Chapter - 4

THE ONSET AND CONSOLIDATION OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY IN KOLATHUNADU

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By the end of the seventeenth century, three major European trading companies started to interfere in the economic and political affairs of Kolathunadu. The French had their strong foothold in Mahe and the Dutch controlled Cannanore through their fort St. Anjalo. The English company established their factory at Tellicherry. Each of these trading companies left no stones unturned to outwit their rivals with the help of the proliferated native political structure. The rivalries between the alien trading companies and the collaborations and conflicts of the native political agents with the former resulted in the establishment of colonial rule in Kolathunadu. The establishment of a factory at Tellicherry ended the role of the British company as an interloper in Malabar trade. The Kolathiri desired a permanent footing of the English company in his region with an intention to not only ensure successful trade and commercial contacts with a new European power but also to make them pay customs duties and other cesses due to the ruler, which as interlopers the company was not obliged to do.1

The Establishment of the Tellicherry Factory

The first factory established by the English company in Kolathunadu was at Baliapatam (‘Cota Cunnu’) in 1669.2 The Dutch had already established a trading centre in Cannanore with the support of the Ali Raja. The newcomers hoped to conduct profitable trade with north Malabar on the basis of the support given to them by the Prince Regent. He was offered a custom duty of 2.5 % and an annual subsidy of 200 sequins.3 However, the Dutch took strong measures to outwit their English rival from

the region with the support of the Mappilas of Cannanore. The English factors decided to dissolve the Baliapatam factory when a rival prince of the Kolathunadu royal family started machinations against them with the support of the Dutch and Ali Raja.⁴

Scholars widely differ in their opinion on the year of establishment of the Tellicherry factory. William Logan put it as “some time before the 24<sup>th</sup> October 1699”.⁵ Padamanabha Menon, based on Sir. George Birdwood’s ‘Report on the Old Records of the India Office’, came to the conclusion that “the English had established a factory at Tellicherry so early as A.D. 1683”.⁶ Kurup also admits the same as the year of the establishment of the factory at Tellicherry.⁷ The Northern Regent (Vadakkilamkur) was the <i>de facto</i> ruler of Kolathunadu during the latter half of the seventeenth century and the Tellicherry factory was built following the orders from him⁸ and that was duly authenticated by the <i>de jure</i> sovereign the Kolathiri.⁹ However several other members of the royal family resented the action of the Vadakkilamkur in assigning the factory site to the English.

Alexander Hamilton, an interloper who visited Tellicherry held the view that the site of factory originally “belonged to the French, who left the mud walls of a Fort built by them to serve the English when they first settled there”. He wonders “for what reason I know not for” (selecting Tellicherry as the site of the factory, since) “it has no River near it that can

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⁴ Ibid, p. 42
⁵ William Logan, <i>Malabar</i> (Trivandrum, Charithram Publications, 1981), rpnt, p. 395
⁷ Kurup, n. 3, p. 46
⁸ Foreign (Miscellaneous, hereafter MSS), vol. 55, part. 1, p.8, N.A
⁹ Swai, n. 1, Ibid.
want its protection, nor can it defend the Road from the insults of Enemies, unless it be for small vessels that can come within some rocks that lay half a mile off or to protect the Company’s warehouse, and a Punch-House that stands on the Sea-Shore a short Pistol Shot from garrison”. 10 Logan gives clarifications for this by stating that Tellicherry’s proximity to Kottayam and Randattara, the two centres of finest quality of pepper, and its closeness to Periah pass into Wynad which supplied best quality cardamom “were the advantages which the Company would certainly appreciate”. 11

The Period of Local Crisis

The factory at Tellicherry was in an exposed position and hence fortifying the place soon became apparent. The territory on which the factory was built belonged to one of the troublesome vassals of Kolathiri called Kurungoth Nayar. He was deprived of some customary royalties as a result of the establishment of the English factory, but his complaints were in vain. The Nayar, with the support of one of the rival princes of the Udayamangalam branch, entered into the Company’s warehouse in 1704-05 and committed certain irregularities. The depredations committed by the rebels were duly reported to Prince Rama Varma, the northern regent, and he consented to construct a fort in order to avoid such events in future. It is believed that he himself laid the foundation stone of the fort. 12 The company also took possession of a house site belonging to the Ponattil Poduval, a hill (Tiruvallapan Kunnu) belonging to Vallura Tangal and a

10 Quoted in Menon, n. 6, Ibid.
11 Logan, n. 5, pp. 394,395
12 N. Rajendran, Establishment of British Power in Malabar 1664 to 1799 (Trivandrum, 1979), p. 48
street of weavers with the consent of the owners and on these sites that the fort and the fort-house were constructed.13

Robert Adams was the Chief of the factors14 at Tellicherry and the construction of the fort was done under his personal supervision. The Zamorin offered all necessary materials for the construction and permitted to import them from Calicut free of customs duties. He did so as an act of courtesy for the help rendered by the English company during his war against the Dutch.15 A sum of Rs. 4, 02,444 had been spent for constructing the fort and stores at Tellicherry.16 Adams knew Malayalam perfectly well and ‘he wielded considerable influence with the various local chieftains’.17 His idea was to ensure the support of the most influential figures among the native politics for strengthening the cause of English trade in Malabar. He attempted to take away from the petty chieftains all customary shares and prerogatives of trade in Kolathunadu with the help of the Kolathiri and Vadakkilamkur. At the same time, he had to be vigilant on the commercial and territorial designs of other European companies in the region. The confused state of affairs of the indigenous political structure contributed to a lucrative trade of arms and ammunition in Malabar. Robert Adams developed it as a new policy of ‘debt trap’ for achieving territorial acquisition and political control.

The construction of the fort and the wars against the rebel chiefs of Udayamangalam and Kurungoth went on simultaneously. The available

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13 Logan, n.5, p. 395
14 The head of the administration was known as the chief who was assisted by a council usually called as Factors
15 Tellicherry Diary, (hereafter T.D), 1743-44, p. 67, Tamil Nadu Archives, (hereafter TNA)
16 Kurup, n. 3, p. 49
17 Menon, n. 6, p.356
records for the same are meagrely poor, except for Alexander Hamilton’s memoirs. He was critical about “the buildings and the War” and explained the reasons for the war with the Kurungoth Nayar in following manner.

“The Nayar, that was Lord of the Manor, had a Royalty, for every vessel that unloaded at Tellicherry, paid two Bales of Rice duty to him. There was another Royalty of every tenth Fish that came to the Market there, and both together did not amount to £ 20 sterling per annum. The Chief either appropriated these Royalties to his own, or the Company’s use, and the Nayar complained of the injustice but had no Redress. These little duties were the best part of the poor Nayar’s subsistence which made it the harder to bear, so his friend advised him to repel the force by force, and disturb the Factory what he could, which he accordingly did (by the secret assistance of his Friends) for about twenty years. The Company are the best Judges whether the War is likely to bring any profit to their affairs there or no”.18

Logan rejected this theory and put Hamilton “not an impartial witness in the matter”. His argument is that “jealouslyes between the Kolathiri chiefs had probably more to do with it than the reasons assigned by Hamilton”. He further argued but without any empirical validation that the company took “every endeavour [-----] to arrange matters amicably with the Kurungoth Nayar and when these proved abortive that the English

18 Logan, n. 5, p. 396
Company resorted to force”. The company stormed the Mailan hill on the outskirts of Tellicherry, which had been fortified by the Kurungoth Nayar, with a view to giving troubles to the factory. Logan was even suspicious of Hamilton himself as an instigator against the company. Hamilton’s account had a great deal of suspicious aspects primarily because he was an interloper. The interlopers were not obliged to pay any custom duties to the king and he might have viewed the organized structure and duty obligations of the English factory as a potential threat to his own trading interests. However, it should be noted that the ‘depredations’ made by the Kurungoth Nayar “was the first rebellion against the English authority by a local chieftain in Malabar”.

The fort of Tellicherry was completed in 1708. The fort—a massive laterite structure with enough security arrangements—and its settlements at Tellicherry decided the destiny of northern Malabar for nearly two and a half centuries to come. The fort itself was constructed on a small hill. There are two underground chambers for storing commodities and military equipments. These chambers are connected together with a corridor and there is narrow entrance to it from the top. On August 20th, the Prince Regent Rama Varma of Palli palace (the Northern Regent) formally made over the fort to the company and the royal writing reads as follows:

“The fort of Tellicherry has been built at the request and entreaties made by me as a friend. To acknowledge the love and friendship which the Company bears towards me and my palace, I give and

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19 Ibid
20 Kurup, n.3, , p. 50
make over the said fort with its limits to the Honourable Company, where no person shall demand, collect and plant. Our customhouse will be obliged to give us what has been settled. This day, August 20th, 1883.21

The company administration was regulated by the general rules framed by the Bombay government, to which the settlement was subordinated. The Court of Directors in London followed a neutral policy in company administration and the Chief and Factors were given free hand in it. They were directed to act amicably in indigenous politics for the promotion of the commercial interest of the company. The Chief and Factors were permitted to engage in private trade as well. They could also function as mediators in indigenous politics but for the total improvement of the trade prospects of the company.22

Kurungoth Nayar’s struggle against the English factory continued with a new vigour as he was duly supported by the French who had bitterness towards the English for the loss of their Tellicherry loge.23 Their negotiations with the Nayar resulted in getting permission to set up a loge at Punnole at Kurungoth country on 18th May 1702.24 The French loge had good fortunes for quite sometime and they were in a position to procure a large quantity of pepper. The English company instigated some local

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23 A 'loge' was just a building in which goods could be stocked and where the French Company's merchants could reside. It was a "pandikasala" which produced the word "bancassal;" in French documents. A 'loge' was the same as the Portuguese "factoria" and the "factory" of the English East India Company
24 Kurup, n. 3, p.51
people to pillage the French loge. The soldiers sent for that purpose from Calicut dispersed the pillagers. In 1707 financial misappropriations were reported from the loge at Punnole and the French council decided to abandon their loge at Punnole.25

Kurungoth Nayar submitted for peace in 1719 and the proposal for peace sent by the Nayar to Robert Adams contained a pathetic appeal. He recognised the English chief as his superior.26 The final agreement was signed on 29th September 1719, which incorporated provisions for trade monopoly and territorial acquisition in Kurungoth territory. The capitulation of peace made with the Nayar reads as:

Having behaved ill towards the Honourable Company without any cause, I cede and give the following as a reparation and on account of the expenses of the war:--

1st. – At Punhole and other places belonging to me, if any one, save the Honourable Company, buy pepper to deal in, you can seize and take (it).

2nd. – On the pepper, which the Honourable Company may buy and convey from my country, no duty need be paid.

3rd. - I give and make over the Raman hill to the Honourable Company [---] Within these four boundaries, I will not plant any tree to replace those

25 Kurup, n. 3, pp. 51-52
26 Logan, n. 21, I/VI, p. 4
felled and destroyed. In this manner I have ceded and given to the Honourable Company, with the consent of the King and Governor of this country and of my heirs. The said writing will undergo no change till the sun and moon last.  

This document may be considered as the first political instrument used by the company against a powerful native enemy. Kurungoth Nayar, who was the first local chieftain who attempted to resist colonial intrusion into Malabar, was made submissive to the company, and was stripped off from many of his customary rights and privileges. His right over the pepper transactions (to” buy and convey”) from his territory and his freedom to sell pepper to the highest bidder were surrendered to the company. This was an attempt to ensure English trade monopoly in Kurungoth Nayar territory. The annexation of Raman hill (Mailan hill) is also important as the company now became powerful enough for territorial acquisition. Moreover, the company took measures to strengthen the hands of the ruling Kolathiri and the Prince Regent by making the Nayar legally subservient to his feudal lords.

**Colonial Rivalries and its Repercussion in Native Power Structure**

The French loge at Calicut was not economically feasible and Mollandin, the Chief of French factory at Calicut was instructed by his superiors in Pondicherry to look out for more profitable pepper trading centres in the Malabar Coast. On 2\textsuperscript{nd} April 1721, Mollandin entered into an agreement with the Vazhunnavar of Vadakara, through which the Royal French Company obtained the grant of a piece of land in Mayyazhi.

\--\footnote{Ibid., n. 21, I/VII, pp. 5,6}
Vazhunnavar promised to allow trade monopoly on pepper at a price to be fixed by Mollandin.²⁸ Robert Adams took several measures to outwit the French company from Mayyazhi primarily because of its proximity to the English factory at Tellicherry and the pepper rich territories of Kolathunadu. He instigated the people of Kadathanadu and some principal Nambiar, which resulted in staging a series of violent demonstrations against the French. The Vazhunnavar of Kadathanadu approached Mollandin and sought his “assistance against the English intervention in Kadathanadu affairs”.²⁹ The French and Vazhunnavar entered into an agreement on 18th December 1722 by which the former was given trade monopoly in Kadathanadu and even permitted to hoist their flag at Mayyazhi. In return, Mollandin agreed to support the Vazhunnavar against both internal and external threats to his authority.³⁰

The English Chief at Tellicherry objected to this move and claimed trade monopoly in favour of the English company all over the Kolathunadu territory, on the basis of an agreement signed with the Kolathiri, earlier in March 1722.

In his royal writing the Kolathiri offered: -

All the trades and farms within our and our predecessor’s territory from Canharotte (Kasaragod) down to the river Pudpatanam (in Vadakara) are all given to the English company, save that granted to the Dutch company; and we authorize the English company to carry on their commerce. If any other European or

²⁸ Ibid, pp.29-30
²⁹ Kurup, n.3, p. 62
³⁰ Ibid.
any other stranger come to this our country, the English Company can, in our name, punish, prevent and drive away

Made and delivered by us to Mr. Robert Adams for the trade of the English company on the Malabar Coast, dated 23rd March 897 (1722).31

Adams knew the vulnerability of such a document from a weak *de jure* sovereign, like the Kolathiri, and insisted the confirmation of the said privileges by the Prince Regent and Governors of the two branches of the royal palace, Udayamangalam and Pally. This confirmation was signed “in the Royal presence of King Colasteri (Kolathiri)”32.

Adams wanted to be vigilant against the pro-French attitude of the Vazhunnavar of Kadathanadu. French presence at Mayyazhi, close to the Tellicherry factory, would be detrimental to the English trade on the coast. An open war between the English and the French was not possible, since both nations were in peace at Europe. He made a futile attempt to appease the Vazhunnavar, and so moved on to protect the sovereign powers of his ally, the Kolathiri. Adams was in a position to convince the Kolathiri about the trespassing committed by the Vazhunnavar on his sovereign powers since, the latter granted Mayyazhi to the French without consulting the former. Adams idea was to turn the Kolathiri against the Vazhunnavar.33

With regard to the details of the war between the Kolathiri and the Vazhunnavar, there are not enough English records. However, the

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31 Logan, n. 21, I/VIII, p. 6
32 Ibid., I/IX, p. 7
33 Kurup, n. 3, pp. 62-3
observation made by Alfred Martineau, and the letters of Mollandin, the French chief at Mayyazhi, help to assume the hostilities in native power structure coupled with the naval blockade and firing between the two European companies resulted in creating perilous trade atmosphere at Mayyazhi.

The molestations and intrigues between the English and the French companies continued for several months. Both parties made use of the devastations of the native politics by instigating them against their respective European opponents. Martineau narrated about such an incident in March 1723. Kurungoth Nayar with 14,000 men attacked the English factory and the assailants were forced to retreat by May 1723. The English ships fired the French flag masts from Kozhikode to Mayyazhi and they were forced to withdraw to Kozhikode. The English contention was that they along with the Dutch at Cannanore only had the legal claim to trade with the Kolathunadu as per the provisions of an agreement signed between them and the Kolathiri, in March 1722. The French complaints about the interference of the English company in their trade interests in Mayyazhi to the Bombay and Madras presidencies were in vain. However on February 1724, the French at Mayyazhi were reinforced with additional resources both in the form of men and money and Adams was forced to terminate all French hostilities for a while. Accordingly an agreement was signed between the two companies on 24th March 1724, by which both parties were agreed to respect the rights and privileges reciprocally. Adams accepted and respected the French because of the financial and military

34 Ibid. p. 63
35 Ibid, pp. 64-65
36 Ibid, p. 66
37 Ibid,
reinforcements in favour of them from Pondicherry and he continued his antagonistic policies after the withdrawal of the same from the coast.

The power structure in Kolathunadu underwent drastic changes by this time. The skirmish was now from within the royal house between the two palaces of Pally and Udayamangalam. Prince Regent, Udaya Varman of the Pally palace was the de facto ruler and a close friend of the English factory and a bitter enemy of the French. The prominence, thus achieved by him in Kolathunadu politics invited jealousy and bitterness of the Kolathiri. Kolathiri decided to support the French and in his letter to them dated 7th January 1725, he willingly accepted the French occupation of Mayyazhi. The Kolathiri was sceptical about the Prince Regent’s inclination towards the English and argued that, “He (the Prince Regent) never was king at this time there; It is I who have always been King Kolathiri and who continues to be so at present; the rights of Tellicherry belong to me, the “English have usurped them”. If the French factors were willing to join hands with the Udayamangalam branch, he is ready to lay the foundation stone for a fortress on the river Baliapatam.

The prolonged wars and naval blockades between the French and English companies at Mayyazhi were detrimental to the commercial prospects of the region. Adams was successful in instigating the local merchants and people of Kadathanadu against the French and the Vazhunnavar. They approached the Vazhunnavar and demanded necessary arrangements—either by ordering the French to evacuate the country or by negotiating with the English company—for the smooth functioning of the

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38 Menon, n. 22, p. 221
39 Quoted in Kurup, n.3, p. 68
commercial activities at Mayyazhi. The Vazhunnavar was sceptical about the new union between the French and the Kolathiri and decided to turn towards the English. Moreover, the Vazhunnavar was also tired with the French interests in slave trade from his country for their colonies in the islands of the Arabian Sea like, Madagascar, Bourbon and Reunion. Adams took initiative in entering into a treaty agreement with the Vazhunnavar on February 1725, which reads as follows:

Writing of Bavnor of Badagara (Vazhunnavar of Kadathanandu) made and delivered to the Englishman Mr. Adams, the Chief of the Malabar Coast, for the trade of the English Company at Tellicherry. With a view of settling the difference, which arose between me and the Company, regarding the Peace Capitulation entered into between us, the following resolutions have been made:

1. From January 901 (1726) and forward, I will not retain nor give shelter, at Cattuvaynattu (Kadathanadu) to any other Europeans.

2. From the aforesaid period, I will not give, nor permit to be given to any other European, save the English Company, the cardamom and pepper of Gadattuvaynattu. I promise to conform to all that are

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40 Ibid, pp. 65-68
The situation in the southern portion of the Kolathunadu territory was ripe enough for colonial rivalry in a protracted manner. The Vazhunnavar now became a puppet in the hands of the Tellicherry factory and he demanded the French to “reduce the number of their cannons and withdraw troops from his country, leaving only four members to carry on their trade at the loge”43 in April 1725. The French shifted their cannons and troops to Kozhikode. In December 1725, the French recaptured their loge at Mayyazhi with help of regiment commanded by “M. De Pardaillan acting under the orders of the Government of Pondicherry”44 The young captain, Francisco Mahe La Bourdonnois, serving the French company was responsible for the siege of Mayyazhi and the settlement was named after him “Mahe” as an act of gratitude.45

The immediate response to such turn of events was a sudden shift in the power combinations in Kolathunadu. Adams encouraged the Vazhunnavar to unite with the other petty chieftains of Kadathanadu to expel the French company from his territory. Accordingly, the first and second Vazhunnavars along with 3,000 Nayars joined together against the French. At the same time the four Nambiars of Coringote and Narangoly, decided to stand out of this coalition.46 Kurungoth Nayar also agreed to collaborate with the French company and he offered to them trade monopoly at Punole, which was taken over by the English company.

42 Logan, n.21, I/XIII, p. 13
43 Kurup, n.3, p. 70
44 Logan, n.5, p. 404
45 G.B. Malleson, The History of French in India, (Madras, 1885), p. 50
46 Diary and Consultations of the Tellicherry Factory, (hereafter D&C), sl. no.1430, T.N A, p. 3
earlier. The English factors had a tough time ahead. The French took all possible measures to weaken the English. The Vazhunnavar had been at war with the French and the Kottayam raja. However, upon the mediation of the English chief, the Vazhunnavar accepted the terms of peace demanded by the Kottayam Raja. The war with the French continued and on the 14th August 1726, they seized a small hill lying between Mahe and Kadathanadu. Adams sent one hundred Tellicherry Nayars to assist Kadathanadu. The Vazhunnavar was in need of money and he sought the English assistance but was rejected summarily on the ground that he was not serious in keeping promises with regard to the earlier financial assistance given to him by the English company. He was told first of all to settle his accounts. The Vazhunnavar attempted to come to terms with the French through the mediation of the Zamorin and on 8th September, he informed Adams that, “he thought himself obliged by force to hearken to the French”.

After the cessation of hostilities with the Vazhunnavar, the French sharpened a new weapon against the English. Kurungoth Nayar was already made a friend of the French and he was offered assistance for recovering two hills, called Punnella and Puinha between the two factories. Adams made necessary precautions on the basis of advance information about the attack and swept off the armed trespassers.

The chaos and confusion in the territory adjoining Tellicherry and Mahe were natural in a fragmented political structure. Profitable
commercial activities could not be conducted in such a situation. All the European trading companies in Malabar faced with similar problems. It was the English who first saw the advantage of centralisation process in the native political scenario vis-à-vis augmented commercial opportunities.  

Robert Adams attempted to strengthen the hands of the Prince Regent in Kolathunadu, as he was the only effective organ through which the troublesome vassals could be made submissive. Adams made use of his friendship with the Prince Regent to make the Nambiars of Iruvazhinadu in favour the English company. On 6th December 1726, the Nambiars of Mutorru, Chandroth and Kizhakkedathu, promised to remain friendly to the English and not to “befriend the Kurungoth Nayar and others […]”. On the same day they agreed to “Prostrate at the royal feet of His Highness” (Prince Regent) and agreed to obey all his commands. The shrewdness of Adams in isolating the Kurungoth Nayar and projecting the Prince Regent as the supreme power in Kolathunadu is remarkable as it designed the course of Kolathunadu political cluster for many years to come.

Their respective superiors in Pondicherry and Bombay did not approve the fighting at Tellicherry between the French and the English companies. The French were forced to invest heavily to secure and strengthen their settlements and trade interests on the coast. As far as the English factory was concerned, perpetual threats from Kurungoth Nayar necessitated proper fortification of the two hills of Punnella and Puinha between the two factories. The Court of Directors of the English East India Company supported the Bombay Presidency and orders were issued to the

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53 T.C, 6 December 1726, v. 2.
54 Logan, n. 21, l/ XVI, p. 15
Tellicherry factory to live amicably with the French, to reduce expenses and to recover debts. The Royal Company of France had given instruction to their loge at Mahe to be in amity with the English settlements in India.

After prolonged discussions, the English and French factors finally agreed upon the terms of the treaty and a detailed agreement was drawn on 9th March 1728 with five clauses “for the common benefit of the companies of England and France and for the tranquillity of their settlements”. This was supplemented by another treaty on 28th April 1728 with two additional clauses. Both the companies decided to be cautious about the obstinate behaviour of Kurungoth Nayar. They also agreed to act together to quieten him, in case of further molestations from his part. He was not permitted to raise any fortifications or any appearance of things, offensive or defensive in any place. Both companies decided to settle “the price of pepper, as often as is necessary, and neither can break the price without advising the other, nor yet raise it without the other’s knowledge. This agreement didn’t mention anything about the affairs in Kadathanadu and the French were free to devise their own plan of action there.

As a result of the aforesaid agreements, between the English and the French and due to the diplomatic skills of Robert Adams, peace and security ensured in Kurungoth and Kadathanadu and Iruvazhinadu. However, new troubles were brewing up in the north. Like Kadathanadu in the south of Tellicherry, Cannanore in the north was a battlefield of colonial politics. Francisco De Almeida, the Portuguese Viceroy at Kochi constructed a fort at Cannanore in 1505. He did so upon instructions from

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56 Logan, n.5, p. 406
57 Logan, n.21, I/XVII, pp. 15-7
the King Manuel of Portugal to capture ports and build forts in them in the
western coast of India. 58 This fort was named fort St. Angelo and the
Portuguese traded from here up to 1663. 59 In 1663 the Dutch seized all the
Portuguese possession in Malabar and fort St. Angelo at Cannanore came
in to the hands of the former. 60 The Ali Raja of Cannanore came in close
contact with the Dutch and their intention was to seek the latter’s help in
strengthening against the de jure sovereign, the Kolathiri, as is evidenced
from the future course of developments in the region. The colonial show
staged in Kadathanadu was repeated in Cannanore. The role played by the
French in the south was taken over by the Dutch at Cannanore and the
native was Ali Raja with the English factors at Tellicherry as common
factor in both cases.

Ali rajas were the most tiresome vassals of the Kolathiri. As noted
elsewhere, Ali rajas possessed political and economic stubbornness owing
to their long association of trade with the Middle East and European
countries. They were in possession of the Laccadive Islands and
Darmapatanam, which provided enormous opportunities for conducting
long distant trade. 61 The lucrative international trade and the enormous
support from the Dutch at Cannanore, equipped them with quality firearms
and luxuries, unknown to other native chieftains of the region. 62 The Dutch
desired to make use of the internal dissensions in Kolathunadu politics.
The Prince Regent’s collaboration with the English factory at Tellicherry

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*Perspectives on Kerala History: The Second Millennium* (Thiruvananthapuram,
1999), vol.2, Part 2, p. 185
62 Swai, n.1, p. 92
helped the latter to become prominent in Malabar spice trade. The Dutch planned to compete with the English factory by using the Ali Raja and upon their instigation he seized the fort of Codaly (Koodali) on 6th June 1727. The fort of Codaly was at a strategic location. It was constructed as a barrier to Randathara, “which produced a great quality of pepper”.63 The Prince Regent and his men were not able to defend the fort as Ali Raja attacked them “not only with Malabar weapons but with people and arms from abroad”.64 In north Malabar, the Muslim spirit of revolt had turned against the English company and many of their ships were subjected to severe acts of piracy which affected the English commercial activities on the coast considerably.65

The Prince Regent, Cunhi Homo (Who is also known as Udaya Varmann)66 was in a precarious position as he lacked men and resources to make Ali Raja submissive. He approached Robert Adams on 12th August 1727 and requested financial and military assistance from the English. The Bombay Presidency, to which the Tellicherry factory was attached, took a decision to help the local leaders with ammunitions on payment of money and not to engage them in loans.67 However, Adams decided to send a small squadron of soldiers to Agarr or Etakkat, where, the English company had a warehouse. Ali Raja’s soldiers resisted them while crossing the Darmapatanam Island. Prince Regent’s laborious efforts to organise a combined action of the “Kolathunadu royal lines” against “Muslim

63    Logan, n. 5, pp. 407-8
64    D&C, sl. no.1434, p. 21, T.N.A
65    Ibid, Sl.No. 1433, dated 12 August 1727, p. 7, T.N.A
66    In several treaties signed by the Kolathiri, the Prince Regent was named as Odearmen (Udaya Varman). Cunhi Homo might have been a distorted version of Kunhi Koman, a pet name given to Udaya Varman by the blood relatives of the royal family. See Logan, n.21, I/XXXVIII, and I/XXXIX.
67    D&C, dated 12 August 1727, Sl. no.1433, p. 7, T.N.A
atrocities”, succeeded to a limited scale. The Raja of Kottayam joined with helping hands. He permitted the English squadron to pass through his territory to Etakkat. The combined forces of the Prince Regent and Kottayam Raja attacked Darmapatanam, in February 1728, and took one of the forts belonging to the Ali Raja. Prince Regent continued his struggles against the Muslim settlements and he seized Valarpatanam. By the end of February the combined forces took the control of the Darmapatanam Island completely. Ali Raja’s men were forced to retreat from there and they found refuge in Grove Island (Kakka dweep), lying close to Darmapatanam.68

At Tellicherry, Robert Adams was recalled to Bombay and John Braddyl appointed as the new chief on 10 March 1728.69 Departure of Adams in an abrupt manner made the Prince Regent suspicious about the real motives of the company. In a letter to the new chief of Tellicherry, Cunhi Homo emphatically reminded the new chief that, the Vadakkilamkur granted various privileges to the English company on the basis of an impression created by the then chief Robert Adams that they would be reliable and sincere to the Kolathunadu royal family. Robert Adams “behaved always with great candour and civility to the country in general” and now with the recall of Adams in such a manner, “little trust is to be placed on the company”. He concluded his letter by saying that, “it is said that the Europeans are men of their words, but the ordering of Mr. Adams away, and the manner of his going seems quite contrary”.70

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68 Logan, n. 5, p. 409
69 Kurup, n.3, p. 300
70 D&C, dated 20 April 1728, sl. no.1433, p. 7, T.N.A
The new chief Braddyl was given strict instruction by the Bombay Presidency to reduce expenses and he made substantial progress in this regard during the early phase of his administration. For increasing revenue Braddyl took severe measures including the recovery of loans in arrears from the Vazhunnavar. He was not in a position to grant any new loans to any local chiefs, as it would create huge deficit in company finance.\textsuperscript{71}

The prolonged military encounters with the Ali Raja put the Prince Regent in heavy financial constrains and he decided to contact the Tellicherry factory for assistance. He wrote a letter to the Chief of Tellicherry factory and reminded them that, “King my uncle, when he gave the fortresses and other privileges to the company, had no other interest, than a hope of being assisted for the time to come, against any of his enemies, when it might be necessary”.\textsuperscript{72} Prince Regent’s letter did not produce any desired effect. Rather than offering financial or military support, Tellicherry factory decided to resolve the issues between the Prince Regent and Ali Raja through negotiations, “as the best means of preventing a large expenditure of money”.\textsuperscript{73} Upon their mediation a temporary truce was arranged between the two contesting parties.\textsuperscript{74}

The Prince Regent was not happy with the turn of events. He wanted to make the Ali Raja totally submissive, which would ensure him supremacy over other members of royal blood as well as the petty vassals of Kolathunadu. Also he was frustrated with the English company over the delay in granting him financial and military assistance. Hence, he opened

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{71} Letter, Tellicherry to the Court of Directors, (MSS). T.D, dated 23 September 1729, p. 5, T.N.A
\item \textsuperscript{72} Letter, T.D, dated, 29th August 1730, pp. 18-19, T.N.A
\item \textsuperscript{73} Logan,n.5, p. 410
\item \textsuperscript{74} Kurup, n.3, p. 78
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
negotiations with the Dutch at Cannanore. He sent an emissary to Dutch headquarters at Kochi and asked for their assistance against the Ali Raja in return of “anything they might request within reason” The Dutch Commodore at Kochi obliged to help the Prince Regent “to humble the Moors” on the condition of getting control of the Darmapatanam Island. 75 Darmapatanam was a strategic trade outlet owing to its geographical position as well as its proximity to the Tellicherry factory. Dutch control over there would be detrimental to the prospects of the English factory. Moreover, Domingo Rodriquez, English company’s linguist in Malabar, reported to the chief of Tellicherry that the Ali Raja was expecting assistance from the king of Canarese. 76 The internal dissensions of Kolathunadu political cluster scaled such a height that the Ali Raja invited Somasekhara Nayak of Canara to invade Kolathunadu. Some of the discontented princes also extended invitation to the Canarese for the invasion. In April 1730 the Canarese surpassed the common boundary and entered into the interior of Kolathunadu. Tellicherry factory faced with serious commercial setback and the Prince Regent’s assistance became unavoidable for the English company. 77 Braddyl reported all these matters to the higher authorities in Bombay. Since the matter had an unprecedented urgency, and ratification and direction from Bombay would take some more time, he decided to offer ten guns and soldiers to the Prince Regent immediately. 78 In November 1730, the Bombay superiors had given permission to support the Prince Regent 79, and Braddyl, accordingly,

75 D&C, dated 19th August 1730, Sl. no. 1434, p. 19, T.N.A
76 Swai, n.1, p. 94.
77 D&C, dated 19th August 1730, Sl. no.1434, p. 17, T.N.A
78 Ibid.
79 D&C, 2 November 1730, Sl.No. 1434, p. 30,T.N.A
offered military stores worth 20,000 *fanams* and 30,000 *fanams* in cash.\(^{80}\)

In return Prince Regent wrote ‘Royal writing to protect the trade of the English Company’, in which he declared:

> For the greater security of the English Company and their Trade and Dealings in our Dominions, Be it to known to all whom these Presents may concern, That I Ode Ormen, Prince Regent and Governour of the Palace of Pallee, by this our Royal Grant, do promise free Liberty to, and authorise the aforesaid English Company (and not to any other European nation whatsoever) for to trade and Traffick [sic] in, buy and sell the severall [sic] Goods and Products of our Dominions. I likewise promise them not to admit either the Dutch or French nation to make any Establishment or carry on any Trade in the country of Erbenadoo, Trentapatam nor Randdoo Tarra. That in case either the Dutch or French nation should hereafter pretend to Traffick or settle themselves in any of the aforesaid Countrys, we do hereby give full Liberty to the English Company to Hoist their national Flag either on Trentapatam or Randdoo Tarra in such places as to them shall seem convenient.

> Given under our Royall [sic] Sign Manuall this 2\(^{nd}\) of November in the Malabar year 906 and the Christian year 1730.\(^{81}\)

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\(^{80}\) Ibid, dated 3 November 1730, Ibid, p. 32

\(^{81}\) Diary of the Tellicherry Factory, 3rd November 1730, Logan n.21, I/XIX, p. 18
John Braddyl was therefore a true successor of Robert Adams in employing diplomatic skills and bravery while dealing with the native political structure. Adams and Braddyl had to obey the instructions given and clarification made, by their superiors in Bombay and London. At the same time being the men on the spot, they were compelled to take immediate decisions. They and all other fellow factors in Tellicherry were basically private merchants and their own private mercantile interests had to be protected without causing serious damages to the interests of their parent company. In a brittle political structure like that of Kolathunadu, they had to be very cautious in maintaining cordiality with the native powers, or else the rival European companies would take benefit of profitable trade practices. In short, the chiefs of Tellicherry were in a wobbly position. However both Adams and Braddyl were proficient enough in cautiously devising their plans without injuring to the interests of any of the pressure groups around and beyond them. The abovementioned treaty was an instance of the victory of the agents of merchant capitalism over the decadent political system of Kolathunadu. The English company achieved monopoly “in buying and selling several goods and products” in Kolathunadu. It gained political power at least in three major territories of Kolathunadu, as there was a provision which permitted the English company to resist ‘the Dutch or French nations to take any establishment’ in Iruvazhinadu, Sreekandapuram and Randathara. This provision was the real instance of the alienation of political rights in favour of the English company by a ‘sovereign power’ of the land. It became more apparent when the Prince Regent permitted the English company to hoist their ‘national flag’, anywhere in the territory, as ‘shall seem convenient’. This treaty was masterstroke diplomacy of the English company against the rival
European powers, since all the privileges hitherto enjoyed by the Dutch and French companies in Kolathunadu were in vain. The Prince Regent, on the other hand, was in an embarrassing condition that he had to fight against two enemies—the Ali Raja and the Canarese—simultaneously. Hard pressed for money, the Prince Regent was forced to take an additional loan from the English factors in January 1731. 82 Through the mediation of Kalliadan Koran Nambiar, the Ali Raja promised to be submissive and agreed ‘to pay an indemnity of 1, 00,000 fanams at once, and a similar sum in four month’s time’. 83

The Bombay Council had already given instruction to the Tellicherry factors to be reasonable mediators for pacification in the native politics than active participant in an expensive manner. 84 So far, their attempts were to strengthen the cause of the de jure and de facto sovereigns of the Kolathunadu royal family by giving financial and military assistance. However the present developments in Kolathunadu created discomfort to the English company. Grain supplies to the Tellicherry factory usually came from the Canarese port of Mangalore. The Canarese was now moving against the Prince Regent and any sorts of open ‘adherence to the Prince Regent cause starvation to the Tellicherry settlement’. 85

The Canarese Invasions and aftermath

The Canarese menace grew into alarming proportions for the Prince Regent in early 1732. Now they appeared with a strong army numbered 30,000 and reached as far as Mount Eli without much resistance from the native forces. The Canarese made quick advancements and on 10th May,
seized the fortified peninsula of Matame belonging to the Mappilas. Prince Regent was happy with the fall of Matame and wished them to besiege Cannanore as well. The Prince Regent made a treaty with the Canarese General, Reghunath, in October 1732. Accordingly, the Prince could hold the territory north of the Valarpatanam River up to Nileswaram as a tributary of the king of Bednure and in the said territory the Canarese could construct three forts at ‘Madacarro’ (Madakkara), ‘Cavi’ (Kavai) and Nileswaram. The Prince Regent would not have any authority in the territory south of Valarpatanam River. The Canarese would assist the Prince Regent ‘against his rebellious subjects”.

The power equations in the Kolathunadu political cluster again underwent drastic changes. The Canarese and the Prince Regent were in good terms as a result of the treaty and their joint armies attacked Cannanore twice—in January and again in February, 1733—but were repulsed with great loss. The English factors became vigilant about the possible threat of the Canarese dominance in Cannanore. From Cannanore the Canarese could very easily control, Randathara, the pepper rich territory in Kolathunadu. Moreover their active presence in Cannanore would be detrimental to the English factory at Tellicherry owing to the close proximity between the two places. In order to resist such eventualities, the English secretly arranged the supply of military stores to the Ali Raja.

Darmapatanam obviously had a strategic importance as far as the spice trade in Northern Malabar in general and Randathara in particular was concerned. Stephen Law, who succeeded John Braddyl as the chief of the

86 T.C, dated 23 October 1732, vol.5, p. 6, T.N.A
87 Ibid, dated 25 October 1732, Ibid.
88 Ibid, dated 8 June 1733, vol. 6, p. 37, T.N.A
Tellicherry on 17th December 1732, emphatically remarked that the Island was, “centred in the pepper country and whoever controlled it could become master of the spice trade”.89 A major portion of the Island was under the control of the Prince Regent and the Kottayam Raja controlled the rest during the period under survey. It was quite possible that the former might transfer it to the Canarese or the latter to the French. In both cases, the English trade in Kolathunadu would certainly have the threat of ruin. Hence, Law had two major priorities in Kolathunadu, both of them having political and economic implications. His first concern was to resist the Canarese advancements in northern Malabar and equally important was the protection of Darmapatanam from all other claimants, like the Canarese and the French. The French exploited all the favourable circumstances owing to the Canarese invasion for maximising their interference in Kolathunadu politics. Accordingly, the French factors at Mahe proposed a confederation with the English against the Canarese in December 1732. Amazingly, the Prince Regent expressed his willingness to join the confederation, despite his treaty obligation with the Canarese. The Zamorin, the king of Mysore and the Raja of Kottayam were also desired to join the confederacy. This confederacy had a premature death primarily owing to the betrayal of the French.90

The Canarese advanced further and reached Koodali in January 1734, which they captured and proceeded to Darmapatanam Island. The Canarese desired to occupy the Island because they wanted to make it the nerve centre of their Malabar possessions.91 The French were enthusiastic in the Canarese occupying the Island, rather than the English. Law decided

89    D&C, dated 19 February 1735, Sl No. 1434, p. 56, T.N.A,
90    Kurup, n. 3, pp. 82-3
91    T.D, dated 30 September 1734, p. 40, T.N.A
to resist this move and with the consent of the Beebe of Cannanore, he established firm control over the Grove Island, lying off the point of Darmapatanam on 5th October 1734.\(^{92}\) Having achieved such a stepping-stone for the annexation of the Island of Darmapatanam, Law deputed Domingo Rodriguez, the official linguist of the English company to the Beebe of Cannanore, with a secret mission of convincing that lady about “the perils which threaten, should that place (Darmapatanam) fall into the hands of ---- the French or Canarese”. He proposed a plan of the English company temporarily taking possession of the Island and protecting it with “strong buildings and people”. After the cessation of the present commotions, the Beebe could take possession of it after paying off the expenses “on account of fortification and European garrisons”. Rodriguez made such an offer with a strong conviction that the Beebe would not be able to pay the expenses of fortification and garrisons.\(^{93}\)

In her letter dated December 3\(^{rd}\) 1734, the Beebe, the heiress of the house of Adiraja (Ali Raja) of Cannanore, made a humble request that, “---- ---Considering all the circumstances, we conceive that we cannot hold possession of, or remain in that place (Darmapatanam). It is better that you take possession of it”.\(^{94}\) Now the said agreement had to be ratified by the Prince Regent and Raja of Kottayam, as they took possession of it early in February 1728. The Canarese army comprised of 4,000 to 5,000 men, crossed the Anjarakandi river and proceeded further to Darmapatanam in February 1735. The English company used the presence of the Canarese army so close to the Kottayam Raja’s territory for the territorial aggrandizement. Law brought the ‘present posture of affairs’ to the notice

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\(^{92}\) Letters, from Tellicherry to Bombay, TD, dated 19 September 1734, p. 57, T.N.A.  
\(^{93}\) Logan, n.21, I/XXIV, pp. 22-3  
\(^{94}\) Ibid, I/XXV, p. 24
of the Raja of Kottayam and requested him to grant permission for occupying the Island, after consultation with the second Raja of the land. On 6th February 1735 the King dispatched his “Royal Grant for your Possessing Durmapatam [sic], and hoisting your colours (flags) on such places as you think necessary for its security”.

Law had entered into a secret agreement with the Prince Regent by which the English company were granted absolute control over the Darmapatanam Island. The Prince Regent, in his royal writing, granted to the English Company. “the island of Durmapatam, with the Lands lying thereon surrounded by its bordering Rivers, and the said lands with the Bars and Rivers thereunto belonging, are accordingly granted by us [---]“. In another agreement, Chief and factors of Tellicherry in their official writing promised the Prince Regent “that in time to come, the duty on all goods imported and exported from and to the said island, by ships and vessels, shall be duly and faithfully paid to the said Prince, his heirs, and successors ------ (the company) shall be subject to no more than a single duty on the goods and merchandize imported, and exported, whether from the island of Durmapatam or from Tellicherry---“.

The two documents mentioned above were entered into the Diary of the Tellicherry factory on 26th February 1735 whereas the documents are dated May 1734. The grant and the agreement might have been signed in February 1735, but had been pre-dated deliberately to support the company’s claims over the island. The English company desired to occupy this island ever since the establishment of their Tellicherry factory. Hence,
it may be regarded as the fulfilment of their long cherished dream. The Tellicherry factors sought confirmation of all the grants hitherto have been made in favour of them by the Kolathiri, so as to safeguard their trade and territorial interests unequivocally in the reckless politics of Kolathunadu. The Prince Regent Udaya Varman of Pally Palace confirmed, ‘—all that our uncle gave to the English Company under his royal writing dated 883 (1708). ------we, of our free will, cede and give to the said company, the Tellicherry Fort, as also all the other Forts subordinate to it and the limits of each. In the place above alluded to, no one shall demand; collect or plant; but our custom House must give us what has been written and settled down” 99 on 27th May 1734.

Thus, the English company gained a solid footing in Darmapatanam through diplomacy and agreements. This was the second in the series of their territorial enlargement during the early phase of the eighteenth century in north Malabar, the first being the Kurungoth territory. However, the English company had to be vigilant about the rival European powers on the coast, especially, the French at Mahe. They were always active in disrupting the English commercial dominance in Kolathunadu. They even attempted to blockade pepper supply to Tellicherry from the country of Vazhunnavar by constructing a fort at Peringathur in Iruvazhinadu territory.100 They were given permission to construct the said fort by a rival prince of the Udayamangalam branch. The Vazhunnavar of Vadakara, Kurungoth Nayar and Narangoli Nambiar also supported this move of the French.101 The French were banked on to support the Canarese occupation of the Darmapatanam Island as a precaution against the English occupation

99 Logan, n.21, I/XXI, pp. 20-21
100 D&C, Letter from Adams to Tremisot, (n.d), Sl. No 1430, pp. 64-6,T.N.A
101 T.D, vol. 8, dated 17 December 1735, p. 33, T.N.A
of the same. They viewed the Prince Regent’s collaboration with the English factors with dismay and, in order to weaken his dominance in Kolathunadu politics, decided to support the pretensions of a rival prince to the royal throne.¹⁰²

The Prince Regent, in an unstable position owing to the Canarese invasion and the French machinations, decided to seek the English support. Early in February 1735 the Tellicherry Chief advised Cunhi Homo to form a combine of the rajas of Kadathanadu and Kottayam along with the Iruvazhinadu Nambiaras against Canarese. Nothing substantial had come out of the Prince Regent’s efforts. However, the Prince Regent contributed a sum of Rs. 20,000 as his share of war expenses.¹⁰³

However, the Bombay Council advised the factors at Tellicherry not to interfere in the native politics too much as it would cost heavy expenses to the company’s exchequer.¹⁰⁴ The factors at Tellicherry could not be silent observers, as it would be detrimental to their commercial and political interests on the coast, decided to intervene in Kolathunadu politics. At the same time they had to be vigilant about the huge expenses incurred. Law came to the conclusion that English dominance in Malabar trade could be sustained only by strengthening the native political structure under the leadership of the Kolathiri and the Prince Regent against their common enemy, the Canarese. Under the present state of affairs, the Raja of Kottayam had to be brought under the control of the Prince Regent and the Tellicherry factory. In order to ensure this Law started negotiations with the Raja of Kottayam and at the end of which he was made totally submissive

¹⁰² Letter, Law to the Court of Directors, T.D, dated 17 January 1736, T.N.A, p. 18
¹⁰³ Logan, n.5, p. 414
¹⁰⁴ Letter, Bombay to Tellicherry, T.D, dated 5 November, 1736, p. 33, T.N.A
to the Prince Regent and to the English company. He agreed to observe that, “in his present confederacy with the Prince of Cherica and English he would with all his might proceed against the Canarees at his own expense, until they are drove over the river Billiapatam and afterwards as far as the Prince may require and which he swore to observe as he should answer to his God Perimal and pagoda and moreover that the English shall in future enjoy the same Privileges in his country as they do and have done throughout the Kingdom of Colastree”.105

Thus a remarkable progress in combining the native forces of Kolathunadu and Kottayam along with the English forces was noticed in January 1736. The confederacy was effective and the Canarese were forced to evacuate the Island of Darmapatanam on the 25th February 1736. On the 7th of March they were ousted from Madakkara at the mouth of Baliapatam river and the Englishmen desired to demolish the place, but the Prince Regent insisted them to keep it for themselves. The Prince Regent feared that otherwise it might fall into the hands of the Muslims of Cannanore.106 The Prince Regent was pleased with the favourable turn of events. He knew the possibility of Canarese invasion in future also and as a protection decided to please the English company with certain concessions. In March 1736 in his royal writing allowed the company to erect a fortress “at the entrance of the river Biliapatam, on the spot called Maddacara”. He also permitted them “to enjoy the sole traffic of pepper and cardamoms produced in those parts”. He made clear his intention that, “they (the English company) do prevent the Canarese frequenting with their vessels for molesting me that way”. Further, the company was given permission “to

105 Logan, n.21, I/XXX, p. 28
106 Rajendran, n. 12, p. 110
erect another fortress on the point of Edacaute (Edakkad) for the better security of their trade carried on the country of Radatarra”.

The Dutch factors at Cannanore were not active so far against the Canarese invasion though it was ruinous to their trade and commercial operations at Cannanore. Their inertia was due to the fear of English dominance in northern Kolathunadu, in case Cadalay (Koodali) would be taken over by the English from the Canarese. To remove their fear the Chief of Tellicherry agreed to give a certificate renouncing all claim to Cadalay if it should be taken and the Dutch joined the confederation on the understanding that Cadalay should be razed to ground by the end of March 1736. With the support of the Dutch, the combined military staged the final act of the show and the last fort, Ayconny (Alikunnu) occupied by the Canarese at the mouth of the Kavayi river, was surrendered on 1st April 1736.

The Canarese made preparations for a second attack on Kolathunadu by the end of 1736 and the Tellicherry factors were well informed about such developments. They could not afford a war for the second time since their resources had been exhausted considerably during the previous encounter with the Canarese. In addition to the war expenses, the company had to suffer severe commercial breakdown during the previous invasion. Moreover, the French and the Dutch companies were eager to undermine the English dominance in north Malabar. The French even offered whole-hearted support to the Canarese for a second attack on Kolathunadu. This was primarily a tactic for ousting the English company

107   Logan, n.21, I/XXXI, p. 28
108   Logan, n.5, p. 415
from Malabar trade at the expense of the Canarese invaders. The English and French had a treaty obligation between each other on the basis of their agreement in 1728. However, both were not serious in fulfilling the provisions of the same, since all such treaties and agreements were often superseded for safeguarding the fleeting interests of the merchant capitalism on both sides. Both the companies again entered into a treaty on August 1736 “for the mutual benefit of the two companies of England and France at their respective settlements”.

Such diplomatic agreements could not ensure commercial tranquillity, owing to the inherent contradictions of merchant capitalism. Therefore, the factors of Tellicherry decided to negotiate peace with the Canarese and Richard Lynch, one of the factors of Tellicherry, was deputed to Bedanur for this purpose. William Logan gives us a different explanation for the attempt of peace treaty with the Canarese by the English company. According to him, “The state of disunion among the petty chieftains, and more especially between different members of the Kolathiri family, and their mutual jealousies were more strongly than ever forced on the attention of the factors in endeavouring to arrange a peace with Bednur; and ……Mr. Lynch (was sent) to Mangalore to arrange a general peace, if possible and if that, as seemed probable, were unattainable, then a separate peace on behalf of the English Company”.

As a result of the negotiation between the Canarese and Richard Lynch, Suryapaya, Governor of Mangalore on behalf of the King of Bednure consented to sign an agreement with the English company.

110 Ibid., dated 16 October 1736, T.N.A, p. 8
111 Logan, n. 21, I/XXXII, pp. 29-30
112 Logan, n. 5, p. 418
Accordingly, in case the Canarese conquer the territories of Kolathiri, the English company shall be given exclusive “privilege and right to transport pepper and cardamom” and they shall respect all grants and concessions given to the English company by the Kolathiri. The English company shall be permitted to export rice and other goods from Canara country “without being subjected to the duty styled (as) Adlamy”. The Canarese could invade the Kolathunadu country up to the fortress of Madakkara and beyond Valarpatanam; the English company shall be permitted to enjoy full freedom. The eighth clause of the treaty is typical to prove the volatility in company’s political behaviour. It goes on to ensure that, “The English are not to give any assistance to the enemies of the King of Bednure”\(^\text{113}\) It was an indicator to the changed attitude of the company towards the Prince Regent. The English chief signed a reciprocal treaty with king of Bedanure on 16\(^{th}\) February 1737.\(^\text{114}\)

As a matter of fact, the cordiality between the Prince Regent and the English company was at the verge of a ruin ever since 1736. The Prince Regent wanted to invade Canara for decisively destroying their war machines, which was summarily rejected by the English. Naturally, he became suspicious of the trustworthiness of the Company and made an attempt to seek the Dutch assistance against the Canarese. An agreement was arranged between the Dutch and the Prince Regent about January 1737, by which the former agreed to assist the Prince to expel the Canarese beyond the Kasaragod river and to reduce the Mappilas of Cannanore and Raja of Kottayam to obedience, on condition that the Prince should deliver to them annually 1000 candies of pepper at Rs.56 per candy which was

\(^{113}\) Logan, n. 21, I/XXXIII, pp. 31-32
\(^{114}\) Ibid, I/XXXIV, p. 32
about half its market rate. The treaty obligation was never fulfilled because, the Dutch turned away from their obligations of ousting the Canarese completely from the territory beyond Kasaragod and inflicting death blow on the Canarese war machines, when they discovered that the task in hand was too rigorous. The Prince Regent also was not in a position to offer pepper at such a cheap rate to the Dutch. Prince Regent’s negotiation with the Dutch was futile and the Canarese crossed the Nileswaram river for the second time in early 1737.

Thus, Cunhi Homo was forced to approach the English for assistance. His negotiations with the Dutch annoyed the Tellicherry factors and they decided to ensure his unwavering genuineness with the English company. They held the view that it was the moral responsibility of the Prince Regent to protect the English settlements in Kolathunadu in return for the customs duties paid to him by the company. The company also demanded due security for re-payment with regard to any further loans. On the 16th of February, the Canarese conquered the fort of Ayconny (Alikunnu) on the mouth of Nileswaram river and upon the withdrawal of the English garrison stationed there the Canarese occupied it. Now they were in a position to command the Nileswaram river and the northern portions of Kolathunadu. In April 1737 they came as far as Madakkara. Upon the pressure of circumstances, the Prince Regent was forced to come in terms with the English company. The English chief decided to make use of this golden opportunity to extract whatever terms he wanted. The Prince was offered an assistance of Rs. 5000 in return of an authentic deed

115 Logan, n.5, p. 418
116 Letter, Tellicherry to Bombay, T.D, dated 30 November 1736, p. 100, T.N.A
117 Swai, n. 1, pp. 100-01
118 Logan, n.5, pp. 419-20
ratifying the company’s hold on Ettakkat and Matakkara and an assurance that he would not come in terms with any other European nation. The Prince was given Rs. 1000 as advance and promised the residue after executing the formal deed. The formal agreement was signed in July 1737, by which he consented not to “enter on any terms of amity with any European nation and that in future no transactions will be done “with them without the consent and approval of those in the direction of Tellicherry”.

So a leading power in the native political structure was made submissive to the designs of an alien power. However, the Prince Regent was not happy with the Anglo-Canarese truce and the English factors found it difficult to convince the Prince Regent about the unavoidability of such a move. Further, he had to be brought under treaty obligation with the Canarese since, the English agreed not to support the enemies of the Canarese in Kolathunadu. Moreover, the Prince had to be made obedient to accept the possible shrinkage of his territory. So far the English company attempted to pressurize the Kolathiri as well as the Prince Regent by establishing direct link with the vassal chieftains of Kolathunadu. The Vazhunnavar of Vadakara, Achanmars of Randuthara, Nambiars of Iruvazhinadu, rajas of Kottayam and Cannanore are to mention a few. Tactics was elevated to a higher plane and the company started to instigate manoeuvrings with the Karyakars (Ministers) of Kolathunadu. A group of Karyakars was made pro-British and they stood against the policies of the Prince Regent. Kolathiri signed the articles of peace with the Canarese

120 Logan, n. 21, I/XXXV, p. 33
121 Swai, n.1, p. 101
on 26th August 1737 in the presence of Stephen Law and Richard Lynch. Accordingly, the territory, “from the fort of Madday, westward, to Urbelly, southward and to the Hills, eastward, with all territories, northward, bordering on the river”, was ceded to the King of Bednure. Kolathiri agreed to satisfy “with what remains to the southward”.122

The divisions in Kolathunadu royal family between the Pally and Udayamangalam branches entered into a repulsive plane by this time. The Pally palace had absolute dominance in Kolathunadu politics and their interaction with the English factors at Tellicherry invited jealousy and distrust among the members of the Udayamangalam branch. Rivalries among the European companies accelerated this process of disruption and it gathered added momentum during external intrusions. For instance, the French supported the claims of a rival Prince called Nadu Cuilotu to the Kolathunadu throne, during the first Canarese intrusion in early 1736, in order to downing the importance of Cunhi Homo, the Prince Regent.123 The “fifth king” of the Udayamangalam palace joined hands with the Canarese during their second intrusion. The ruling Kolathiri, perhaps fed up with the quarrels between the two palaces, decided to assign, “the Government of my Kingdom, remaining to me, unto my heir, the (aforesaid) Odearmen of the Palace of Pally”. This was probably an attempt to permanently exclude the members of the Udayamangalam branch from the ‘rights and privileges’ of the Kolathiri kinghood.124

The peace treaty signed between the English company and Suryapaya, was not acceptable to the King of Bednure. Suryapaya was

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122 Logan, n. 21, I/XXXVI, pp. 33-34
123 Letter, Tellicherry to Bombay, T.D, dated 17 January, 1736, p. 100, T.N.A
124 Logan, n. 21, I/XXXVIII, pp. 34-35
expelled from the post of Governorship of Mangalore and Reghunath superseded him. The new Governor was ambitious in achieving territorial annexations in Kolathunadu and in January 1738, he sent a dictatorial order to the chief of Tellicherry to visit him at Madayi. The factors sent a deputation to Madayi, as “the Chief never thought proper to visit him (Reghunath)”. The deputation was informed that, the Canarese wished the company to be neutral in the war about to be commenced against “the Mallabars”. The factors upon this information decided to strengthen the defence of the pepper rich districts of Kolathunadu from Canarese invasion.125

The Prince Regent noticed the senselessness in depending on the treaty obligation with the King of Bednure. He entered into an agreement with the English in October 1738 to drive out the Canarese from north Malabar. It is to be noted that the Prince Regent was presented as the Prince of “Cherica” (Chirakkal) rather than “Kolathunadu” in this document. So the very concept of greater Kolathunadu had disappeared and the ancient title of the Kolathiri Raja was virtually superseded by that of the Chirakkal Raja. According to the provisions of the said treaty the company had to bear the expenses and pay of its soldiers on land. The expenses of ammunitions (ball, powder), native militia (Nairs, Tiers) and vessels (Dhoneys and Machuvas) had to be settled by the Prince Regent. He made an advance payment of Rs. 30,000 to the company and promised to pay more if be required for the war expenses. If the promised money was not forthcoming, “the Company may retire (from the war), and seek any other means beneficial to themselves”. In case of success against the Canarese, the Prince promised, “to pay the Company the expenses, both on sea and

125 Logan, n.5, pp. 421-22
land, defrayed from its coffers”. The agreement shows the moulding of a new weapon of debt trap in the process of colonial penetration in Kolathunadu. Udaya Varman was now taking a heavy risk of committing to a debt of unpredictable magnitude.

The skirmishes between the English company and the Canarese near Madakkara on January 1739 brought the possibility of company’s active involvement in ousting the intruders from north Malabar. On January 10, the intruders were driven out beyond the Valarpatanam river and the prospects of a fresh peace treaty between the Canarese and the English emerged. However, the final settlement of peace was arranged by the end of February 1740. On February 27th 1739, William Wake succeeded Stephen Law as the Chief of Tellicherry. The new chief drafted the treaty of February 1740. It was sent to the Canarese Governor, Suryapaya on 18th February, which resembled the earlier treaty of February 1737, between the same parties, except for few clauses. The Tellicherry factory could export 300 corge of rice of forty-two bales, annually from the Carnatic ports without paying the duty called Adlamy and further laden shall be liable to the duty of half a pagoda per corge. The King of Bednure, Soma Surya Nayak confirmed the covenant of peace and the final agreement was signed on 26th February 1740. The clause of the earlier treaty of 1737 that prohibited the Canarese from making conquests to the south of the Valarpatanam river was deliberately omitted. The Canarese permitted the English company to occupy the fort of Madakkara. They also promised not to invade “two places belong to the Company, viz., Puteny and Punole Mala”. The company should not move against the forts, which may be built

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126 Logan n. 21, I/XXXIX, p. 36
127 T.D, 20th February 1740 in Ibid., I/XLII, p. 40
by the Canarese hereafter. The tenth clause categorically asserts that, “the English Company should not give any help or favour to those who are enemies of this State (Bednure)”. Finally, the English company should deliver arms and ammunitions for the Canarese army and they should not prevent the import of the same from other sources.128

The treaty revealed the treachery and dishonesty of the English factory to safeguard their trade and commercial interests. The Canarese presence beyond Valarpatanam river was a threat to the security of the northern portion of the Kolathunadu and this made the Kolathiri and the Prince Udaya Varman dependent to the Tellicherry factory. However the interests of the Tellicherry factory could be secured in the northern portion with the help of a strong garrison positioned at the fort of Madakkara. In a way the Canarese demanded English neutrality in case of a war against the Kolathiri. Moreover, the company promised to supply arms for the use of the Canarese, against the Kolathiri.

The internal dissents in the Kolathunadu royal house became irreparable as a result of the Canarese invasion. In the north, as a result of the settlement of peace between the English factors and the Canarese, political tranquillity became imminent for some time since 1740. However in the southern region, things took a bloody turn, thanks to the manoeuvring of a member of the royal family. In 1739, a prince called Ockoo, who hated the peace treaty with the Canarese, turned towards the French at Mahe. He challenged the legitimacy of the Prince Udaya Varman as the Regent of Kolathunadu. Udaya Varman requested the English for assistance and Prince Ockoo was trapped and killed in an encounter in

November 1739. However these continued dissensions ultimately resulted in disintegrating the royal family. The European companies, especially the English and the French accelerated the process of disintegration by taking sides with the rival parties for their own trade and political proliferation.

The French tried to interfere in the internal politics of the region by moving against the Nambiars of Iruvazhinadu. The Nambiars turned against a Nayar called Polatche when he tried to wear away from certain feudal obligation towards the former. The French and the Vazhunnavar of Kadathanadu supported Polatche against the Nambiars of Iruvazhinadu. In September 1739 the enmity grew into an open clash. The English factors viewed these developments with great concern and they considered it as the French design to establish a footing in Iruvazhinadu. Through the mediation of the Prince of Chirakkal they entered into a treaty with the Nambiars on 7th September 1739. The reciprocally binding treaty ensured security from common enemies. The Nambiars permitted the English company to conduct commercial activities without any “impediment” through their territory. The English agreed to resist any move by any power, except the Europeans and the King of Pally Kovilagam, to attack Iruvazhinadu, with the help of armed Nayars. It is very clear that both the signatories had hidden motives in entering into such an agreement. The English factors desired the Nambiars to be helpful against the Canarese and the Princes of Udayamangalam Kovilagam and the Nambiars hoped to seek English support against the Vazhunnavar and other native chiefs.

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129 D&C, dated 6 November 1739, Sl. no. 1441, p. 69, T.N.A
130 Logan, n. 5, p. 423
131 TC, 7 September 1739, vol. 2, Also in Logan, n. 21, I/XL, p. 37
The struggle between the Nambiars and the French was halted by the end of December 1739 on the basis of a secret peace agreement. The Nambiars agreed to pay a sum of 80,000 *fanams* as war indemnity and surrendered two hills, Poyterra and Chembra, in Iruvazhinadu in favour of the French company. All pepper produced in Iruvazhinadu were to be given to the French in Mahe for the price prevailing in the country. All disputes that the Nambiars with the Vazhunnavar and Kurungoth Nayar were to be settled through the mediation of arbitrators appointed from among prudent people of the country.\(^{132}\)

Thus the French attempts of extending its influence in the southern portion of Kolathunadu were achieved through diplomacy. The English factors wanted to resist such designs at any cost since the French and the English were not in hostilities in India during this time. They followed the proven technique of using the native chiefs through manoeuvrings against the French. They decided to support the Vazhunnavar through the mediation of the Prince Regent Udaya Varman and supplied ammunitions to fight against the French.\(^{133}\) This primarily indicates a moneylender’s tactics in financial dealings. As noted earlier, the support offered to the Vazhunnavar was primarily for the benefit of the English company. Vazhunnavar was not dependable as he was always inconsistent in dealings. However, the Prince Regent could not neglect the English, as he was already indebted to them. He was being treated as a surety for assisting the Vazhunnavar.

The French were not far behind in employing intrigues to gain political influence in the native politics. The peace treaty of December...

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\(^{132}\) T.D, dated 10th January 1740 in Logan, n.21, I/XLI, pp. 38-9

\(^{133}\) T.C., vol. 12, p. 31, T.N.A
1739 between the Nambiars of Iruvazhinadu and the French was short lived. The Vazhunnavar renewed fresh hostilities in June 1740. The arrival of Mahe de Labourdonnais from Pondicherry on 13th November 1741 resulted in stimulating the rivalries rampant in the region. He defeated the Vazhunnavar and agreements of peace were signed between the Vazhunnavar and the Iruvazhinadu Namibiar in the same year. \(^{134}\) Labourdonnais entered into a treaty obligation with the Tellicherry factors in December 1741, which provided for the demolition of French forts in Iruvazhinadu, viz., Peringatur, Cannamalla, Chimbora, Poitera, Bilayi, and Maylat in exchange for same number of forts by the English in Olamalla, Putinah, Irreemalla, Ponella Malla, Muicarra Cunnun and Muicar rua. Both the companies decided to act in union for controlling the petty chieftains of Kolathunadu. In order to ensure profitable pepper trade they decided to fix the price of the pepper at a rate acceptable to both the parties and to resist the price manipulation tactics of the private merchants. \(^{135}\) So the French and the English signed a reciprocally beneficial treaty for safeguarding their mercantile interests even at a time when their respective mother countries were in hostilities in Europe. Both moved with the dictates of merchant capitalist principles and were even ready to forget the nation state’s rivalries in Europe. However, such a common interest was never felt among the native political lords.

The Canarese presence in the Kolathunadu was still continuing and the Tellicherry factors were not bothered about it as they had treaty obligation with the Canarese. The acquisition of the Madakkara fort on the mouth of the Valarpatanam river had given them confidence about their

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134 Sreedharan, n.41, p. 255
135 T.C, 1741-42, vol. 13, p. 61, T.N.A
safety. The Canarese however desired to withdraw from their Kolathunadu possessions, owing to severe financial constrains and entered into a treaty with the Prince Regent on 14th September 1742. This treaty was signed not in consultation with the Tellicherry factors and the Raja of Coorg acted as the mediator. The Prince had to defray an amount of 7,000 pagodas to the Canarese as compensation. Another 1,000,000 pagodas had to be given when the Canarese would evacuate the fort of Maday. Similarly they would be given with such compensations for evacuating other forts subsequently.\footnote{TC, vol. 15, 14 September 1743, p.13, TNA} All other claimants of Kolathunadu royal family like the branches of Udayamangalam and Pally refused to contribute anything to defray it and Prince Regent who happened to be a member of the Chirakkal family had to bear entire amount due to the Canarese. Hence, the right to succession to the throne of Kolathunadu was reserved for the members of the Chirakkal house.\footnote{Kurup, n.3, p. 106}

The Succession Wars and the Revolutionary Wars in Europe during the early and late parts of the eighteenth century had its repercussions in India also. The English and French companies fought several wars in South India. The first among the series during 1742 and 1748 made the French a dominant power on the Coromandal coast at the expense of the English. The English dominance on Malabar Coast went unaltered. However, there were several instances of anti-British movements in Malabar and Prince Regent himself became weary of them.

**Disintegration of native power structure**

The Prince Regent had become a mere shadow of his earlier glories. His authority over his vassals was receding and many of them dared to
neglect all feudal obligations with him. He now became aware of the fact that, the English factors were primarily responsible for the disintegration of Kolathunadu and their attempts to establish direct link with his vassals made them neglect him. His complaint had its own firm base, especially in connection with the affairs in Randatha. For instance, he incurred a huge debt to the English company during the course of the Canarese wars and intended to pay off the same by collecting corresponding amounts from his vassals. Accordingly, the Achanmars of Randathara had to pay 1, 00,000 fanams as their share as on 1737. By 1740, they had remitted more than 70% of the amount to the company on behalf of the Prince Regent. In December 1740, they remitted 1,029 fanams as part-payment and requested an additional loan of 18,741 fanams. The outstanding balance of the principal amount along with its interest and the liability of the new loan put the total figure of liability to the company to be 60,000 fanams. Consequently the Achanmars signed an agreement on 1st March 1741, by which, they mortgaged Randathara to the English company and promised to collect the quit-rent from there in the presence of the officials of the company and would remit annually, 6,000 fanams as the interest and obliged to pay the principal amount in the sixth year together with interest. The district of Randathara was an integral part of the Kolathunadu political sphere and when the Achanmars signed the said mortgage treaty the Prince Regent was totally ignored as it was signed without his mediation. As a result, the Achanmars began to consider themselves independent from the feudal yoke of the Prince Regent.

Again in the same year he ordered the Achanmars to contribute 30,000 fanams to defray a debt owed to the English company. The

138 Logan, n.21, I/XLIV, pp. 43-4
Achanmars refused to obey as they felt “that the basis for an obligation of this sort no longer existed”.\textsuperscript{139} The Prince Regent threatened to assume the revenue collection of Randathara for himself unless the Achanmars agreed to pay him the tribute of 30,000 \textit{fanams} he had demanded. The English factors arranged the sum of 30,000 \textit{fanams} on behalf of the Achanmars in exchange of the revenue collection of Randathara. This is a unique technique of the donor arranging money for himself at the expense of a third party. The Prince was relieved from defraying the said sum and it became the responsibility of the Achanmars.

The Tellicherry factors came to note that the independence of the Achanmars and the interference of the Prince in Randathara affairs would be harmful to the interests of the company. The territory became a crucial centre of colonial conflict and the English company intended to establish greater control over the territory. Its control and security became highly apprehensive because the French initiated a policy of expansion from the south. As noted earlier, the Prince Regent was not consulted when the mortgage treaty of 1\textsuperscript{st} March 1741 was signed. However, he was taken into confidence when one of the members of the Achanmars family joined hands with the rival prince Ockoo’s gang of rebels and through the mediation of the Prince Regent the other members of the Achanmar family were brought under control on 12\textsuperscript{th} June 1741. The Achanmars agreed to keep all intruders out of their district who were hostile to the Prince Regent or to the English company and to punish any of their own members who might molest the Prince or the company. The factors made it clear that the

\textsuperscript{139} Bonaventure Swai, “Randathara; Flashpoint in Anglo-Kolathunad relation: 1730-90” in Journal of Kerala Studies, VI, March, June, (Trivandrum, 1979), p. 74
intention of such an agreement is to control the Achanmars and to interpose with the Prince if he should oppress them by extravagant taxes.\textsuperscript{140}

The English company’s efforts to impose political and economic control over Randathara made the Prince Regent to become highly critical of its factors. The disobedience of his vassals and scheming princes of the two branches of the royal family made it impossible to initiate any stubborn resistance against the mercantile designs of the European companies. On the contrary every effort to strengthen himself resulted in him becoming more and more wrapped up in the debt trap of the merchant capitalism. The Prince Regent Udaya Varman was old and frail by now. His frustration over the inconsistency in company’s attitude found its expression in his letters to the Bombay council. In one of such letters he made it clear that “my subjects and their estates be solely under my control” but owing to the scheming of the English linguist, Domingo Rodrigus, he was not in position to do so.\textsuperscript{141} The English factors observed that the Prince was becoming irrational in his approach towards the company.\textsuperscript{142} Their contention was that the anti-British faction of ministers was responsible for the illogical attitude of the Prince and they secretly supplied ammunitions to Prince Kunhiraman to chastise those karyakars (Ministers).\textsuperscript{143} The Prince Regent’s letter to the Bombay council in 1745 was an analysis of the Anglo-Kolathunadu relations. He reminded them of the reciprocal treaty of friendship between his palace and the English company, signed in July 1737 and criticized the English company for unilaterally violating the same by supporting some of the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{140} T.C, vol. 12, 12 June 1741, p.140
\item \textsuperscript{141} T.C, vol. 16, p. 90, T.N.A
\item \textsuperscript{142} T.C, dated 15th October 1745, sl. no. 1448, p. 25, T.N.A
\item \textsuperscript{143} Ibid, dated 18 August 1743, sl. no. 1447, p. 4, T.N.A
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
troublesome vassals of Kolathunadu. The company was, in short, interfering too much in the governance of his country.\textsuperscript{144}

Ali Raja of Cannanore joined hands with Prince Ockoo’s supporters. Tellicherry factors had already initiated measures to ‘purchase’ the support of the Raja of Kottayam. Accordingly, the Raja agreed to support the factors for Rupees 1,000 in lump sum and a daily allowance of Rupees 40 for his stay at Natture, near Tellicherry.\textsuperscript{145} Prince Regent and the Ali Raja were ready to offer him presents and he decided to side with the highest bidder. This attitude clearly indicates the lack of values among the indigenous political agents, and the vacillation shown even in the midst of machinations for jeopardising the native power structure by the agents of European merchant capitalism.

Prince Regent’s decision to move against the English accelerated intrigues and treachery in Kolathunadu royal family, particularly between the two houses of Udayamangalam and Pally. Many of the princes of two houses competed with each other to align with the English either to safeguard their own interests or to secure a position in the sinking structure of the Kolathunadu kingdom. Udaya Varman (Cunhi Como) died on 5\textsuperscript{th} June 1746 and Unni Thampan, the Prince of Kottakunnu, succeeded him. However, after a while, he gave up his position in favour of Kunhiraman of Pally palace.\textsuperscript{146}

Prince Kunhiraman had a great deal of intimacy with the Tellicherry factory and roughly two months before his accession, he had killed some of the ‘most dangerous’ \textit{karyakars} of the Kolathunadu upon the directions of

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\textsuperscript{144} Letter, Cunhi Homo to Geerkie, T.D, dated 29th October 1745, p. 25, T.N.A
\textsuperscript{145} T.D, dated 2nd October 1745, in Logan, n. 21, I/CX, pp. 100-01
\textsuperscript{146} Kurup, n.3, p. 109
\end{flushleft}
the English company. He was young and enthusiastic and desired to establish a centralised form of administration by eliminating the independence enjoyed by his vassals with the help of the English. He was aware of the huge debt he owed to the English factors. In November 1746 he expressed his desire to collect the land revenue of Randathara perhaps to strengthen himself for defraying it. He also tried to make strict control over the territories of Iruvazhinadu and Kadathanadu and on the trade and commercial activities in Kolathunadu through the fort of Madakkara.

The English factors viewed Kunhiraman’s efforts, to strengthen him by controlling his vassals, with great concern. The Tellicherry factory already devised a successful technique of establishing direct link with the karyakars and officials of Kolathunadu. In the present context, Kunhiraman’s karyakars were not pro-British and their expulsion became a major priority in the ensuing peace settlements.

There was a truce in the Anglo-French hostilities by the end of 1748 and the English factors decided to strengthen their position in Kolathunadu. On 10\textsuperscript{th} January 1749, an agreement was signed with the Prince Regent, whereby he agreed to imprison Camal Mopla, a minister in charge of Madakkara, on charges of treasonable conferences with a Mahratta pirate called Angria. Jogui Charadin, along with eleven of his associates was to be expelled from the country on charges that “their having insulted and abused the company’s people going overland to Madakkara”. Prince Regent’s Customs Master was dismissed and Changarah Putter was to hold that

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\textsuperscript{147} Swai, n.1, p. 104
\textsuperscript{148} D&C, dated 26 November 1746 & 29 December 1747, sl. no. 1450, T.N.A
\end{flushright}
office for six years. Finally, not to interfere in the affairs of Randathara contrary to the provisions of the agreements so far made.\textsuperscript{149}

The Tellicherry Chief Thomas Byfeld then turned his attention to other unsettled matters. He paid a visit to the Madakkara fort on 8\textsuperscript{th} May 1749 and had detailed discussions with Kunhiraman and Unni Thampan on the differences that existed between them and the English company. This was an attempt to settle the rivalries rampant between two Princes of the house of Pally since Unni Thampan’s abdication of the powers of Prince Regent in favour of Kunhiraman. Byfeld found some of the prominent officials of Kolathunadu guilty. The accused -Kutti Putter, Ananda Narayana Putter, Ana Cutti Putter and Chittil Ram Putter and Saben Cutti Putter- along with their families were expelled from Kolathunadu. The Princes were forced to give the Island of Madakkara to the English company with “full and absolute power to govern and administer justice on the said island as practiced at Tellicherry”. The company was given the right over the wrecks of vessels driven on shore, which was so far a sovereign prerogative.\textsuperscript{150}

Byfeld’s success in these negotiations marked the beginning of a new era in the history of merchant capitalism in Malabar. They were now assertive enough to dismiss and appoint \textit{karyakars} and other officials in Kolathunadu and hence the administrative functions of the native power cluster became mere puppets on the string of directions from the agents of English East India Company. Moreover, they asserted political and judicial powers in Madakkara as practiced in Tellicherry. Above all, the company became capable of claiming a sovereign prerogative at par with the

\textsuperscript{149} T.D, dated 10 January 1749, in Logan, n. 21, I/XLVI, pp. 44-45
\textsuperscript{150} TC, 1748-49, vol. 17, pp. 212-3
Kolathiri. Since the Prince Regent was displaced from his political and economic prerogatives in Randathara, he had to be placed in a secure position in the midst of mounting court intrigues, so that he could settle the accounts with the company. However, they could not permit him to have a free hand in Randathara affairs owing to the reasons of mercantile interests. The only way out was to strengthen him at the expense of English factory’s rivals, especially the Dutch, in the northern portion of Kolathunadu.

The machinations within the Kolathunadu royal family, between the Udayamangalam and Pally branches, went upon to such an extent that the Prince Regent imprisoned the Vadakkilamkur who belonged to the Udayamangalam branch and was put in the Valarpatanam fort. Byfeld hoped to put the northern portion of Kolathunadu under the disposal of the Prince Regent and the Palace of Pally for making them capable of defraying debts due to the company. Hence the Vadakkilamkur had to be brought into submission. Byfeld mediated a treaty on 9th May 1749 by which the Vadakkilamkur was forced to permit the Prince Regent to enjoy absolute powers on all the properties of his family south of Taliparamba river. If any of the members of the palace of Udayamangalam refused to accept these terms, Prince Regent Kunhiraman could proceed against them in the manner he deemed proper. The junior members of the Udayamangalam branch carried out several acts of resentment against this treaty. Byfeld tried to negotiate peace by fixing the southern limit of the Udayamangalam territory at Cherukunnu, about a mile to the south of the Taliparamba river opposite Madayi. The Pally branch virtually superseded the Udayamangalam branch as a result of this treaty. A new

151 Logan, n. 21, I/XLVI, p. 48
152 Ibid, I/L, p. 49
convention was born. Henceforth, the eldest male of both branches could be elected as Kolathiri but the post of the Prince Regent, the *de facto* ruler, had been reserved for the eldest male of the Pally branch who was usually referred to as ‘the Chirakkal Raja’.

The Vadakkilamkur was released from jail on the mediation of Byfeld but the possibilities of peace in the northern region remained unsettled owing to the banner of protest raised by the junior princes of Udayamangalam. Their uncle signed the agreements in favour of Kunhiraman and Pally palace, when the Vadakkilamkur was in jail and it forced them to part with their ancestral rights in Kolathunadu. Byfeld made some futile attempts to bring peace between them and he decided to assist Kunhiraman with men and ammunitions. Thereafter, the Puttur fort occupied by the rival princes was taken back in June 1749 and they were driven into jungles.

Thus, the dissentions in the Kolathunadu had a temporary truce and the English Chief turned his attention to improve the trade possibilities of the company. Trade monopoly in the Kolathunadu had been secured by virtue of a number of treaties from various chiefs and most of them were duly ratified either by the Kolathiri or the Prince Regent. However, due to the aggressive competition with the French and Dutch factors, price of pepper and other articles had risen in open market outside the Tellicherry settlement. In order to check smuggling of spices from Kolathunadu to other settlements, proper control over nearby territories became inevitable. This might be the reason why Byfeld turned his attention towards the Kadathanadu territory. He proposed an article of friendship with

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154 Ibid., pp. 435-6
Kadathanadu and the Vazhunnavar promised to respect all the ‘Writings and Grants’ given by the Kings and Regent Princes of Kolathunadu in favour of the English company in Kadathanadu. He, further agreed to protect and assist the transportation of all ‘sort of commodity produced in the province of Cartenad (Kadathanadu).155

By this time, the accumulated debt of the three successive Regent Princes to the English company grew into a substantial amount. Negotiations were initiated to settle the differences in amounts and on 7th September 1749, Kunhiraman had admitted the company’s ledger as the true account according to which his debt to the company “in the sum of one hundred fifteen thousand, one hundred thirty-four fanams, twelve vis and a half” (approximately 1,15,134 fanams). Kunhiraman had to make arrangements for settling this debt and he negotiated with the temple trustees of Muzhappilangad and Andalur and arranged to give the temple properties in the island Darmapatanam to the English company in lieu of land in Kolathunadu territory. The English company was now in a position to realise twenty-two thousand six hundred eighty-three fanams, six vis (approximately 22,683 fanams) annually from the revenue of the said land.156

On the same day, the uralars (heads of temple administration) of the major temples in Kolathunadu were compelled to sign agreements with the company for surrendering their age-old rights on the revenues from Randathara. Byfeld entered into separate treaties in the presence of the Prince Regent with the temples of Edakkad (six thousand five hundred fanams), Peralacheri (six thousand fanams), Muzhappilangad (two thousand fanams, in addition to the surrender of its land in Darmapatanam), and Tiruvengatu

155 T.D, dated 5th September 1749, in Logan, n. 21, I/LIII, p. 50
156 Ibid, Ibid., I/LV & LVI, p. 51
(five hundred *fanams* in favour of the Prince Regent and another five hundred *fanams* towards the Achanmars’ debt).\(^{157}\)

These treaties indicate the nature of the expansion of merchant capitalism to the role of political administrators in ‘some regions’ of Kolathunadu through the application of debt and diplomatic manipulations. In pre-modern Malabar, the ownership of land rested with three categories of authority. Land assigned to the temples was known as *Devaswom*, Brahmin-held land was *Brahamaswom*, and the king’s property was *Cherical*. Brahmins were the custodians of Devaswom in their capacity as the *uralars* or temple administrators. The Raja acted as the protector of both *Dewasom* and *Brahamaswom*. These rights and privileges were regulated through the application of customs and traditions, which sustained the feudal society and obviously had political and social connotations beyond mere ownership in land. The English company, by claiming rights over many of these conventional prerogatives of the ruler as well as Brahmins might have wished to be powerful by establishing their legitimacy in the same pattern of the native customs and traditions. They had established political authority over ‘some regions’--Tellicherry, Madakkara and now the island of Darmapatanam and the district of Randathara-- which had strategic trade and commercial potential.

The Prince Regent had married Kadathanadu Vazhunnavar’s sister and had a house for her in Iruvazhinadu. He desired his son to be the ruler of Iruvazhinadu and the Vazhunnavar supported this move, as his nephew’s elevation to such a post would be helpful for him to control Iruvazhinadu more effectively. The English factors observed it as a means of

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\(^{157}\) Ibid, Ibid, I/LVII-LXI, pp. 51-53
counteracting French influence in that district. However, the Nambiars of Iruvazhinadu strongly objected this move. The Prince Regent took it as an unpardonable act of defiance, contrary to the established laws and rules of his kingdom. The English Chief and the Vazhunnavar of Kadathanadu agreed to assist him against the insolent Nambiars. An alliance was formed on the basis of a lengthy agreement in October 1749.

On 17th January 1750, Thomas Dorril succeeded Thomas Byfeld as the Chief of the Tellicherry and immediately led to catastrophic changes in indigenous politics of Kolathunadu. Logan observed that the new chief Dorril “appears to have been rash as well as narrow-minded and weak. He was easily misled, and being weak, he mistook obstinacy for firmness”. However, it may be noted that there was no fundamental shift in the policies and motives of the English company under Dorril but the modus operandi differed radically from his predecessor. Byfeld followed a diplomatic approach while dealing with the native chieftains. He moved with the motive of strengthening the cause of English trade even at the expense of the native chiefs and often undermined the assurances of protection and treaty obligations with them. His dose of sugarcoated betrayal helped the company to achieve trade as well as political supremacy in many of the strategically important territories of Kolathunadu. Dorril lacked this particular quality and his approach was rather transparent and direct.

Hardly had six months passed since the formation of the aforesaid alliance the power equations reversed in Kolathunadu. In March 1750, the

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158 Logan, n.5, p. 436
159 T.D, dated 16th October 1749, in Logan, n. 21, I/LXIII, pp. 53-54
160 Logan, n.5, p. 437
Vazhunnavar declared himself as the Raja of Kadathanadu. It is not possible to ascertain the reasons for his sudden shift, due to the dearth of contemporary materials from indigenous sources. Reliance on the English records exclusively, put the blame on the French for their interference in native politics in order to damage the Prince Regent and to destroy the English company’s trade interests.  

Upon the Vazhunnavar’s coronation as the Raja, the Prince Regent declared war on him with the support of the Nambiars of Iruvazhinadu. However, some of the Nambiars joined hands with the Vazhunnavar and the Achanmars of Randathara at once took sides and later on pleaded to the English factors for protection. The English company’s trade in Iruvazhinadu and Randathara faced acute difficulties during the time. A silly incident of indignation on a servant of one of the English officers at Madakkara fort by some of the officials of the Prince Regent was sufficient enough for Dorril to turn against the latter. He started to work out some feasible solutions to weaken the importance of the Prince Regent in Kolathunadu politics. He fell out with the Prince Regent’s design of providing his son with an appendage in Iruvazhinadu territory and openly acknowledged the claim of an elder prince of Pally palace to be the ruling Prince. Kunhiraman, the *de facto* Prince decided to seek assistance from the French at Mahe.

Dorril visited the *de jure* sovereign, Kolathiri and convinced him of the depredations made by the Prince Regent and his associate, Unamen, in hurting the Nambiars of Iruvazhinadu and the Vazhunnavar of

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161 T.C, dated 1st May 1750, vol. XIX, p. 170, T.N.A
162 Ibid., Ibid., p. 158
163 D&C, dated 12 October 1749, sl. no. 1455, T.N.A
164 Logan, n. 5, p. 437
Kadathanadu. In his royal writing, given to the chief of Tellicherry on 21 April 1751, Kolathiri dismissed Kunhiraman and appointed, Ambu Thampan, a junior Prince of the Pally palace as the Prince Regent. He further requested the English company:

“to grant to the said Ambu their favour, and help to enable him to carry on the government of my country without dispute with any other person. If in the prosecution of the Government by Ambu, the Chief of Tellicherry understands and learns that his management and proceedings are not going on in a correct manner, he can advise him, which, if not listened to, the powers given to him by me will cease”. 165

This document shows the elevation of an alien merchant capitalist organisation to a more important position having political power without responsibility in the internal governance of Kolathunadu. They were now the real kingmakers as the new Prince Regent was appointed upon their will and they had the right to depose him. Kolathiri reiterated his obligation to the English company in his royal writing addressed to Ambu Thampan, which states:

“I therefore hereby constitute and appoint you, Regent and Governor of my Dominions, which power is to be of force no longer than your management is agreeable to the Chief of Tellicherry [---]“. “Should you hereafter act otherwise than may be consistent with their

165 Logan, n. 21, I/LXVI, pp. 56-57
interest and advice, the power I hereby invest you with is to become null and void".  

Ambu Thampan, was thus, appointed as the Prince Regent but his position was pathetic. His obligation to the English company had been legitimised in a separate document on the same day, which contained specific clauses for total submission. For instance, he agreed to be firm and sincere to the English company for the good of their trade and contracts. The appointment of “Regiadores” (ministers) in administration shall be done with the approval of the English chief. Further, he promised to defray all the debts owed to the company by himself as well as by his uncle (the Kolathiri) out of the revenues of the country.

Dorril had to face a devastating military encounter from the native forces immediately after the execution of the aforesaid disgraceful agreements. As soon as the treaty agreements were over, he proceeded to meet the Prince of Kottakunnu. He was abruptly trapped in the fort and only with the help of his bodyguards did he manage to withdraw to Valarpatanam. Kunhiraman, with help of the Vazhunnavar and the Raja of Kottayam arranged an army of 1,500 men and proceeded to Valarpatanam. Dorril withdrew to Madakkara and the native army followed him there. He took the aged Kolathiri and Ambu Thampan as hostages and carried them away to Tellicherry. Kunhiraman declared war on Tellicherry and started negotiations to seek French help against the English and allowed them to

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166 Ibid, part. I/CXIII, pp. 120-3  
167 Ibid., part. I/LXV, p. 55  
168 T.C, dated 5 June 1751, vol. 7, p. 43, T.N.A
occupy the forts of Nileswaram and Ramanthali. His intention was to disrupt the import of rice from Mangalore to Tellicherry.\(^{169}\)

Kunhiraman was convinced of the true nature of the English factors. He blamed them for all sorts of political instability, court intrigues, and external threats in Kolathunadu. In his letter to the English chief he declared to end their rule in his realm.\(^{170}\) His efforts to come to terms with the Vazhunnavar of Vadakara, the Raja of Kottayam and the Nambiar of Iruvazhinadu became successful and for the first time since the establishment of the Tellicherry Factory, a native coalition came into being against the alien intruder. Dorril had no friend left among the native chieftains, except Ali Raja of Cannanore, who only promised to remain neutral.

Under the pressure of circumstances, Dorril sent an invitation to the Canarese to seize the Nileswaram fort. This invitation was made primarily to check the possibility of the French occupying it. Moreover, the Canarese presence in the north would give him time and energy to outmanoeuvre the aggressiveness of the Prince Regent in the south. The Canarese accordingly invaded Nileswaram in August (1751), but had made little headway owing to the strong resistance offered by the native forces. The French had already started their busy endeavours to forestall the Canarese invasion, and hoisted their flag at the forts of Nileswaram and Alikkunnu, on the mouth of Kavayi river.\(^{171}\) Kunhiraman had become more aggressive and attacked several of the company’s posts like, Edakkad and Ponolla, in the outskirts of Tellicherry. At Tirimalla, the Nayar and Tiyya sepoys among the

\(^{169}\) Ibid, vol. 20, p.179
\(^{170}\) D&C, dated 24th May 1751, sl. no. 1457, p. 6, T.N.A
\(^{171}\) TC, vol. 20, p.179, T.N.A
company forces refused to fight the native army. Dorril sent the company’s Canarese linguist to the Raja of Bednure and arranged two treaties with them in October 1751. These agreements did not bring immediate advantage other than prevent the French from concluding terms with Bednure.

Dorril might have noticed the effectiveness of fanning-up intrigues among the native chieftains rather than waging open war for controlling the indigenous politics. He succeeded in his attempt to drive a wedge in the native camp during the early days of November. Kottayam Raja was a typical example among the native chieftains who betrayed a common cause for the sake of temporary and personal gains. He entered into a treaty with the English chief on 2nd November 1751. The company agreed to pay a daily allowance of Rs. 40 or two hundred fanams. In return the Raja promised to send 1000 of his men with arms for assisting the English on the condition of them being provided with the same allowances applicable to the Company’s Nayar sepoys. Kottayam Raja would prohibit movement of the native troops through his country as long as the differences exist between Prince Regent and the English company.

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172 Logan, n.5, pp. 438-9
173 According to the provisions of the said treaty with king of Bednure, the company was permitted to construct a factory at Honore. In case, Bednure king happened to conquer Madayi, Mount Dilly and Ramantaly, in Kolathunadu, the English company would have exclusive trade monopoly on sandalwood, pepper and cardamom. He also agreed to use utmost endeavours, in case of conquering Kolathunadu to recover all debts due to the company from the native chieftains. In return, the English company promised to give all sorts of assistance with war-like stores against due payments of money and not to assist the Kolathiri, vide T.D, dated 26 November 1751 in Logan, n. 21, I/LXVII, p. 57
174 D & C, (MSS), sl. no. 1458, p. 201
175 Logan, n. 21, I/CXIV, dated 2 November, 1751, p. 103
The French attacked the fort of Madakkara in the north on 19th March 1752 and the English army resisted it and the fight continued up to the 13th of May. Kunhiraman was not able to sustain his war efforts in the south and on 23 May 1752, a peace agreement was concluded between him and the English company. The treaty consisted of two parts: those that were mentioned in the written engagement and those that were privately arranged. In the written part, the English company was permitted to enjoy all the former “privileges and trade--- in the countries belonging to the Princes of Cherica (Chirakkal) in addition to the agreement on mutual protection against common enemies. However, the last clause of the treaty was eloquent to prove a schism within the ranks of the Tellicherry factory. Pedro Rodrigues, the official linguist of the factory, was forbid from conducting any transactions between Chirakkal and the English company. This was a deliberate attempt to blame Rodrigues for all the commotion between Chirakkal house and Dorril. A separate treaty was signed by which the English company agreed to give Rs. 50,000 to Prince Regent as compensation and Rs. 10,000 to Kottayam for mediation. Madakkara fort was returned to the Prince Regent and in return he had to destroy his redoubts on the hills of Andolla, Punolla and Putinha.

The armistice was not destined to bring tranquillity to Kolathunadu affairs. It brought a temporary truce with the English company but new power combinations germinated in indigenous politics. Kunhiraman continued his obligation towards the French who were busy with their war with Bednure. At the same time, a coalition was formed among the Zamorin, the Raja of Kottayam and the Iruvazhinadu Nambiar against the

176 Meenon, n. 119, p. 218
177 T.D, dated 27 May 1752, Logan, n. 21, LXIX, pp. 58-59
178 Logan, n. 5, p. 441
Prince Regent under the instigation of the English chief in June 1753. The Prince Regent was forced to cement his alliance with the French. Other native powers started to hone their old rivalries. In October, the Raja of Kadathanadu invaded the Iruvazhinadu territory with the support of the Prince Regent and the French. Iruvazhinadu Nambiars approached the English company for assistance and Kottayam Raja also came up to support them. Inevitably, the Nambiars and Kottayam Raja were forced to borrow more money and ammunitions from the English company.179

Thomas Dorril was an utter failure as the chief of a mercantile company. He often acted as in role of an imperial agent, though British interest in India had not transformed likewise during his time. His interference in the native politics was autocratic and attitude was rather hasty. He might have underestimated the gravity of troubles that the native chiefs could nurture. Moreover, some of his unwarranted actions like the expulsion of Kunhiraman and the imprisonment of Kolathiri and Ambu Thampan as hostages might have irritated the feudal sentiments of the native population. When the English trade steadily deteriorated and the company faced acute financial constraints, he was reaping fruits of his labour. Dorril was suspended from service, pending enquiry on several charges and John Sewell and Thomas Hodges were appointed as Supervisors to conduct enquiry.180 Dorril was dismissed from service on 15th March 1754 and among several other charges he was found guilty of misappropriation of funds. Pedro Rodrigues was acquitted and restored to office as the official linguist.181

179  D&C, sl. no. 1461, pp. 5, 28, T.N.A
180  Ibid., sl. no. 1460, p. 88, T.N.A
181  Ibid, sl. no. 1635, pp. 118-21,T.N.A,
Thomas Hodges, the new chief of Tellicherry, reversed the policy of direct action pursued by Dorril and preferred to follow negotiations and secret diplomacy, while dealing with the native chiefs. His foremost priority in north Malabar was to turn out the French from Nileswaram. He was successful in supporting the third Prince of the Nileswaram family with military assistance against the French.\(^{182}\) His efforts came out successful in June 1756, when the said Prince managed to oust the French from the fort of Mattalye (Madayi), which maintained the French communications between their fort at Alikkunnu and their furthest post at Nileswaram. Kunhiraman initiated mediation between them and arranged to restore Mattalye fort to the French in return of their evacuation of Nileswaram. As a reward to the service rendered by Kunhiraman, the French agreed to return and cancel his bond for Rs. 60,000 advanced to him in the war with the Tellicherry factors. However, the French had deliberately broke their promises, which was the turning point in the Prince Regent’s friendship with the French.\(^{183}\)

England and France resumed hostilities in Europe as part of the Seven Years’ War and authentic reports reached Tellicherry about its official declaration in October 1756. Hodges had made preparations for consolidating cordial relations with the native powers in anticipation of the extension of Anglo-French war in South India. Raja of Kottayam was thus brought under a fresh obligation with the English company in December 1756.\(^{184}\) The Prince Regent had fallen sick and Hodges paid him a visit at Chirakkal for having a detailed interview and at the end of which an agreement was drawn on 30\(^{th}\) November 1756. The Prince agreed to

\(^{182}\) Ibid., sl. no. 1462, p. 47, T.N.A
\(^{183}\) Logan, n.5, p.445
\(^{184}\) T.D, dated 26 November 1751 in Logan, n. 21, I/CXXI, p.108
support the English company against the French or any other nation and also agreed to align other country powers in the same direction. The commerce and trade of the English company in the dominions of Kolathiri were to remain on the same footing as before. This treaty was a masterstroke triumph of the diplomacy of Hodges. He had chosen the right time for approaching the Prince Regent. The latter was ill and carried the mental burden of the French betrayal.

Hodges had already initiated measures to bring Ali Raja and Kottayam Raja into English confidence. Ali Raja agreed to support with 300 armed men and firearms against the enemies of the English company. He was given 13,000 rupees in advance for the pepper to be supplied during the ensuing season at a price fixed by the company. Raja of Kottayam died in August 1757 and there was a succession quarrel between the vice-regent and the heir apparent. The English factors supported the vice-regent and the commotion continued up to June 1759. When the vice-regent crowned as the Raja of Kottayam he ratified the former treaty signed by his predecessor in an amplified form. He promised to despatch ”any number of his Nairs, Musqueteers, that may be desired not exceeding 6,000” for the service of the English company. He also guaranteed English monopoly in the purchase of pepper, cardamom or sandalwood from his dominion in return of an annual present of 1,200 fanams during the feast of Onam.

The Prince Regent Kunhiraman died in May 1759 and succession became a severe issue. There were two claimants: Ramavarma, the Vadakkilamkur as the natural choice by virtue of his seniority, and the son-

\[\text{\textsuperscript{185}} \text{Ibid, ibid, part. I/LXX, pp. 59-60} \]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{186}} \text{Logan, n. 21, I/LXXII, p. 61} \]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{187}} \text{Logan, n.5, p. 448, also see Kurup, n.3, p. 126} \]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{188}} \text{T.D, dated 24 August 1759, in Logan, n. 21, I/LXXIII, pp. 61-63} \]
in-law of the demised, Unanamen Thampan. The English factors feared the possibility of the latter falling under the influence of the French through the mediation of the Kadathanadu Raja, who was his wife’s uncle and who supported the French. The Kottayam Raja and the Ali Raja also sided with the northern regent. A combination was formed and on 23rd of September, the allied forces made Unanamen Thampan to retreat from one place to another. On 23rd September, Unanamen sued for peace and Ramavarma, the northern regent, had asserted himself to power on 17th October.

Prince Ramavarma’s success had great significance in accentuating English company’s authority in Kolathunadu. By this time, the company had equipped its own agents among the group of karyakars in Kolathunadu administration for protecting their multi-faceted interests. Ramavarma asserted himself as the Prince Regent with the help of these pro-British factions of karyakars under the leadership of Siben Putterah. Ramavarma executed two agreements on 9th September 1760 with the English company. In the first agreement, in addition to the usual ratification of the earlier grants and privileges, Ramavarma agreed “to prevent the Dutch or any one else purchasing pepper of Randatera (Randathara)” and to let the English company’s people in any parts of his dominion to “frustrate” Dutch trade. Prince Unanamen Thampan was rejected to be the heir apparent and it was agreed that another Prince would be appointed to that post only on the “approbation” of the chief of Tellicherry. Finally, he agreed to accept an annual stipend from the company in lieu of the amount of customs for the English trade activities through his dominion. This clause was actually

189 Logan, n.5, p. 448.
190 Swai, n.1, p.108
borrowed from practice prevailing in Surat and Cambay.\(^1\) This agreement eloquently explained the pathetic pothole to which a legitimate heir of political authority in Kolathunadu had glided into.

The second agreement signed on the same day was more harmful to the political integrity of Kolathunadu. Ramavarma mortgaged “the annual rents” of “Randatera” (Randathara), “Podatedatu Naudu” (territory in south Nileswaram) and “Cunahangalath” (Kunhimangalam, far south to Podatedatu Naudu) to the English company until the whole debts due to the company, from the princes of Pally family and by the Achanmars of Randathara, would be paid off.\(^2\) Thus, the *de facto* ruler of Kolathunadu was at the mercy of an alien power for the financial liabilities created by his predecessors and feudal vassals. The succession quarrels and the frightening financial obligation to the company, forced the Prince Ramavarma to surrender the “whole right of collecting the customs in all places in our dominion”[---] “for ever” in favour of the English company on an annual payment of 21,000 silver *fanams*.\(^3\)

The court intrigues in Chirakkal family continued even during such political calamitous times. The Princes of the family became puppets at the hands of pro-British and anti-British fractions of *Karyakars*. When Ramavarma died in 1760 the anti-British fraction, comprised of Krishnankutty Putterah, Tayaddy Kashamby, Aiyyar Swami and Cande Gurikkal got upper hand in Kolathunadu politics.\(^4\) With their support, Unanamen Thampan became the new Prince Regent and naturally the

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1\(^1\) T.D, dated 9th September 1760, in Logan, n. 21, I/LXXIV, pp. 63-64
1\(^2\) Logan, n. 21, I/LXXV, pp. 64-5
1\(^3\) Ibid, I/LXXVI, p. 65
1\(^4\) D&C, (not dated), sl. no. 1466, p. 47, T.N.A
importance of the pro-British fraction was in decline. The ruling Kolathiri had great concern over the turn of events or was inspired by the English factors to take severe measures against Unanamen Thampan. In 1761, he dismissed the Prince Regent and started to rule his territory directly. Kolathiri ensured all commercial privileges to the English company and permitted them to collect all the custom duties of Kolathunadu in lieu of the heavy debts his family owed to the company.

The repercussion of the rekindled Anglo-French rivalry had not been experienced in Malabar coast until the end of 1760. However, Hodges made preparations against a possible threat from the French and his negotiations with the native powers need to be seen from this perspective. He brought all the native chiefs, except Raja of Kadathanadu and Kurungoth Nayar, under the wings of Tellicherry factory and acquired total control over the revenue administration of Kolathunadu. In December 1760, four ships from England brought a platoon of English troops with Major Hector Munro as commander. In February 1761, the Tellicherry factors decided to attack Mahe and Louet, and the French chief agreed to surrender. They evacuated all the forts and military establishment in northern Malabar, and all of them came under the sway of the English company shortly. The Anglo-French rivalries came to an end by the treaty of Paris signed on 10th February 1763 and as per the articles of peace, all the French possessions were to be given back to them. The fort of Mahe was restored to the French on 20 October 1765, but their prestige, commerce and several fortifications were lost forever.

195 Ibid, dated August 1760, T.N.A
196 Swain, n.1, pp. 108-9
197 Sreedharan, n. 41, pp. 258-9
**Predominance of the English Company**

The agents of the British merchant capitalism appeared on Malabar coast as interlopers. Later by the end of the seventeenth century, their trade and commercial activities were regulated under the banner of an institutional framework of the English East India Company and its Tellicherry factory. Their untiring quest for profitable trade demanded intervention in the decadent system of indigenous politics that had inherent contradictions. At the outset, they had given support to Kolathiri and the Prince Regent for strengthening the centralisation process in the native polity. This attempt was futile in Kolathunadu and later they started to assert power for themselves.

The Anglo-French rivalries during the first quarter of the eighteenth century determined the cause of the political destiny of the region. The English, French and the Dutch left nothing unturned on the coast for achieving trade monopoly. Interestingly, at the same time, the petty chieftains of Kolathunadu competed not only among themselves but also with their *de jure* sovereign, the Kolathiri for establishing perpetual commercial relations with a European Company. The motives and procedures of both the European companies and the indigenous power groups had some similarities. The European companies tried to achieve exclusive trading privileges by plotting rivalries in internal politics. They schemed about strengthening a potential claimant against the weak contestants of the indigenous politics. The English company’s support for the Prince Regent reciprocated with an agreement granting exclusive trading rights. Kurungoth Nayar and the Vazhunnavar of Kadathanadu were supported by the French at Mahe not only against the English but also against the Prince Regent of Kolathunadu. The indigenous politics also
moved with political and economic ambitions with the help of rival European companies. In short, the rivalries among the European merchant companies had its repercussions in indigenous politics, which accelerated the process of European penetration on the coast.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the English company became powerful enough to choose and support persons of choice to regal positions. Their interference in the native administration grew to such an extent that even in the selection of Karyakars their dictum was final. At the same time, their military and financial supports were decisive in settling internal quarrels as well as external aggression.

The English company became predominant in Malabar in comparison with other European rivals as well as native chieftains by the later half of the eighteenth century. The company was now entitled to enjoy superior and exclusive rights in purchasing pepper and other valuable products from Kolathunadu territory. Their position was accepted and respected by all the native chiefs and many of them were under the protection of the English company. They were a territorial power over Tellicherry, Madakkara, Darmapatanam, Mount Delli and Randathara and the British agents were busy with the task of collecting land revenue and other perquisite in the true fashion of a political power. Their dominance in Kolathunadu had been buttressed by the construction of several forts and watch towers at centres with commercial and military potential. The Tellicherry fort was the nerve centre of their activities and in its immediate vicinity; the Mailan fort was a precaution against the aggressiveness of the

198 A Report of the Joint Commission from Bengal and Bombay appointed to Inspect into the state and Condition of the Province of Malabar in 1792-93, (Madras, 1861), vol. 1, pp.6-7, T.N.A.
Kurungoth Nayar. The forts of Edakkad and Koodali were for the protection of pepper trade from Randathara. Darmapatanam, Attarah, Codota, Kuna and Melure forts along with a fort in Grove Island were intended to resist the territorial designs of the native powers like, rajas of Kottayam and Cannanore and the European rivals like, the Dutch and the French over the island of Darmapatanam. The Madakkara fort at the entrance of Baliapatam river and another at Matamy were for protecting the English trade on rice and sandalwood from Mangalore. Fort at Mount Dilly was the northernmost fort of Kolathunadu.