to be confined within the Fort. He was later released on 16 January when Mr. Henry Davenport became security for Coja Saffur.

On 25 September 1713, we are informed that Company merchant of Machilipatnam have several times acquainted the President since their arrival in Madras and demanded to discuss their account but the President referred the case to the board which was admitted. They have informed the Board that they waited patiently for many years in the hope that their debts were contracted with the Company, would be write-off as ‘themselves and some hundreds of family at Machilipatnam and Maddapollam are reduced to the worst of circumstances’ they continued to said that they fled to the country had not the Armenians assured them that their case would be decided in their favour by the company in England and that ‘they were very credibly informed by the Armenians, that orders came out by these ships to pay and hope that we (Governor & Council) would give them speedy dispatch [of the said order].’ In fact, their case was negotiated by an Armenian Coja Babba di sultan in England under the direction of Agra Pera Calendar. He had succeeded in procuring the case which he sent it to Aga Pera Calender who delivered it to the President.

As the Machilipatnam merchant had demand the orders and as the Court had ordered the President and council ‘to give them satisfaction for their demands on the company’ the case was taken up for serious consideration for their demands on the

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221 D&CB, January 13, 1710, p.7.
222 D&CB, January 16, 1710, p.8.
company” the case was taken up for serious consideration on 25 September 1713. After taking into account all possible cases, the President was finally entrusted to deal with the said merchants and discover what sum would satisfy them.\(^{223}\)

However, what appears to be graced to the Machilipatnam merchants would had turn it into woes had not the just English Government of Madras took reasonable decision. In fact, Aga Pera did the job of obtaining the court order through his own initiative by taking the opportunities provided and the possibilities seen. On 19 April 1714, the said Machilipatnam merchants grievously complained to the president and Council that Coja Aga Pera had demanded upon them of ‘several extravagant sums which he pretended to have disbursed by his agent Coja Babba de Sultan n England for procuring orders to have their doubtfully discharged with principal and interest’. They also affirmed that ‘they neither gave any power nor any instruction to the said Aga Pera to act in their behalf”. The council was already angry over the interference to Aga Pera in the case. Therefore, they took such complain against him very favorably, being well satisfied that if he had not interposed this business would have been ended before for much less money. Therefore, they (council) resolved that if Aga Pera could produce any power from the said merchants to constitute as agent in England or to treat in their behalf, he should be allowed to recover such reasonable charged as he made himself appear to have been at. However, if he fails to produce the said account and power to act the said merchants should not be obliged to pay what he demanded.\(^{224}\)

Aga Pera was not satisfied with the Council’s decision as he knew he was not in a position to produce the required documents. Therefore, he sought the help of his good friend Mahomad Jaffar, the Faujdar of Machilipatnam to recover for him 10,000 pagodas from the said merchants. This move was informed to the governor and council by one of the said merchant, Cunsum Pera One. On 29 July 1714, he told the Board that he and his compatriots could not return to Machilipatnam as Aga Pera had wrote to the fauzdar of that place, Mahommad Jaffar, to recover 10,000 pagodas that he dared not return to his

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\(^{223}\) D&CB, September 15, 1713, pp.133-135.

\(^{224}\) D&CB, April 19, 1714, p.57.
family 'knowing Mahommad Jaffar to be Aga Pera's particular friends and that he will give him a great deal of trouble'. 225

When Aga Pera was summoned in the Council he had also acknowledged that he wrote to the Fausdar as 'he had a right to apply to the Moors govt. of Metchlepattanam as these merchants are inhabitants of that place'. However, he was told that the case had been already decided here [Madras] and as inhabitants of Madras he could not apply to other government. He was also told that he may rather apply in Madras Council if he has reasonable means. Aga Pera answered that his agent had spent considerable amount of the disbursement. On the other hand, the said merchants 'utterly' denied empowering him to solicit for them and Aga Pera could not produce the same. Therefore, the Board resolved that the said merchants 'ought to have the right Honourable company's Protection' and that as they applied to the Madras Board for this case 'if he [Aga Pera] shall hereafter apply to the Moors government and bring the said merchants into any trouble, this Board will oblige him to make them fair reparation for whatever looses they sustain'. The said merchants were dismissed 'with the promise of cowle signifying that they are no ways indebted'. 226

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, it can be said that the Armenians of Madras were one of the most successful businessmen during 17th and 18th centuries. They amassed huge fortune from their oversea as well as overland trades. By earning special privileges under the protection of the English Company through their Contract in 1688, this small but significant community formed one of the most fascinating commercial networks. Their transcontinental network was basically laid on the family firm which however brought conflicts among them especially for breach of trust and the complication in the system. Despite their adherence to freights, their good in the European ships for its shipment to Europe and Persia, they mainly used their own ships in the country trade in India and with the South East Asian countries. Their trading items included almost all tradable goods. However, the main chunk of them was formed by diamond and other precious stones besides gold, silver, textiles, indigo, saltpeter, and sugar, etc. Their role in

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225 D&CB, July 29, 1714, p.100.
negotiating for the Company at the local courts was another interesting aspect of the Armenians in Madras. Their knowledge of Persian and expertise in negotiation had earned them the name of being the most astute negotiator. They could get for the English Company a Hushbahukum and a Firman from the Mugals Court, a Parwanas for Fort St. David, etc. Their relationship with the English Company was friendly except with some cases of harsh treatments.