CHAPTER - II

THE POLITICAL CONFIGURATION IN
THE COROMANDEL

The political situation of South India in the seventeenth century was one of anarchy and a complete disorder. Multiplicity of authorities added to the problem. In fact, three levels of authority were discernible which frequently had overlapping roles. The first level of authority, at the apex was the Muslim rulers of Golconda who took over the coast after the fall of Vijayanagar empire in 1565. During the seventeenth century Golconda, a significant period was marked by the rule of Abdullah Khan, was who willing, to assert his authority over the Dutch and the English traders on the Coromandel. Most of the important European enclaves in the Coromandel such as Madras, Pulicat, San Thome, Masulipatnam etc. were within the Qutb Shahi dominion.

The second tier of authority was held by the local Hindu Naiks particularly in the coastal districts in the region. Madras, emerged as an autonomous fortified enclave as a result of the extra-territorial rights and trading privileges, granted by Damarla Venkatappa, a coastal ‘naik’ who owed their allegiance to the ruler of Chandragiri, the successor of the Vijaynagar rulers.\(^1\)

The third level of authority was represented by the Mughals, who always had an inclination, from the time of Akbar, to embark on the

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conquest of the Deccan. It was from Shah Jahan’s reign that the real danger came to be felt by the Qutb Shahi dominions. The process was however completed by Aurangzeb who extended the boundaries of the Mughal state towards the South by annexing the two states of Bijapur and Golconda. With this Madras also came within the ambit of the Mughals. The multifunctional authorities were a constant problem to the European and to the English Company which were constantly troubled about the autonomy of European enclaves.

Since the extinction of the Nizam Shahi State, the Mughals had become an important player in the power play in the Deccan. In fact, the Mughal viceroy was stationed at Daulatabad and his function was to keep watch over his neighbours in the South. His duty was to advance the Mughal power southwards as opportunity offered, to gradually reduce his southern neighbours, to a condition of complete tutelage to the Mughals if not of reduction to subordination. A very significant group on whom the Mughal viceroy had to keep watch over were the Marathas under Shivaji. Shivaji occupied the territory on the western side of the Ghats and made an effort at conquering and occupying the coastal region as far as could be done. The Maratha power was nominally subordinate to the kingdom of Bijapur but it believed as though it was an independent state with policies of its own. Bijapur represented the second power, but it posed no serious threat to the Mughals. Golconda was the third important power, which was in a position to quietly extend its authority southward with some effect. The Qutb Shahis
were also active towards the north, thus putting an effective check against the advances of the Mughals. Further, Madras was an autonomous English enclave located within the Golconda territories who were accountable to them for all practical purposes.

An examination of position of parties and the political affairs it is clear that both the Mughals and Marathas were seen as the real danger to the autonomy of the southern kingdoms. The intrigues of the Mughals and the Marathas against each other and vis-à-vis the Golconda state resulted in the fall of Golconda into the hands of the Mughals. After this the Mughals did not miss out any opportunity of exercising their influence on Madras and the English, inspite of all kinds of resistance acknowledged them as a Southern power. Madras was acquired by the English in 1639 from the Raja of Chandragiri. They agreed to pay a yearly rent of twelve hundred pagodas, or six hundred pounds sterling.² As discussed earlier, the English establishment was constantly under threat from the local authorities. The Golconda rulers had conquered Hindu Naiks of this region and thus automatically became the rent extracting authority. The Nawabs or the officers of the Golconda rulers were not satisfied with the rent.³ They constantly exacted other fines and demanded gifts from the English. There were frequent skirmishes between them as the Nawabs would create hindrances in the process of English trade. The English Company in its nascent stage could not offer resistance and hence inspite of its reluctance, it complied with the demands

³ ibid., p.50.
and extortions made by these officers. Till 1670’s or so this kind of relationship continued.

In 1672, Sultan Abul Hasan took over the reigns of Golconda. Syed Muzaffar Khan was his Chief Minister. Musa Khan, the Khan-i-Jahan, assumed the position of the Governor of the Golconda Karnatak after the death of Nawab Neknam Khan. The Madras Council had earlier concluded an agreement with Neknam Khan regarding the rent of the fort and the town of Madras. It was in 1672 during the governorship of Sir William Langhorn that this agreement was confirmed, “The Nabab Yecknam Cawn being deceased and Mussa Cawn chosen in his place, having sent us a Confirmation of the Agreement and Phirmaund (farman) made by and with his predecessour, with Promise that he will be no less nay more a friend to us then he was and that he should looke upon the Phirmaund etc. as received not from Yecknam Cawn but himselfe which the Agent: hath with thankes acknowledged by this Letter...” The same consultation further adds that “It is Resolved to be very necessary that at his first entrance upon his Government and our Bramini’s first appearance before him with the Divans money that a Present be made him befitting his Quality, being that which will be expected from us, and in Return of his Letter wherein we have not been a little befriended by Cottapella Yengana and other great men about the king and him and also by the late Nawab.. enformed and recommended unto

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4 Golconda Karnataka Occupied the areas all along the Coromandel Coast roughly north of Madras.
5 D&C, 25th April 1672, p. 5.
him this said Business..." The Company was supposed to take note that it would send presents worth 500 pagodas, in shape of scarlet cloth, looking glasses etc., which would be carried by their Brahmin agent Venkatapati to the Nawab on his accession as the governor of Karnatak. Further in October of the same year, the Agent and the Council considered the problems created by the Muslim commanders and havaldars in San Thome who not only created constant problems but poisoned the mind of the Nawab. The nawab was inexperienced in dealing with such and "...too apt to give Credit thereto notwithstanding the incessant dilligence used by the Agent to underceive him and the reasons alleged by his letters to the Court and Camp to the contrary and finding there is no remedy..." Taking account of all these problems the Company decided to reduce the 'Peshkashes'; to them, through their Chief Merchant Kasi Viranna. By May 1673, the relations between the Nawab and the Company seem to have improved. The Consultation informs that all the erroneous information about the Company which were given to the Nawab were taken care of. The Nawab Khan-i-Khana and the king of Golconda now had a positive stance for them. The General, Havaldar and the Chief Brahmins were ordered by the King to visit the English Agent and strike a cordial relationship with them. The Company

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6 ibid.
7 ibid.
8 D&C, 20th April 1672, p. 4.
9 Peshkash, in the English records is mostly used in the sense of a present to a great man. Hobson-Jobson.
10 D&C, 20th April 1672, p. 4.
in return sent gifts to the Nawab to show "Campanyes esteem for them." 11 Around mid 1670's, the English were facing threat from French (at San Thome) and Dutch (Pulicat) with them as neighbours on either side, so to procure another fort at the site would be the requisite arrangement. The Company at any cost did not want to miss this opportunity and let it pass to the French or the Dutch. 12 Around the same time (March 1674), Syed Fatimeah, the governor of Chingleput (son of Syed Ibrahim, a good friend of the English Company) was sent by the Sultan of Golconda to marry the daughter of his Chief Mufti who was a man of great influence. To grace the occasion, the Company thought fit to send presents worth 130 pagodas to Syed Fatimeah, "to entertain that friendship of so long continuance and which of probability may be of good consequences to their affairs, he having promised to give the King (Sultan) a good account of all passages here to their vindication, from the many Aspersions raised by the Dutch and others at the camp." 13 Sometime later, it was deemed necessary by the Council to proceed with great caution on the matter of the confirmation of their firman by the court. The confirmation of the farman was delayed due to the absence of Madanna, the influential Minister of the Golconda ruler. 14

The Consultations of February 1675 shows an attempt on the part of the Company to please the king and his men. The English were ready to acknowledge the sovereignty of the King. They were set to send him

13 D & C, 26th March 1674, p. 22.
14 D&C, 21st November 1674, p. 34.
peshkash and gifts. But this affair was dealt cautiously by the Company. They were willing to comply as long as they could conduct their business peacefully. Thus the peshkash was kept on hold till the English ship had started for its destination.\textsuperscript{15} The peshkash was being send not only to the king but to Madanna who was described as “the great Bramany who is the great Mogumdar, and the Chiefest person in power next the king himself”, the Nawab Mushkamia Mahmud Ibrahim “The new Serkheil or Lord Chancellor,” Pulla Pella Yengana who was “The Chief Survey Visse or Comptrouller Generall” Narsa Vittulo and other important men.\textsuperscript{16} In 1675 the Company face d losses in its weaving industry and trade due to the highhanded oppression and illegal extortion by Madanna’s men. Kasi Viranna intervened on behalf of the Company after which Madanna’s horsemen were withdrawn but the Company had already suffered irreparable loss.\textsuperscript{17}

There was constant interference from the local authorities in the affairs of Madras. This was frowned upon by the English who considered these interferences as a threat to their autonomy. The next event took place in February 1676, when Pollippella Vengana, incharge of the neighbourhood of Madras, claimed to sell paddy free of customs there which came from the territory of Golconda. Vengana had set out to sell the paddy at the rate prevailing in his territory and which was not in accordance with the prices in

\textsuperscript{15} D&C, 10th February 1674/75, pp. 38-39.
\textsuperscript{16} ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} D&C, 27th September, 1675, p.73.
Madras. His logic for this was that the grantees of the Cowle (Abdullah Qutb Shah and Neknam Khan) had passed away hence the English had forfeited their right over Madras.\textsuperscript{18} Even in the previous years, Podili Lingappa, the nephew of Madanna and Akanna, who was appointed the tarafdar and Governor of Poonamalle district, had procured a Firman and Tasheriff (honor) from the Sultan for the Madras governor and Agent, “merely to extort a pishkash, as he had from the Dutch at Paliacat to the value of 800 Pagodas.”\textsuperscript{19}

The Company took the help of Kasi Viranna, their Chief Merchant to solve this problem. Viranna met Lingappa at Tiruvotiyur and clarified that the cowle and farman had been issued to them by the Diwan himself. The Agent wrote to Egyb Venakatapurtty\textsuperscript{20} and received order from him. The order was meant for the Tarafdar who was supposed to observe the cowle, farman and salabad in return ensuring the income from the rent for the King.\textsuperscript{21} With the arrival of Podili Lingappa into the scene, the administration acquired a stern demeanour and the relation between the Madras Council and him became one of continued hostility. The English at one place remark that ‘meanwhile the said Podala Lingappa left no stone unturned to create us trouble in your business, stopping of paddy and callicoes, raising the Inland customs, and not ashamed to say that King was a man that would not keep

\textsuperscript{18} D&C, 18th February 1675, p. 40.
\textsuperscript{19} D&C, 16th & 17th March 1675, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{20} Egyb or the Hajib was the clerk or emissary for the ruler of Golconda.
\textsuperscript{21} D&C, 1672-78, 16th and 17th March 1675, p. 42.
his word...”

22 This statement clearly reflects his differences with the Madras Council.

On the other hand, the Dutch Company was very indulgent with Lingappa. Kasi Viranna heard from the Sultan’s Mazumdar of Armagaon about Lingappa’s attitude towards Madras Council. He informed that Lingapa was presented a horse and other presents when he paid a visit to the Dutch towns of Pulicat and Sadras. Also if and when he carried a tasheriff (honour) to the English, they would not accept it, nor would they invite him to their town. Pollepella Vengana added to Lingappa’s problem with English by stating that “English were scornfull people and have the government of a Town which produces great summes of mony; formerly the Nabob Necknam Cawn unadvisedly and foolishly let them have a Town that yearly yields severall thousand pagodas for the rent of 1200 Pagodas”. 23 He further urged that Lingapa should keep a havaldar in Madras to keep a watch on the English. He also suggested that the cowle of Neknam Khan should be terminated with them and the reins of Chinnapattam should be given to a Muslim. 24 The Sultan’s intervention was a compulsion now with his courtiers advising him to take some definite action in the affair. However, the Sultan seems to have postponed any decision till the returned from Masulipatnam.

24 ibid.
The Golconda court was dominated by a coterie of Telegu Brahmins in this phase. The English strongly believed that this Brahmin dominance had an adverse reaction towards them. The Consultation of December 1676 complained of Brahmin officials of Golconda “who have been studying to do all the prejudices they can and to cavil at the said Cowle, laboring to bring this place [Madras] into the same condition as Paliacat and to force it to receive the King’s Paddy at his own extorsive rates; as a beginning of evils more to follow...”25 The Company was all set to obtain a new royal confirmation of the cowle by the Sultan’s own firman. The English also requested the Sultan to study the situation carefully. However considering Madanna’s proximity to the throne, they were not too positive about the outcome.26 The Consultation continues that the annual rent due for 1676-77 be sent to the agent of the Council as Golconda, the Bramany Viraraghava to be paid to Nawab Mirza Muhamamed Ibrahim (the Sar-i-Khel). Alongwith it the Nawab was also requested to provide protection to the Company’s business as against the mischief created by Lingappa and Polepelli Vengana, who were Madanna’s appointees. Lingappa had strengthened his hold over whole of the country, from Armagaon to the borders of Bijapur. He forced the English to purchase only his paddy at exorbitant rates. He was also set to extort from them a loan of 10,000 pagodas for paddy. Even the natives were

25 D & C., December 1676, p. 103.
sidelined in this process. Letter from Fort St. George to the Company expressed the anxiety of the English. They informed the Company about the problems that they were facing on the political front. In their opinion the local government could not be trusted as these local authorities had no respect for any kind of agreement. In such a situation the Council had to be prepared to face any kind of aggression. Thus began the recruitment of soldiers and peons and likewise guard its boundaries. However the Council decided to wait and watch the movements of these authorities. They hoped for a positive overture from the Diwan so that the circumstances would change. The English Company put up with the system and resolved in January 1677 to present a peshkash valued at 30 pagodas to Lingappa and of a smaller value to the Brahmin agent.

By 1677, Shivaji had already become a force to reckon with. The Vijaynagar state had vanished as a real political entity in course of time and the provinces of the erstwhile Vijaynagar empire emerged as independent kingdoms. Gingee was absorbed by Bijapur in the 1930’s. The Naik of Tanjore and Madura were at loggerheads with each other. Tanjore Naik was moving towards its end. Mysore and Ikkeri on the plateau maintained themselves in a position of some importance. They had not adopted an effective policy of mutual friendship and alliance with each other. Ikkeri had various enemies which kept her engaged on the Western frontiers and

27 D & C, December 1672, p. 12.
29 D & C, 13th January 1677, p. 105.
activities of Marathas kept them engaged on the North. Mysore, in fact was free to pursue her own policy of active expansion into territory on its northern frontiers.

This was the position of affairs when Shivaji’s attention was drawn to South. He adopted a policy of intervention in which he sought the help of Golconda. In 1676, Shivaji planned, ‘the most important expedition of his life’, the campaign of 1677 which resulted in complete control of the land south of the Tungabhadra right upto Bangalore and Tanjore.\(^{30}\) Shivaji’s objective was to regain his father’s heritage in South and divide the possession among himself and his half bother Ekoji (also called Venkojii). Though his real objective seemed to be the extermination of the influence of Bijapur and also to make Venkoji his subordinate.\(^{31}\) For his he had to contend with two important powers - the Mughals and the Qutb Shahis.

Diler Khan, an Afghan was the Mughal governor of the Deccan at this time. Bijapur was under the regency of another Afghan, Abdul Karim Bahlol Khan. Shivaji got into an alliance with Diler Khan thus naturally throwing Bijapur into the hands of the Mughals. Subsequently, Diler Khan alongwith Bijapur made a joint attack on Shivaji. But this war lacked the initiative from both the sides as it needed the attention of the Mughal emperor who was moving towards Hasan Abdal in the Khaiber region where several Afghan tribes had risen in revolt. Diler Khan was thus called back to the north-western frontiers and instead of him Bahadur Khan was sent to

\(^{31}\) ibid., p.213.
take over the command in the Deccan. Shivaji then undertook a successful expedition against Bahadur Khan. Later Shivaji opened negotiations with him. However, this negotiation proved futile and he and Bahadur Khan stood against each other. Bahadur Khan had already invaded Bijapur. With no other option left, Bahlol Khan sought the assistance of Shivaji in return for a payment of 300,000 huns annually to him. This alliance broke off soon and Shivaji proceeded further. At this point another negotiation took place between Shivaji and Bahadur Khan. It was not really difficult for Shivaji to come to terms as he had nothing much to do except offer obeisance to the emperor through the governor and pay him the Peshkash.32

On the other hand it was easy for Shivaji to handle the political situation in Hyderabad. Raghunath Narayan Hanumante who was the chief advisor of Venkoji, went to Hyderabad and was received with full honours by Madanna. Hanumante was able to persuade Sultan Abul Hasan to agree for an offensive and defensive alliance with Shivaji, even before the later had reached Hyderabad.33 The Golconda government under Abul Hasan was in a more dangerous position than ever. Bahadur Khan having got into an agreement with Shivaji and seeing that the Bijapur government was powerless to do anything effective against him was bound to pursue a more active policy against Golconda. Given this marginalisation of Bijapur, the best option for Golconda rulers was to forge an alliance with Shivaji. As a result he arrived at Hyderabad in 1677 with a huge army. A meeting

32 Kincaid and Parasnis, p.238.
33 Francois Martin, India in Seventeenth Century ed. by Lotika Vardarajan, Introduction.
between Shivaji and Abul Hasan Qutb Shah was held which resulted into a treaty between the two. Under the treaty it was decided that Hyderabad government would not disturb Shivaji’s movement towards south to take possession of his father’s jagirs there and Abul Hasan would give him a subsidy of 3000 huns per day so long as the campaign lasted; while on his part Shivaji promised to hand over to Abul Hasan the parts of Karnatak which had not belonged to his father. The treaty also included an article that it would in effect be an offensive and defensive alliance of these two powers against the Mughals.34 In this deal Shivaji was to gain maximum. Abul Hasan on the other hand neither gained nor lost in the deal.

Armed with this treaty, Shivaji moved confidently towards the south crossing the confluence of the Krishna and Tungabhadra gives and descended into Bijapur Karnatak, marching past Madras. From there he went straight to Jinji which he occupied without facing any resistance.35 From Jinji he marched towards Vellore which was surrendered after a siege of four days. He then occupied Arni, Kolar and Sira and devastated the whole territory north of Tanjore. He then occupied Bellary after a siege of twenty-seven days as well as fort of Kopbal in Krishna Tungabhadra doab. He appointed his brother Santoji as the governor of Karnatak and forced Venkoji to hold Tanjore not as a fief holder of Bijapur but directly under

34 S.K. Aiyangar “Abul Hasan Qutb Shah and his Ministers Madanna and Akanna” JIH, August 1931, p.106.
35 ibid, It appears that the occupation of Jinji by Shivaji he was approached by Abul Hasan to allow to be put under the command of one of his Generals, and it was his (Shivaji), refusal to do so that “opened Abul Hasans’ eyes to the deception which had been practiced upon him” and made him realize that Shivaji and Madanna had come to a secrete understanding with each other to the prejudice of their own interests.
himself. Shivaji thus fulfilled all his aims at one go: first, he threw the Adil Shahis out of the land that they had acquired after the fall of Vijaynagar. Second, he throttled the aims of Venkoji. Third, he was successful in creating an independent state of affairs in South India, which was out of reach of Mughals. Fourth, he did not cede an inch of the newly acquired territory to the Qutb Shahis.

The English at Madras were in no way isolated from the ongoing politics. During Shivaji’s Karnatak expedition of 1677, the English Council was under compulsion to entertain Shivaji for two reasons - one that they were scared of Shivaji’s powerful army consisting of 20,000 horses and 40,000 foot soldiers and two, Shivaji was an ally of Golconda. The Council in May 1677 received a letter and messenger from Shivaji requesting some “cordial stones and counter poisons” which were sent to him, along with some broadcloth and a quantity of sandal wood. The value of these gifts were around sixty pagodas.

As mentioned earlier, the parts of the Karnatak under the control of Golconda, were secure. Shivaji began serious military operations only when he entered the Gingee territory that was under Bijapur. The comparative inactivity of Shivaji in the neighbourhood of Madras and the subsequent immunity that the English enclave enjoyed were the result of an understanding that had been reached between Shivaji and the Golconda administration. Also this was possibly deemed by astute Madanna as “the

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36 D & C, 14th May 1677, p. 113.
best course of action to be adopted in the circumstances, both as against the advancing tide of Mughal aggression as the best safeguard for, the preservation of what was worth preserving, the Hindu India of the South.»

In June 1677, with the beginning of the long-drawn siege of Vellore, Shivaji wrote to Madras asking for further supply of cordials and counter poisons. The Consultation also talks of Shivaji's power “increasing and he exercising so much authority in the king of Golconda's country, that he sends all about to receive the Kings rents by this own people, and punishing the Avaldras and great men of the country at his pleasure.” In the same year, in October, the Madras Council again received a letter from Shivaji demanding ‘Ingeniers’ (Engineers) required for the siege of Vellore. The Council sent him an excuse, saying that they were not in a position to meddle in the political affairs. They were scared of the consequences that they would have to face in the wake of the antagonism from the Golconda and the Mughal authorities. This was a diplomatic move on the part of the English who wanted to maintain cordial relations with the other power centres of the region.

Meanwhile the problems between the English and the Sultan’s leaseholder for the Poonamallee country continued. The bone of contention was the right of the latter to compel the English to sell paddy in Madras at his own rates. Lingappa (Sultan’s renter) threatened the English that he

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37 ibid.
38 D&C, 18th June 1677, pp. 115-116.
39 D&C, 3rd October 1677, p.123.
would stop wood and other provisions from reaching Madras if they forbade
his corn to be sold in Madras. The Council wrote to Lingappa who was
stationed in Conjevaram. He replied to the Council that the only way out for
them was to give 7000 pagodas to him for the supply to resume.⁴⁰

The Governor Streynsham Master was cautious not to lose the
support of Golconda. He sent the annual town rent due for Madras for the
year 1677-78, to Nawab Muhammad Ibrahim at Golconda. He also
convinced the Nawab that Lingappa’s report regarding the construction of
bulwark was incorrect. The English were repairing the damaged bulwark and
their purpose was not offensive. Master also sent a list of demands to be
fulfilled by the Sultan on his forthcoming visit to Masulipatam: (1) a firman
granting the right of minting to the English which would be valid and
acceptable in the Sultan’s dominion,  (2).a firman granting the exemption
from the junkan⁴¹ and other customs and duties on their goods and trade in
the Karnatak and adjacent regions as it was at Musulipatnam. (3) the
acquisition of Verasheroone or Madapollam or both of them settled on the
English as rent free grants, or on a fixed unalterable rents which was to be
paid only to the Diwan.⁴² There was also a request to grant Tiruvottiyur,
Egmore and San Thome in the vicinity of Madras, either rent free or at
moderate rents. In the case of San Thome they were prepared to pay 1300

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⁴¹ Sunkam or toll tax.
⁴² D & C, 23rd May 1678, pp. 72-73.
Pagodas per annum, as Kasi Viranna was then paying for it. The Sultan’s Sar-i-Khel, Nawab Mohammad Ibrahim was sent with a tasherriff congratulating Governor Master on his accession to his office. However all the demands were stalled because the Sultan could not go to Masulipatnam owing to inconveniences en route.

The English at Madras and the Dutch at Pulicat were under constant threat from Shivaji. In August 1678, the English received the news that Shivaji’s troops under the command of Santojee, appeared at Conjeveram and it was likely that they would proceed further to Madras. Vellore had already surrendered under his pressure and Poonamallec castle would be the next target. Shivaji by now was in the possession of both Vellore and Jingi. The English feared that Shivaji would now turn his attention towards Golconda Karnatak. Lingappa’s continued to remain a problem for them.

Lingappa wrote a letter to Kasi Viranna threatening “to do this Towne all the mischief at court that possible he could if did not lend him a summe of mony and if he did lend him mony then he promised to be kind at court to the affairs of Madrasspatam... desiring to see the Governor pretending he should return again with much greater authority then ever, and that it would be our Interest to part friendly with him, meaning to give him a pishcash.” Viranna ignored Lingappa’s move. In the next letter, Lingappa repeated his threat to disrupt the functioning of mints in the town. Viranna informed about this to the Governor. The Governor in return replied that the Mints in

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43 D&C, 3rd June 1678, pp. 76-77.
44 D&C, 23rd August 1678, p. 106.
the town functioned under the command of the Company. The king had already granted the minting rights to them which was under the direct control of the former and hence they were not to feel threatened by a smaller authority.\footnote{ibid., D&C, 5th September 1678, pp. 110-111.}

Lingappa went to Madras in the beginning of September, 1678 to pay a condolence visit to Kasi Viranna, on the death of latter’s wife. Lingappa chose this time to put forward his demand of valuable presents and a Persian horse from the English. He asserted that he had received a new firman from the Sultan giving him supreme control over all the Golconda forces and that the Governor Master should not regard himself in any way as his equal.\footnote{ibid.} Lingappa gave five days to Viranna to think about the demands or else he “threatened to hinder and impede all his business and investments in the country.”\footnote{ibid., D&C, 16th September 1678, pp. 113-114.} Lingappa repeated his demands again when he received two candies of gunpowder instead of ten that he had requisitioned to suppress the jungle chiefs (Poligars).\footnote{ibid., D&C, 16th September 1678, pp. 113-114.} Meanwhile Madras was under the compulsion to welcome the ‘Habshi’\footnote{Habshis were the people of African origin who rose to occupy prominent positions under the rulers of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golconda. Alpers, Edward A., ‘Africans in India and the Wider Context of Indian Ocean’ in Alpers, Edward A. and Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy, (eds.) Sisits and Scholars, Rainbow, Delhi, 2004. pp. 32-33.} general of Bijapur, Abdullah Khan, who had surrendered Vellore to Shivaji. He however decided to seek refuse from the English as opposed to Marathas.
By 1679 the Madras government became desperate to get some return for their payments and gifts to the Sultan. A letter was written by the Council to the Brahman Egyb at Golconda requesting him to try and recover something concrete in lieu of the presents given to the Sultan and to his minister, Madanna during their last visits to Masulipatnam. The Company urged the Egyb to pursue Madanna and Akanna to grant the towns of San Thome and Egmore to them, "since the English by their ancient, faithful and peaceable demeanour towards and profitableness to the Divan and his country, have not deserved less, but more favours from him than the Dutch or any other nation residing in his Highness's dominations and it is not for the Divan's honour to do so much for one and nothing for the other..." The Egyb replied that he spoke to Madanna, who informed him that the Dutch had given their promised present of 6000 pagodas whereas the English had not given theirs of 3000 papadams. Only when this would be fulfilled that he would begin any negotiation with English concerning the renting of San Thome and Egmore and obtain Sultan's permission.

Lingappa was persistent in his demand to the Council. To achieve this he was constantly disrupting the English trade and also troubling the people. He justified his demand for higher rent by accusing the English of raising the customs. The governor Streynsham Master was adamant about the Council's decision. He sternly replied to him, "The market of Madraspatam was free to all people to buy and sell in, but if men were content to sell at 12

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50 Letters from Fort St. George 1679, p.4
51 D&C, 17th February 1679, p. 17.
kalams (measure) for a Pagoda which was now the market price, no man could force them to sell at 10: and if it should please God to make it dearer or cheaper, it was not in the power of man to alter what God almighty had decreed...”52 The Council directed the residents to buy paddy which came only from Vepery and Egmore. If needed, the Council also resolved to resist him by force. It had become a political expediency to obtain a cowle and firman from the Sultan of Golconda for San Thome, Egmore and Tiruvottiyur. In desperation they repeated their request to the Egyb for the same. Alongwith, they also enclosed a copy of the kind of firman they desired. The enclosure specified the names of the six villages dependent on San Thome, six hamlets belongs to Tiruvottiyur and the nine villages adjacent to Egmore. It also stipulated that these places should be permanently rented to them with the right to build factories, godowns etc. in them. They also demanded their jurisdiction in both civil and criminal cases, and to be exempted from the former customs, junkan and other duties.

During this time the English feared that the French had an eye on San Thome. Viranna before proceeding to Golconda instructed Lingappa to settle accounts and to use all possible means to prevent the French army from occupying San Thome again. The result of this was that Lingappa took possession of San Thome by cancelling the lease of Viranna. Viranna resisted this move. His anxiety is clear from the Consultation - “to prevent the inconvenience that may accrue to the revenues of this Town [Madras] by

52 D & C, 1678-80, p. 18.
the stoppage of goods, grain and calico investment this year." Lingappa was slowly moving towards Madras which became clear in his request to Akanna to dispossess the English of the town and rent it to him.

The Council requested Akanna to take heed of Lingappa’s evil designs. The same letter of request also informed him that Viranna had a farman from the Sultan and a Rakka from Madanna. This could be used by Akanna to reinstate him in San Thome. These protests and appeals to Akanna had the desired effect. In October 1679, the Egyb Viraraghava sent them a positive reply hoping to restore Viranna. The Egyb was congratulated by the Company for the negotiation. The Company however showed its apprehension that Lingappa might violate the decision.

Viranna’s death on 28th March 1680 created a void in the English administration as he strongly advocated the English cause vis-à-vis the Golconda officials. The next move from the Golconda officials was the imposition of a havaldar in the town of Madras. The havaldar, Shiekh Ahmad came armed with letters from Fateh Khan at Chingleput and a Rucca from Sair Lashkar Nawab Mahmud Ibrahim. For this action the authorities presented the logic that in the absence of Viranna the administration had passed into the hands of English. The idea was to keep a close watch on the activities of the English. The havaldar was sent to Madras. The English

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54 Rakka in Arabic Ruka or letter, a note of hand.
55 D & C, 3rd November 1679, p. 59.
56 D&C, 26th November 1679, p. 53.
57 D&C, 24th May 1680, p. 31.
were cautious of the moves on the part of Golconda officials. The Council reacted to this and resolved that all the records of the English commerce in Madras would be a secret record. They would be accessible to chosen English officials. Lingapa's attitude was not peculiar to the English alone. He was equally stiff in his demands as against the Dutch. The matters got complicated by the steps and counter steps. It is doubtful whether these actions of Lingappa were in favour of Golconda administration or an attempt to fill his coffers. At the end of August 1680, Lingappa put a stop to all the Dutch business at Pulicat forbidding their merchants to buy or sell any cloth. Later on he imposed a similar embargo on Madras, in bringing of the cloth. The prohibition was imposed on the ground that the governor refused to admit the havaldar who was sent by the order of Nawab Muhammad Ibrahim.\(^58\) Lingappa sent word that Viranna used to lend him large sums of money periodically and besides gave him annual presents "which he knew not of whom to have these advantages" whereupon the Chief Merchants of the Company agreed to send two of their members to Lingappa to treat him as to the removal of the embargo.

On the resumption of the trade, the English sent an application to the Golconda court for redressal.\(^59\) Lingappa was not affected by this and maintained that he did not begin the blockade without orders from his master. He was adamant on his demand for the payment of 2000 Pagodas from Viranna's successor and a loan without interest for his Divan. The

\(^{58}\) D&C, 30\(^{th}\) August, 1680, p. 26.
\(^{59}\) D&C, 13th September 1680, p. 66.
Golconda court also remained quiet on the issue and kept delaying the Egyb’s request on some pretext or other. The worse came, when Lingappa sent orders to stop Chunam (lime shell) and brick from coming to Madras.\(^60\) It was only in the beginning of November that the Council received letters from Golconda with Rukkas of the Nawab, Madanna and Akanna to Lingappa, ordering him not to stop the goods from entering Madras.\(^61\) Thus Lingappa was forced to withdraw his embargo. However he continued to create problems for the Council as he was in collusion with a number of weavers and painters who deserted Madras and moved to San Thome.

Lingappa continued to look for an excuse to harass the Madras Council. He alleged that his messenger was not received by the Governor properly. Consequently he got the order from the court to stop the entry of goods and provisions to the town.\(^62\) He also threatened that he would stop all trade, destroy the town and bring it to the same fate as of San Thome. These persistent threat had so much effect on the Council that it resolved to set up a factory at Gingee "which is out of the Golconda dominions, which is a matter of great security to the Company’s investments and one of the main reasons why the Dutch keep so many factories upon this coast, which being divided into severall governments if they be obstructed in their business by one governor, they have another place to friend and besides this advantage of presenting Lingappa or any other Subahdar of this country from being

\(^60\) D&C, 27th September 1680, pp. 69-70.
\(^61\) D&C, 5th November 1680, p. 76.
\(^62\) D & C, 27th December 1680, pp. 87-88; 3rd January 1681, p. 89.
capable of spoiling all our business when it depends wholly upon their courtesy."  

Akanna then decided to intervene in the dispute between Lingappa and the Madras Council. Lingappa had not given up his attempts to trouble the Company. The next attack from him came when he refused to give Triplicane to the Council directly or their Chief Merchant Pedda Venkatadri. He had decided to integrate Triplicane into his dominion. At this time Nawab Muhammad Ibrahim informed the Council that Akanna had abandoned the idea of raising the rent of Madras. Lingappa however, did not see these as abatement to his actions. He re-imposed the blockade to Madras and placed watchmen at various points to affect the same. All that the Governor at Madras could do was to assure the people of San Thome, Egmore and other villages that if Lingappa abused them and prevented them from sending in provisions, they also had the option to seek protection in Madras. Lingappa sent word with his Diwan, Kishnamma to the Governor that he had an order from Akanna to besiege Madras and Pulicat because the Governors of these two places would not do as they were ordered by the Diwan of the Sultan. The Dutch governor of Pulicat sent a letter to Lingappa thus warding the threat on them. The English however refused to give up to Lingappa’s demands. They began the preparation for any kind of assault from him. Fearing an attack the English governor posted the

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63 D&C, 6th January 1681, p. 90.
64 D&C, 28th February 1681, p.8.
66 D&C, 15th April 1681, p.18.
Portuguese residents at various places. The embargo continued upon all goods and provisions coming into Madras throughout May 1681. The Council decided that the only way out of this was to send a Peshkash to the Golconda minister and make friendly overtures to Lingappa. Later in June, the same year Madras Council sent 2000 Pagodas as a peace-offering to Akanna, through Nazar Beg who was deemed to have an alliance with the Minister. Along with this a letter from the Governor was sent with Pedda Venkatadri who was ordered to have dialogue with Lingappa for a friendly alliance between them.

The Governor on 1st August informed the Council that all differences with Lingappa were over. However the Company was still facing the problem of minting coins for which they had petitioned several times. The Egyb at Golconda, Viraraghava was replaced by Grua who had earlier served the Company.

Lingappa's relationship with the English depended among other things; on the right to receive rent from Fort St. George which ought to be paid only through him. The English could have no transactions or correspondence directly with the Sultan or his ministers. The letters to Fort St. George of 1682 carries Lingappa's request addressed to the Governor.

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67 D&C, 17th & 18th April 1681, p.18.
68 Nazar Beg was the Sultan of Golconda's jeweler; D&C, 6th June 1681, p.28.
69 Pedda Vankatadri was one of the Chief Merchants of the Company, who was a friend of the Tarafdar of Poonamallee.
70 D&C, 6th June 1681, p.28.
71 D & C, 1st August 1681, p. 43.
72 D&C, 22nd September 1681, p. 56.
Gyfford that the rent for current year or at least half of it to be sent to him. 73

In another letter send by him, Lingappa wrote: ‘their lordships Madanna and Akanna have once before sent tashrifs to your worship, through my hand’. 74

Inspite of, the Company Agent arguing on the contrary, the ministers Madanna and Akanna maintained that Chennapatam and all other affairs of those parts came under the control of Lingappa. The Agent however, feared that “if we should pay the rent money but one year to Lingapa, he will contrive many ways to bring us into such a Labyrinth of troubles that we shall not be able to get out of it.” Akanna himself advised governor Gyfford that he should “hear Lingappa with credulity in whatsoever business he shall acquaint you about and to get to him to write to us. When you would have any business to be done here for more you oblige Lingappa to write in your behalf, the readier shall we be to favour you.” 75

The implications were too obvious to be overlooked. This indicated, the way in which Lingappa had managed to get all his demands recognized as lawful. He manipulated the Golconda authorities and secured an undisputed and sole authority over the European settlements under his jurisdiction.

Lingappa throughout attempted to enhance his position. He was strict in his demands and enforcements of all payments due to the Golconda government. These covered the entire gift which had to be given to himself by convention and also to all the men who held posts at the headquarter. The

73 Letters to Fort St. George 1681, p.8.
74 Pringle, D&C, 1st March 1682., pp. 18-19.
75 D&C 6th March, 168½ , p. 19.
Brahmin ministers were known for their benevolence. However their control on the European settlements was rigid.

Lingappa soon came to occupy the supreme position in the administration of Golconda Karnatak, analogous to that enjoyed by Mir Jumla on one hand and better than that of Neknam Khan on the other. From the position of the Tarafdar of Poonamallee, he became the Governor of the Karnatak in succession to Akanna. His role as champion and defender of Golconda's rights was one of great value. He claimed to have taken the town of Chikkanakaikanhalli, in the Subah of Sira from the hands of the Marathas, after the death of Shivaji thus vindicating his masters cause even against Marathas who were a real power down south then. The receiving or demand of gifts was neither peculiar with him nor other Brahman functionaries of Golconda but a feature commonly found even among Europeans. The promotion of Lingappa to the supreme governorship of the Karnatak was consequent upon the transfer of Akanna to the Sar Lashkar's post from which the Sultan dismissed Nawab Muhammad Ibrahim for his inability to defend the town of Basavapatam from the troops of Ikkeri. Thus Lingappa managed the government of all the country from Krishna river in the North as far as the Karnatak country where Neknam Khan was formerly ruling.

76 S.K. Aiyangar “Abul Hasan Qutb Shah and his Ministers Madanna and Akanna” JIH, August 1931, p.106.
77 Letters to Fort St. George, 17th May 1682.
The English Company was advised to keep an Egyb at Lingappa’s headquarters. It was also made known by their Golconda Agent that the ministry had prohibited any direct petition to them being made and ordered that everyone should first apply to Lingappa “for without his consent no request would be heard here (Golconda)”78 Lingappa had now the command of all the forces belonging to the Karnatak and he demanded from the English, the service of fifteen of their gunners to manage his guns. He also arranged for the ships to be built on behalf of Akanna who wrote to Gyfford that “your worship may please to look upon Lingappa as myself”.79 Lingappa’s power was immense. Throughout he tried to bring the English under his command. In 1685, there are references to Lingappa being addressed as His Excellency. He took strict action against a Jewish interloper, Rodriquez who had been granted the permission to stay in Madras. His goods were confiscated at San Thome on Lingappa’s order.80 Seven pieces of timber belonging to Lingappa had floated to he shore of San Thome which had been seized by governor Gyfford. Lingappa’s men threatened him: “Your honour knows Lingappa’s disposition; so as soon as you see the letter, your Honour may please to send the timbers and goods... before Lingappa hath intelligence of it, and then you may live without trouble.”81 Lingappa before his death was removed from the post of Sair Lashkar (around 1686). The Consultation during the time of Governor Elihu

78 Letters of the Company Agent Viraraghava; 2nd August 1682.
79 Letters to Fort St. George. 28th August 1682.
80 ibid., 1684-85, Letters dated 16th March 1685 from the Brahmans Narayanappa and Sangama at Conjeveram.
81 Letter to Fort St. George; 15th July 1685.
Yale gives an account of his death, "Lingappa, late Sar Lashkar of the country, having often endeavoured to put a havaladar upon this Town and to impose a custom for the Diwan but being success less therein, he, about 3 years past orders the building of a banksall within a mile of the Fort intending there to stop all the grain and other to pay them Junkan before they would permit to come into town, but Lingappa happily leaving this world, before the finishing his ill designs on the banksall... the Governor privately treated with the havaladar of Poonamallee about buying the said building of him." 82

After 1686 the change came with the fall of Golconda into the hands of the Mughal. The Mughals were equally assertive but by late seventeenth century they were themselves heading towards their collapse. South India posed a constant problem. The centralized state structure was heading towards a breakdown. The relations between the English Company and Madras did not remain localized but was effected by their relations at other places. The English in Bengal had been allowed to establish a factory in Hoogly but without a fortification. The Nawab of Bengal's exactions and oppressions were a recurring problem for the English. At one point of time, Job Charnock, the Governor of Hooghly was even imprisoned by the Bengal Nawab. This was followed by a war between the English army and the Nawab's army, Aurangzeb immediately took charge of the situation and pacified both the English and the Nawab. The English seemed satisfied with

82 D & C, 1687, p.200.
the turn of events which was expressed in a letter from the Court of Directors - “The subjects of the Moghul cannot bear a war with the English for twelve months together, without starving and dying by thousands for want of work to purchase rice, not singly for want of our trade, but because by our war we obstruct their trade with all the Eastern nations, which is ten times as much as ours, and all European nations put together. Therefore we conclude Fort St. George is now much more worth and secure to us, than ever it was in the mean king of Golconda’s time; for he had little at stake for us to revenge ourselves upon; but now if new injuries should be offered, us, we have a fat enemy to deal with, from whom something is to be got to bear our charges. Therefore, we conclude that the Mughal’s governors will never give us for fresh provocations, nor deny you St. Thome, or anything else you shall reasonably and fairly request of him.”

By the end of seventeenth century Madras had attained the status of an autonomous state. The independence of the Council in most matters political and administrative led to friction between the Directors in London and the Council at Madras, evident from an undated letter of Josiah Child “The great trouble we labour under is, that you cannot get out of your old forms, and your cavilling way of writing or perverting or misconstruing procrastinating or neglecting over plain and direct orders to you: as if you were not a subordinate but a co-ordinate power with us....” This reflects the sovereign position of the Council not only versus the local powers but vis-à-

vis their own Court of Directors. The formation of a Municipal Council at the end of the seventeenth century which included the natives and the English freeman is an indicator of the growing autonomy of the Council.

The Marathas were still posing threat to the English. The Mughals also felt threatened owing to the presence of Marathas in the region. In 1689, Marathas had besieged Pondicherry from French. The countries between the rivers Krishna and Koleroon was the Carnatic region. Politically it was divided into northern and southern regions, which may be distinguished as the Moghul Carnatic and the Maratha Carnatic. The Mughal Carnatic had been previously a province of Golconda; now a province of Mughals including Madras. The Maratha Carnatic comprised the Southern region which had been conquered by Shivaji, including the French settlement at Pondicherry. Fort of Jinji formed the boundary between the two dominions. In 1690 when the Mughals under Zulfikar Khan laid siege of Jinji, the English under the governorship of Elihu Yale supported them with gunpowder and other services. 84 In return for this support the English obtained a firman from the Mughals, confirming their settlements in Golconda and Jinji. The Marathas under Ram Raja were in the possession of the territories from Jinji to Koleroon. It was in fact from the Marathas that the English purchased Fort St. David. For the next five years Zulfikar Khan kept trying to besiege Jinji but miserably failed. The English at the Fort St. David were advised to forge cordial relations with Ram Raja.

The relation between the Mughals and the English could not remain cordial for a long time. The turn of events took place when Zulfikar Khan demanded money from English amounting to thirty five thousand pound sterling. The governor Nathaniel Higginson sent present for him but refused the money. The English now feared on attack from Zulfikar Khan. This suspicion is evident from the Consultation of 1696, "It may be objected that it is very probable that the Nawab Zulfikar Khan cannot make war against this place without the King's order.... And it is in is power, if he be so inclined, to trouble and plague us, and to raise new impositions to the stopping all business; and it will not be in our power to procure a remedy at last, but by the same means that he and his officer now aim at, that is by a more considerable present." In 1701, Zulfikar Khan was replaced by Daud Khan as governor of Carnatic. The English immediately paid their respect by sending gifts and presents to the new Nawab. The commanding figures of Nawab Zulfikar Khan followed by Daud Khan Panni in the later years of Aurungzeb’s reign reinforced the aura of the Mughal paramountcy in the Southern Coromandel tract.

The increase in the trade volume and value of the English Company suggests that it was not affected by the change in the political scenario.

85 D & C, 5th November 1696.