CHAPTER V

THE EXPORT AND IMPORT OF COMMODITIES

The principal characteristic of the export trade was that the merchandise was procured through the advance payment system (dadni). The weavers received the advance from the intermediaries or the paikars who in turn received them from the merchants. This was done much time before the shipping season. This was in fact, the general structure of Indian maritime trade. Generally, the link between the paikar and the merchant was established by the dalas or broker. And it was normally, the paikari, the dalali and the sea trade were three distinct professions. But sometimes the influential merchants like Khem Chand could continued the elements of these three professions single-handedly. But for the European this was not possible because they neither could establish any communication with the primary producers nor were familiar with the market conditions and systems in India. Hence, to avoid all such difficulties, the Company invited the merchants to their factories where the prices of both the export and import commodities were mutually agreed upon then the goods were disposed.

SECTION – A

THE EXPORT TRADE: THE ITEMS OF EXPORT

Orissa produced both agricultural and non-agricultural goods much in excess of her needs. The surplus was exported to different parts of India as well as to other countries in Asia and Europe. The internal trade was carried on both by land and river routes; the coastal and external trade was carried on only by water ways.

I. Textiles:

As in most of the regions of India, textiles constituted a significant item of export from Orissa; but it was not on the same level as in Gujarat, Coromandel and Bengal, except in case of certain varieties. The textiles exported from Orissa were of
certain varieties, like cotton, silk and mixed-piece goods. *Tussar* was the most important among silk cloth, though in quantitative terms the manufacture of *tussar* cloth was not so important, its quality was considered to be the best in Orissa.¹ The piece-goods enjoyed the predominance in the export of the European throughout seventeenth and eighteenth century.

But the manufacture of cotton piece goods was widespread in the entire region of the province. The variety could be classified as coarse, fine and very fine. *Muslins* were fine in quality than the *calicoes*. The distinction between them is one of degree and each can also be further classified as coarse and fine. According to Moreland, in a few cases, it is also difficult to say whether a particular textile should be classed as a fine calico or coarse *muslin*."² Generally, *muslins* were thiner in texture and lighter in weight than *calicoes* and they were suitable for wear in hot countries."³ The manufacture and trade of very fine *muslins* in Orissa were extremely limited as Dacca enjoyed an unquestionable supremacy in this field in the entire seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But the other varieties of *muslin* and *calicoes* produced in the province were good and fit for exportation to both Asiatic and European countries. Some of the fine *muslin* produced in Orissa were *khas, mulmul* and *adathi*. We do not know how far these varieties found market in Asiatic countries, but the European procurement was not regular in Orissa and they were mostly procured from Dacca, Malda, Santipore and Hugli areas, though in eighteenth century we find the *mulmul* of Kasijurah of Midnapore was on the regular export list of the English."⁴ The reason for such low procurement of these fine *muslins* from Orissa was that they were not as fine as the Bengali varieties. Peter Mundy also informs us that the *khasa* of Orissa available at Patna was thicker than the *khasa* of Sonargaon."⁵ Generally all the *muslins"
were embroidered either with gold or silver yarn or cotton or coloured silver yarn according to their variety.⁶

But the calicoes of both finer and coarser varieties dominated the export list and at the same time the industry was also widespread. The fine calicoes were manufactured in the Bengal’s portion of Orissa extending from Puri to Midnapore districts. The areas comprising Gingelly coast produced the typical Coromandel variety of cloths. The main varieties were salampore and long cloth which were woven in all the centres on the coast. These varieties had very good market both in Asiatic and European countries. A variety betilles equivalent to Bengal khasa was woven in Srikakulam area which had red stripes on the border.⁷ In early seventeenth century this variety is said to have good demand at Batavia.⁸

Thus all the fine calicoes of above description were the major export among the cotton textiles of Orissa. This fine calicoes may also be referred to as plain or ordinary muslin. Among the coarse calicoes mention may be made of dessies, qurrahs, ambaris and lungis which were produced in Bengal portion of Orissa. These were exported both to the Asiatic countries and Europe, but the first one was considerably more important due to their low prices. In the district of Ganjam, there was manufactured a long-cloth of coarse variety which the Dutch called Guinea or Negro cloth. Another Gunies twin and thread were also produced from the villages in this district.⁹ From the mid seventeenth century to the later seventeenth century, the textile trade in Balasore and Pipli reached a high watermark as increase in their export to the Asiatic and European countries.

In the first half of the seventeenth century, the cotton goods in India, did not feature so prominently in Western Europe and until 1660 there was practically no demand for muslin or prints as apparel, and such dress-goods as were carried

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⁸ The *Dutch Factories in India, 1617-1623*, Ed. by Om Prakash, Delhi, 1984, p. 185.

westwards were destined almost entirely for Africa or America. The trade had been established by the Portuguese and the Indian calicoes were used to meet European household need such as table-cloths, napkins or towel.\textsuperscript{10} However when the English and the Dutch entered the commercial area, they realised the prospect of textile trade. Moreover, England did not produce linen in a large scale, so that imports of calico would not complete seriously with home industry and their sale abroad brought money into the country and were therefore regarded with favour by the prevailing mercantilist opinion.\textsuperscript{11} Previously, England also imported her textiles mainly silk from Italy and France. But the Indian textiles, particularly the muslins, calicoes, silk or mulbery and tussar cloths of Bengal and Orissa proved to be much more competitive in England because of their low prices, though these silk-piece goods were not comparable with the former in quality.\textsuperscript{12}

In the seventies of the seventeenth century, the English investment in Bengal expanded rapidly with establishment of two more factories in Dacca and Malda. Among the piece goods regularly ordered by the court of Directors mention may be made of gingham, sanno, nila, mulmul and rumals. Of these, the former three varieties were produced regularly from Balasore throughout our period.\textsuperscript{13} In the early eighties of the seventeenth century, the English investment in all the factories in Bengal increased very rapidly. Balasore occupied the second largest place in terms of investment. In 1681, 72,500 piece goods were ordered apart from 20 bales, from this place. The order increased to 162,000 pieces plus 16 bales in 1682 and 158,000 pieces plus 16 bales in 1683.\textsuperscript{14} The order for all the celebrated varieties like sanno, nila and gingham showed increase from the previous decade. The order for gingham was 15,000 and 30,000 respectively and nila 18,000 and 36,000 respectively.\textsuperscript{15} The order for rumal also increased, as in 1681 it was 7,500 pieces

\textsuperscript{10} W.H. Moreland, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 123.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p. 124.
\textsuperscript{12} Sushil Chaudhuri, \textit{IHR}, 1974, p. 265.
\textsuperscript{14} DFE, 1680-82, p. 67; S. Chaudhuri, \textit{IHR}, 1(2), 1974, p. 268.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
and in 1682 it was 20,000 pieces.\textsuperscript{16} The share of Balasore in these two years was 40% of the total rumal ordered from Bengal.\textsuperscript{17} After 1683 the quantity ordered for Balasore factory gradually declined; for example, in 1684 the order for sannoes, gingham and nilaes were 20,000, 15,000 and 30,000, respectively.\textsuperscript{18}

The Dutch trade in this decade was marked by a gradual decline of trade with Japan and expansion of exports to Amsterdam. Their export of Orissan textiles were considerable. The frequent data regarding the export of mixed piece goods from Orissa are available to us. But proportionately, these mixed-piece goods were more than the cotton-piece goods throughout our period.\textsuperscript{19} The Dutch also produced some cotton-piece goods from Orissa, which were not only exported to Europe, but also to some other countries in Asia. For example, in 1675 cotton rumals of Pipili were reported to be very useful in the trade with Spain and Turkey.\textsuperscript{20} In the last decade of seventeenth century, the procurement of some mixed piece goods like gingham and rumals suffered due to the rebellion of Sobha Singh of Midnapore. But the end of the revolt showed a significant increase in the number of Bengal textiles exported to Batavia for Holland in 1698-1699.\textsuperscript{21} However, there were some factions in the British parliament for the prohibition of Indian imports, and after some act directed particularly against the silk or tussar piece goods of Bengal, though it also made a reference to the manufacture of Persia, China and East India, the silk goods as well as mixed ones lost their predominance in the English East India Company's export from the beginning of eighteenth century.

Turning to eighteenth century, it was a period marked by stagnation for Orissa as well as Balasore's trade with South-East Asia and Ceylon. Though we have no detailed data to compute the textile trade with these regions, it can be said that her

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} In 1682, 50,000 pieces were ordered in which Balasore supply 20,000. S. Chaudhuri, \textit{Trade and Commerce}......, pp. 263-264.
\textsuperscript{18} DFE, 1681-1686, pp. 108-109.
\textsuperscript{19} Om Prakash, \textit{Dutch East India Company} .....” (for detail), pp. 188-195.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p. 60.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., pp. 213-214.
textile trade carried on by Asian merchants with these regions come to an end. As textiles were the main item of export to south-east Asia but the decline of shipping was a blow to the export of this commodity. However, the export of some ordinary piece goods was increased to Maldives as a result of rising shipping. For example, it increased from 1,200 pieces in 1680-81 to 2,600 pieces in 1699-1700.\textsuperscript{22} After an initial set back from 1700, the export picked up and was showing on upward curve from 1709 until 1720.\textsuperscript{23} The act of 1720, however did not stop the importation of piece goods as they were allowed to come to England on condition of her being re-exported. As a result Amsterdam and Rotterdam became the chief markets of these goods especially Indian wrought silk, Bengal mixed stuffs and \textit{calicoes} painted, dyed, printed or stained in those ports.\textsuperscript{24} But the position of Balasore as the investment centre had became insignificant in Orissa. The following table given an idea of the volume of Company’s cloth trade in the different parts of Bengal. The Calcutta council constructed for the following bales of clothes with different Factories in 1730 and 1731.\textsuperscript{25}

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
Factory & 1730 & 1731 \\
\hline
Calcutta & 1,200 & 1,500 \\
\hline
Dacca & 1,000 & 1,200 \\
\hline
Bengal & 800 & 1,000 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p. 233.
\textsuperscript{23} S. Chaudhuri, IHR, 1(2), 1974, p. 276.
\textsuperscript{24} S. Chaudhuri, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 158-159.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p. 164.
Table 5.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factory</th>
<th>Bales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td>4,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasimbazar</td>
<td>2,681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dacca</td>
<td>0,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patna</td>
<td>0,252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balasore and Jagdea</td>
<td>0,082</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                                | 7,716 | 7,900   |

From the above table, it becomes clear that unlike the seventeenth century the position of Balasore was down graded in the eighteenth century. This was largely due to loss of importance of her mixed-piece goods and rising demand of fine muslins of Bengal.

The Gingelly coast was also important in our period mainly for its grain trade and some sorts of typical varieties of Coromandel textiles. As a textile exporting centre, this region came to the forefront only in the eighteenth century. In this period, the main textile exporting centres for the Europeans were Vizagapatam, Ganjam and Bimlipatam. It is not possible to speak in detail about the trade carried by the Asian merchants. But all the varieties had a very good market in South-East Asia. The Portuguese, the Dutch exported the coarse long cloths to West Africa, which was mainly available in Bimlipatam and Ganjam areas.26

The English East India Company mainly collected salampore, long-cloth and battilis from the Gingelly coast for Europe. The English used to bring its textile to Vizagapatnam from where they were carried to Fort St. George. It is not possible to give a detail idea about each varieties of textiles. But it can be said that from the first decade of the eighteenth century the English East India Company was keen to exploit the full potentiality of its business here. Of course, between 1724 and 1733 there was a general decline in the investment of the English in the Coromandel coast. But this decline was felt particularly in Madras and Fort St. David and during this time the

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26 Arasaratanam, Merchants, Companies..., pp. 49-99.
northern region made up in some measure for the falling of the south. Again the trade in the years 1727 and 1729 constituted an exception.²⁷ However, lastly we can say that, the textile trade of the Gingelly coast continued to prosper while the Bengal portion of Orissa showed a decline in the eighteenth century.

II. Food Stuffs:

Apart from the trade of textile, which was the most important item of export commodity from Orissa, there also many other commodities which were exported from coastal Orissa and almost all the ships needed these items as ballast goods on their return voyages. The commodities used for these purpose were food-stuffs, saltpetre, cotton yarn, sugar etc., depending upon their availability. Among these varieties of commodities, food-stuffs were an important item of export in the maritime trade of Orissa. Bengal and Coromandel also an important source of rice and it exported to different Asiatic countries like Orissa in the seventeenth and eighteenth century.

Bengal sent to Gujarat, the Persian Gulf and Europe her typical finer varieties of cotton-textiles, raw silk and sugar, while her inland neighbour Bihar exported saltpetre²⁸ to Europe and opium to the Indonesian archipelago. The Coromandel retained her role as the major supplier of cotton-textiles to Ceylon, South-East Asia and some quantity to Europe. The export of food-stuff was carried out from Orissa, which sent them to Ceylon, the Maldives and Coromandel coast. Though this trade was secondary field of operation during seventeenth and eighteenth century but so far as the Indian Ocean area as whole is concerned, Orissa earned the distinction of being the major supplier of food-stuffs to various places.

In the first half of seventeenth century, "over one hundred vessels" observed Manrique, are yearly loaded up in the ports of Bengal with only rice, sugar, fats, oils, wax and other similar articles.²⁹ The most frequent ports in Bengal according to him

²⁷ Ibid., p, 191.
were Hugli, Pipli and Balasore and the other ports to him “being less used are less known.\textsuperscript{30} The most busy port in his time in Bengal was, without doubt Hugli. The other ports in this period in Bengal proper were Satgaon, Sripur and Chittagong\textsuperscript{31} all being the centre of grain trade but in declining condition. Even if all these ports in Bengal proper including Hugli accounted for more than fifty vessels say about sixty, the rest of the forty vessels could be accounted for sailing mainly from the Bengal portion of Orissa coast, extending from Hijli to Puri.\textsuperscript{32} But if the ports of Gingelly coast are taken into account then no fewer than sixty to sixty-five vessels could have been accounted for in these rice-surplus regions. Bowrey also mentions that for the better transportage of the before mentioned commodities (grains and \textit{calicoes}) ships and vessels in great numbers resort hither (Gingelly coast) to harbour in Carango, Vizagapatnam, Bimlipatam, Watlasa and Manichapatam.\textsuperscript{33} Hence taking all these into consideration, every year at least more than sixty vessels must have been loaded in the sea-coast of Orissa with rice and other food-stuffs.

On the other hand the Gingelly coast was also important for its rice export to central and southern Coromandel, if there was any shortage. Almost all the ships directed from Bimlipatam, Ganjam and Vizagapatnam with rice to ports like Pulicat, Madras, Sadrasapatam and Porto Novo.\textsuperscript{34} But if there was no shortage, then rice from these ports exported to Achin, Malacca, Ceylon, Maldives and even to west Asia.\textsuperscript{35} From the thirties of the seventeenth century the Dutch participation in rice trade became significant. In the early thirties and forties their council at Batavia needed Indian rice to feed their colonies in Batavia and Malacca. The bulk of the rice which Coromandel Factors supplied to them was from Orissa and Bengal.\textsuperscript{36} But this trade

\begin{footnotes}
\item[32] The twelve province of Bengal which Manrique refers were “Bengala, Angelim (Hijli), Ourixa, Jasor, Chandekar, Midnipur, Catraho, Bacata, Solinanvas, Bulwa, Dacca and Rajmahal”. Manrique, Vol. I, p. 52.
\item[34] Arasaratanam, \textit{Merchants, Companies ....}, p. 103.
\item[35] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
from this coast received a rich impetus particularly in the mid-seventeenth century, largely due to the increased participation by the English and the Dutch. The Dutch exported rice from Bimlipatam, where they founded a Factory, especially to procure rice, in 1651. They exported these rice mainly to Masulipatam, Ceylon and Narsapur. However, there were some troubles between Dutch and the king of Golconda and also with English East India Company regarding rice export. But after a compromise the Dutch again returned to Bimlipatam in 1678 and continued to export rice to Ceylon and Nagapatanam until the mid-eighteenth century.

Balasore was the main exporting centre for rice in the Bengal portion of Orissa in seventeenth and eighteenth century. We have also evidence that, her neighbours Pipli and Kanika, at the point Palmira also exported rice in the late seventeenth century and eighteenth century. The prices of provisions in Bengal was fairly cheap and cheaper than any other ports in India, which induced her merchants to carry on trade profitably not only with other parts of India but also with South-East Asia, Ceylon, Maldives and the ports in Western India.

The procurement and export were absolutely dependent upon the state of agriculture production each year, which was largely affected by natural factors such as flood and famine. Only during scarcity the export was banned to check any rise in prices, otherwise the rulers seemed to have encouraged the export of food-stuffs. A Dutch report in 1686 mentions that rice, wheat, butter and oil were the untaxed articles in Bengal. The main commodity which the merchants of Bengal purchased from Ceylon was elephant, which was in high demand both the Hindu and Muslim aristocracies in Orissa and Bengal, and Ceylon was the most convenient destination.

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37 Ibid., p. 67.
38 Ibid., pp. 67-68.
39 Arasaratanam, Merchants, Companies..., pp. 132-219.
40 T. Bowrey, op. cit., p. 179.
42 W.H. Moreland, op. cit., p. 205.
than any other overseas ports for them. But the policy of the Dutch had ruined their trade and these events were soon followed by the France-Dutch naval engagement which further prevented the Orissan merchants from going to Ceylon.

Despite these restrictions, the Ceylonese Government knew very well the value of this traffic and hence concessions were continued to be given to the Bengal and Orissa merchants. They were permitted to sell a certain quantity of cloths and were provided with all the areca-nuts they wanted. In Jaffna the toll in cloth was reduced from 20% to 7½% from 1720s onward. Passes from other European Companies were also honoured.44 In this way, the trade was continued in the eighteenth century, though it showed a declining trend. But the traffic never reached its earlier volume.45 The reason for this set back is not clear, but it seems that Ceylon by this time either had attained self-sufficiency in rice or had opened up alternative source for supply from other coasts such as the Canara coast.46

The merchants of Balasore also exported food-stuffs to the ports like Tenasserim, Achin, Kedah, Parah and Junk-Ceylon.47 About Achin, Bowrey mentions that rice, wheat, oil, butter and sugar were imported here from Bengal.48 About Junk-Ceylon he writes, though they had abundant fish and coconuts, their provisions were not very plenty. They cultivated a sort of rice which he said to be excellent, but were not enough to subsist with the whole year. Still the rice from Bengal or the Coromandel coast did not sell their own. But the butter and oil from Gingelly or Bengal were sold well there.49 For example in 1681-82 Khem Chand sent a ship loaded with 200 maunds of ghee and 100 maunds of oil to Tenasserim. In that season, 4 ships sailed for that destination.50 Similarly, in 1683-84, Khem Chand sent

45 Ibid.
46 Om Prakash, *Dutch East India Company...*, p. 116.
49 Ibid., p. 149.
9000 maunds rice 8000 maunds sugar, 250 maunds of oil and 300 maunds of butter to Achen. In that season 2 ships sailed for Achen and 1 ship for Tenasserim from Balasore. Not only the native merchants, but also the European carried on extensive trade in food-stuffs in the ports of Orissa.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century the Orissan trade was left only with food-stuffs and some coarser varieties of textiles, because of the absence of commercial patronage unlike the nineties of the seventeenth century. Since then, when Bengal’s trade with coastal India increased considerably from Hugli, the merchants of Balasore had to concentrate their trade with Maldives. As Maldives was depending upon Balasore for her food-stuff, so also Balasore was depending upon her for cowri. Moreover unlike other regions in India, the economy of Orissa was still not sufficiently monetized and even at the turn of this century in the time of Murshid Quli Khan, the revenue was collected in rice. Thus in this process the economy of Maldives and Orissa became interdependent and continued this grain cowri trade for about one and half century. However, in these centuries, the four important maritime centres of India, i.e., Bengal, Coromandel, Malabar and Gujarat traded with one another in muslins, calicoes, pepper, sugar, saltpetre, opium and silk etc. Orissa was left with the role of exporting rice and other food-stuffs to the deficit areas on the east as well as west coast.

III. Cotton Yarn:

The English East India Company throughout our period regularly exported cotton yarn from India to England. In Orissa, Balasore was the main supplier of this product, though by the second decade of the eighteenth century Kasimbazar took the lead. The English weaver during this time could not use the finer yarn; hence the

51 Ibid.
52 Ibid., p. 47.
export from India were relatively of the coarser variety. But the demand for cotton yarn in England was not regular and many times the English traded them as ballast to fill their dead freight. As early as 1657, the court's order was just 10 tons, but in 1659 it abruptly decreased to 400 bales "in short skeins not cross-reeled" each able containing about 3 maunds. In the same year the Factors at Balasore reported that "cotton yarn was procurable (at the best season) for 14 rupees the maund of 75 lb." but in 1660, the demand fell down as the commodity had "grow out of request." In the years of seventies we have no record of its export but only in 1699 the cotton yarn was sent as the sample and in the next year better and cheaper yarn had sought in Hugli. But in 1671, the order was dropped as the Company could sell it only at loss. In 1667 the Company wanted to purchase at least 50 or 60 bales, the merchants refused to furnish only for that year as it being late. From this time the demand was high, but seems that many times the procurement was restricted in Balasore on the ground that, they could be got cheaper at Hugli. The actual export of cotton yarn thus varied year to year.

IV. Saltpetre:

Saltpetre was another important export commodities in which all the European trading Companies drove extensive trade. According to K.N. Chaudhuri, the export of this commodity from India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was a new development in the history of her maritime trade.... Its bulk and weight would of coarse make it a prohibitively expansive commodity to export overland. But the economics of seaborne transport completely altered the picture. The growth of an


59 The English Factories in India (New Series), Ed. by C. Fawcett, 1670-77, p. 331.

60 Ibid.


62 EFI (New Series), 1678-1684, p. 345.
extensive munitions industry in Europe and the wiser use of artillery made Indian saltpetre both a desirable strategic raw materials and a profitable article of trade. There is no doubt at all that Dutch and English demand for Indian saltpetre was closely connected with national, political and military consideration. 63

Before Patna was recognized as a saltpetre centre, which was supplier of the cheapest and the best quality, European demand for this commodity was met from the Coromandel coast. But after the reorganisation of Patna, the trade in Bengal assumed importance. At Patna the saltpetre was available only one rupee per maund, which was half from the rate of Balasore, but customs and freight raised the price at Hugli to 1¼ rupees and finally it amounted 25/8 rupees at Balasore. 64 From the very beginning the Patna factory was sent raw to England but this increased the freight charges. 65 In 1650, the Factors at Balasore were advised to open a refinery unit there. 66 A English report of the 1650s mentions that Balasore imported 1000 to 5000 maunds every year. 67 However, the Company still collected saltpetre from Balasore, in spite of the fact that the prices were so exorbitant there and they had already established a Factory at Patna. The possible reason was that Patna was always unpredictable because of a number of reasons.

The Dutch also imported saltpetre in their early days in Bengal, like the English. The Dutch established a refinery in Pipli in 1640-41 in order to save cost which in the mid-1650s reached a capacity of 800,000 lbs. annually with provision for expansion to 1.2 million lbs. 68 According to an English report of 1652, the Dutch shipped nearly 3000 tons refined saltpetre from Pipli annually, “though they buy most there of gross (as well as other commodities) up the said river as far as Patna and

64 EFI, 1646-1650, p. 337.
65 EFI, 1651-1654, p. 495.
66 EFI, 1464-1650, p. 334.
67 EFI, 1655-1660, p. 297.
68 Om Prakash, Dutch East India Company..., p. 158.
bring it down in boats. The sale figures of this commodity on the other hand, show a gradual increase. In 1649-50, the amount sold was 105,000 ponds which rose to 303,000 in 1653-54. The amount exported to Holland from Bengal in 1653-54 was 151,020 ponds which rose to 412,122 ponds in 1654-55. It is not clear why the refinery was established in Pipili instead of Patna, but it can be suggested that like the English procurement in Balasore, the Dutch also procured some quantity from the petermen locally who transported them from Bihar. Hence, in order to save the cost, the saltpetre collected from Patna was refined at Pipili. However, the English established a special saltpetre ground near Patna for the manufacture of gunpowder.

V. Sugar:

Besides the above mentioned commodities, sugar was another important commodity which was exported from Orissa by the English and Dutch Companies in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As early as thirties of the seventeenth century when the English just set up their settlements in Balasore and Hariharpur, exported it to Gombroon and Basra in the Persian Gulf where they fetched very good profit. A limited quantity was sent also to Bantam, from where probably they went to Europe. The Dutch annual shipment to Persia in the forties averaged 400,000 lbs. to 450,000 lbs. By 1650, the export was 450,000 ponds, but for the next season for which the figure was available was 1655-56 in which 229-955 ponds were sent against Gombroon factors order for 250,000 ponds. In 1650 the Balasore Factor reported that sugar was bought there in February, or March for 7 1/2 or 8 rupees per bale and at monsoon it increased to 11 or 12 rupees. In 1658-59, 5393 bags containing 7,632.5

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69 EFI, 1651-1654, p. 95.

70 Om Prakash, Dutch East India Company..., p. 186.

71 J.T. Wheeler, Early Records of British India, London, 1878, p. 150

72 EFI, 1634-1636, pp. 140, 178, 204.

73 Ibid., p. 49.


75 Om Prakash, Dutch East India Company..., p. 126.

76 EFI, 1646-1650, p. 337.
maunds or 572,440 lbs. valued at Rs. 33,163 or about 4,145 were dispatched from Balasore.  

However, the English interest in this commodity was short-lived and their trade was never impressive with England because of the import of Brazilian and west-Indian sugar, which left the Company with no desire to increase the trade in this commodity. Secondly, though it was good for ballasting but it was not so profitable as saltpetre. Hence, the Company preferred the trade in saltpetre to sugar.  

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SECTION: B

IMPORTS TO ORISSA

The import trade of Orissa does not seem very important during the period under survey, because the balance of payment was always in favour of the province. In this period the general demand was restricted only to the commodities of everyday consumption such as food-grains and textiles etc. which were produced and available inside the province. Some of the imported commodities such as elephants, broad cloth or European guns were mainly meant for the use of the aristocracy. Precious metals and lead were imported by the European and Asian merchants from different countries. The other imports by the Asian merchants were tin, spelter and spices like pepper, nutmeg, cloves and cinnamon. It has been said that the import trade during our period except, precious metals does not seem to have increased substantially. The import of some of the European manufactures like woolen cloth or broad cloth might have increase because of the efforts of the Dutch and the English, but the increased was marginal in comparison to increase in the flow of precious metals. But the most important imports of the Asian merchants was elephants, from the ports of archipelago, Ceylon and Burma. The following table indicating the number of ships that came to Balasore from various Asian ports from 1680-81 to 1704-05.\(^{80}\)

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\(^{80}\) Om Prakash, "The Dutch trading Companies", IESHR, 1964, p. 40.
Table 5.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of ships came from</th>
<th>167</th>
<th>81-82</th>
<th>84-85</th>
<th>87-98</th>
<th>99-02</th>
<th>03-04</th>
<th>04-05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ceylon</td>
<td>8(8)</td>
<td>5(5)</td>
<td>1(1)</td>
<td>1(1)</td>
<td>2(2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islands of Maldives</td>
<td>2(at least)</td>
<td>3(3)</td>
<td>4(4)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2-6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenasserim</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9(3)</td>
<td>4(4)</td>
<td>1(1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malacca</td>
<td>3(at least)</td>
<td>3(at least)</td>
<td>2(1)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achin</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4(at least)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surat</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manila</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coromandel</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pegu</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2(1)</td>
<td>1(0)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arakan</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Information is not available for the years and numbers of ships are not included in the table.

The figure in brackets, whenever available, indicate the number of ships that came to than from various Asian ports on the account of Bengal merchants, the rest being on the account of non-Bengal merchants.

As regards the activities of the several merchants discussed previously, we can have some idea of the ventures of the two Balasore merchants. Both Khem Chand
and Chintaman Shah took an active part in overseas trade during seventeenth century. They owned ships which sailed on trading voyages to different countries and sometimes these ships were owned jointly by them.

Sushil Chaudhuri informs us that the items of export and import handled by other merchants varied little from these two merchants. The datas show us that the most important commodity of import in the seventeenth century from the different Asiatic countries was elephant. These were imported from Tenasserim, Ceylon, Achin. Elephants were also imported by the private European traders.\(^{81}\)

It is apparent that in overseas trade as in inland trade, Khem Chand was more active than his partner and colleague Chintaman. Khem Chand’s trade was mainly with Galle in Ceylon, though he traded at the same time with Tenasserim and Achin also. Chintaman was more concerned with the Islands of Maldives, though his trading vessels went also Jaffnapatam and Galle. The most important item of import was elephants. No merchants came home without them. Other items of import consisted of tin, *cowris*, cinnamon, copper, nutmeg, spelter, arrack, porcelain and even gold.\(^{82}\)

Bowrey informs us that an elephant of Kedah which was available at 200 Spanish reals was sold in Masulipatnam or Bengal at 3000 reals.\(^{83}\) From English Factory Records we are also informed that the governor of Balasore presented an elephant to a Hindu Raja which was valued at 5000 rupees.\(^{84}\) It is irony that during our period the merchants of Orissa had to import elephants inspite of the fact that the forests of Orissa were very rich in them.\(^{85}\) However, the elephants were mainly purchased by the big Zamindars, *Nawabs* and other members of the aristocracy. The local rulers also occasionally sent them as gift to the emperors.\(^{86}\) We are informed in

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\(^{82}\) S. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Commercial Organization...*, p. 90.


\(^{84}\) *EII*, 1655-1660, p. 297.


the English Factory Records, how the Raja of Mayurbhanj was disgusted when he was refused permission by the governor of Balasore to take away an elephant which he had purchased.\textsuperscript{87} We should remember that until recently there were plenty of elephants in the forests of Mayurbhanj. The maximum number of elephants were imported from Tennasserim, though according to Bowrey, the Ceylonese elephants were considered to be the best in Bengal and all over India. They were generally large and endowed with more sense and reason than those of Tenasserims, Queda or Siam.\textsuperscript{88}

Bengal’s trade with the archipelago was considerable until the fifties of the seventeenth century. But by this time the Bengali merchants were compelled to accept Dutch pass-port in order to sail to their destinations in south east Asia. Since it was difficult for the Dutch to refuge passes to officials in Bengal, the Company liberalized its policy in respect of certain places such as Malacca, Tenasserim and Achin. The original policy remained operative with respect to Kedah, Perak, Junk-Ceylon and Bangery.\textsuperscript{89} The reason was because the Company wanted to monopolize the trade of tin in these Malayan ports. So far as Malacca was concerned a toll was imposed on both exports and imports.\textsuperscript{90} But as tin was also available in other parts of the archipelago such as Achin and Tenasserim, the merchants could make their purchase there. Hence, in spite of the restrictive policy in issuing passes by the Dutch, so long the state officials continued trade and imported elephants, spices and tin from the archipelago.

After the withdrawal of the state officials from the shipping business, the import of these commodities declined considerably in Balasore. For example, in case of Tenasserim, Om Prakash has calculated that in 1699 only 370 \textit{maunds} of tin were imported against 1,551 \textit{maunds} in 1683. Similarly the import of elephants declined from 122 in 1682 to 10 in 1699.\textsuperscript{91} From the third decade of the eighteenth century the

\textsuperscript{87} EFI, 1678-1684, Vol. IV, p. 365.
\textsuperscript{88} T. Bowrey, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 180.
\textsuperscript{89} Om Prakash, \textit{Dutch East India Company...}, pp. 231-22.
\textsuperscript{90} Om Prakash, \textit{IESHR}, 1(3), 1964, p. 54.
\textsuperscript{91} Om Prakash, \textit{Dutch East India Company...}, p. 227.
private trade of the English increased to a considerable extent in Bengal, but unfortunately, we are not in a position to say whether the import of these commodities was continued by them on the earlier level or not. The import of copper also declined. But its decline could not have been serious as the bulk of the commodity was then imported by the Europeans. Except elephants and cinnamon, the other commodities imported from Ceylon were purchased by the common people in Orissa and Bengal. These were areca-nuts and shankhs. Chewing areca-nuts with betel-leaf was a common social habit among all section of people. Hence its demand was considerable in these regions. But about 80% of the total demand was met by nuts produced around Dacca itself.

From the late seventies and early eighties of the seventeenth century when Balasore's trade with Ceylon was resumed again, the trade in areca-nut had already been a monopoly of the Dutch. The Dutch sold this commodity in Bengal at an average gross profit of 100%. The shankhs were used here on ceremonial occasions, both social and religious. The poor people also used them as ornaments. In 1661-62, it was sold by the Dutch at 108% profit, but it came down to 25% in 1666-67 because of large-scale import by the Indian merchants. Apart from Ceylon, the commodity was also imported from Tuticorin.

Low-valued items like cowris were imported from the Maldive Island. This commodity was regularly imported to Orissa from Maldives. But from the close of the seventeenth century, its increased to a considerable extent. But all the imported cowris were not for domestic consumption, some of them must have been re-exported to areas outside Orissa. Some of the them were purchased by the English East India Company for sending them to the African countries. The intention of the Company

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92 Ibid.
93 Ibid., pp. 166-67.
94 Ibid., p. 167.
95 T. Bowrey, op. cit., pp. 208-09.
96 Om Prakash, Dutch East India Company ..., p. 167.
97 T. Bowrey, op. cit., p. 208.
must have been supplemented by their servants, who were engaged in private trade with Maldives. 98

In seventeenth and eighteenth century, bullion was the most outstanding feature of the import trade of Orissa. The demand of bullion slowly rose after Orissa was annexed to the Mughal empire. Though the revenue was collected in rice, it was necessary to remit them to imperial treasury in the form of coins. This led to the rise of monetary economy which was feasible only if there was enough import of bullion. Previously, the merchants of Orissa occasionally brought some gold from the archipelago, but the bulk of them must have been absorbed either in hoarding or non-commercial uses in view of their limited import. For the Mughal India, Mocha was the “treasure chest” from where a considerable quantity of silver was imported, but this was done mainly by the merchants of Gujarat and Malabar coast and we have little evidence to show former’s regular connection with any of the ports in Bengal region prior to 1650. 99 The main precious metal imported to Bengal and Orissa from Japan was silver, as the latter was the standard of currency here since the general feature of the Company’s trade was its expansion, the import of Japanese silver rose correspondingly in a subsequent two decades. 100 On the other hand, the export of gold had already been banned by the Japanese authority in 1641. Dutch imported a substantial amount of silver from Japan. But since the loss of Taiwan in 1662, an important supplier of gold to the Dutch, the latter did by agreeing to pay an exchange rate of 6.8 or 5.8 reals between silver and gold. But since the Chinese merchants had no incentive to purchase this expansive gold, they largely concentrated on silver which put a pressure on this metal. Hence to stop such pressure on silver, the Japanese altogether banned the export of silver in 1668 and to give incentive to the Chinese merchants to purchase gold, the domestic purity of silver and gold was reduced to 5.6 reals per Koban. 101 Hence as a first step in 1670 the prices of the Koban was increased from 5.6 to 5.8 reals per piece and an executive order was addressed to the Japanese merchants to pay lower prices for foreign goods, and a suggestion was made to the

98 Hedge’s Diary, Vol. I, p. 89.

99 Om Prakash, Dutch East India Company....., p. 254.

100 For details see Om Prakash, Dutch East India Company....., pp. 120-130.

101 Ibid., pp. 127-128.
Dutch and the Chinese to sell their goods at a lower price. However, this measure resulted in nothing. Hence, the authority in 1672, restored the pre 1668 value of silver with gold, i.e. 6.8 teals per gold Koban. With this exchange rate now the import of precious metals became less attractive from Japan and from the eighties onwards, the Company imported the bulk of her metals from Europe.

The English East India Company imported goods generally meant for both commercial and non-commercial uses. Some of the goods like broad-cloth, leads, copper and iron ordinance, etc. were brought regularly for sale which might provide purchasing power to the Company. There were other some goods which were less important, but they were meant either for the Factors own use or might be offered as present to the rulers to obtain their favour. Since Balasore at this time was one of the most important English Factories on the eastern coast, all these goods figured prominently there. But the most important import in terms of value was bullion both gold and silver. From the very beginning of their days in Bengal, the Company imported proportionately more gold than silver; but from the nineties of the seventeenth century the import of the former was virtually stopped. Since it had a limited demand in this province. Of the following lists of goods and bullion sent to Bengal by the court of Directors in four selected years a tentative idea can be formed about the ratio of bullions and goods generally sent to Bengal.

Table 5.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Bullions ($)</th>
<th>Goods ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1675</td>
<td>67,000</td>
<td>23,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1682-83</td>
<td>267,505</td>
<td>1,795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1699-1700</td>
<td>168,903</td>
<td>10,419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1718-19</td>
<td>168,560</td>
<td>18,827</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above tables, it is clear that the value of the imports in bullion was considerably more than the goods. This was particularly true from the eighties of the

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102 Ibid., p. 129.
103 Ibid., p 137.
105 Ibid., p. 208.
seventeenth century when more bullion was sent to Bengal with the expansion of English investment. In the seventeenth century for the English, Balasore appears to be the best market in Bengal for English goods though like all the other factories in India, here also the Company had the difficulty in selling them. For example, in 1675, Vincent protested against diverting a considerable proportion of the invest into Balasore factory where the goods were very costly. But Clavell and Budgen though agreed with the former, pointed out that, “other factories gave little assistance in disposing of goods sent out from England such as broad-cloth, leads, gums, brimstone, quicksilver and vermilion and they were forced to trade them in return for goods at Balasore or have lie on their hands and perish…….”

The European investment in Balasore during this time was dominated by two powerful merchants i.e., Khem Chand and Chintaman Shah who could purchase these commodities in exchange of the return cargoes, though very often reluctantly. But this created ill-will among the merchants and very often loss to the Company. As has been said, the demand for the English manufacture was limited to the aristocracies; their sale, many times therefore, depended upon their will and choice not always a prospective purchaser could be induced to purchase them. For example, generally broadcloths were sold well in Bengal region when a new Nawab came, but here also there was no guarantee. Sometimes the Factors complained that due to the parsimonious nature of the old Nawab, broadcloth could not be sold and unless of a young Nawab came they could not be sold.

A commodity like lead did command a demand in the state to some extent as it was needed for the mintage of silver coin. The local Rajas and Zamindars also purchases them along with brimstone and iron guns to supplement their military stocks. But this was also very often forbidden by the Governor of Balasore and the Nawab of Orissa, ostensibly not to allow them to equip with any weapon so as to became rebellious force. But the actual intention was to purchase them at

109 Ibid., p. 372.
concessional price for themselves.\textsuperscript{110} As has been said, lead was needed for the coinage of the silver currency, from 1668 due to the Japanese ban on the export of silver the Dutch import into Bengal suffered considerably which ultimately led to the decline of the demand of the lead in the seventies of the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{111} For other commodities like vermilion, quick-silver, Iron ordnance and tins, the Company had also difficulty in selling them. It had a limited demand not only because it was quite expensive but was also hardly necessary in a tropical country like India, except by the aristocracy classes of upper India.\textsuperscript{112}

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the English export broadcloth to Orissa and as a result in many cases, the goods lay in the warehouse for years.\textsuperscript{113} As Sir Richard Temple says, "Frequent mistakes, such as sending broadcloth to Orissa, where it was unsaleable, were the result, and formed one of the chief causes of the perpetual friction and bickering that went on between the court of committees in London and the council in Madras."\textsuperscript{114}

On the other hand, the prices of lead fluctuated violently as we know from the following data. In 1677, Sushil Chaudhuri show that it was 9.4 rupees in Bengal per maund,\textsuperscript{115} but in 1680-81 the prices went down to 7 rupees per maund, but again in 1703 it was reduced to Rs. 3. 11.12 annas.\textsuperscript{116} The reason for such fluctuation of this non-precious metal was that previously the import of this commodity was also handled by the Portuguese and the Asian merchants. But with the fresh import of the Dutch and the English, there was slump in the market of this commodity. The large import of this non-precious metal along with tin and copper by the Dutch and indigenous merchants from the East Indies made it difficult for the English to dispose

\textsuperscript{110} Master's Diary, Vol. II, p. 85.
\textsuperscript{111} EFI, 1670-1677, p. 373.
\textsuperscript{112} S. Bhattacharya, op. cit., p. 167.
\textsuperscript{113} EFI, 1670-1677, p. 344.
\textsuperscript{114} Master's Diary, Vol. I, p. 234.
\textsuperscript{115} S. Chaudhuri, Trade and Commercial Organization ..., p. 212.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid.
of their wares. The prices of the various metal fluctuated sharply according to the available supply in the market.\textsuperscript{117} The European also presented them as gifts to the ruling class, what Moreland observed is that, these novelties are called “toy” by the European in contemporary literature.\textsuperscript{118} The other articles are looking-glass and knives etc.\textsuperscript{119}

In the late seventies of seventeenth century the gold market in Bengal was over-stocked with the large-scale import by the Dutch from Japan. The Dutch in 1676 sold this metal at marginal profit in Bengal. Two years later the English had considerable difficulties in selling them in different factories including Balasore.\textsuperscript{120} We have also seen that in 1676 the gold koban was sold in Balasore at a profit of 7.73\% against 6\% each at Hugli and Patna by the Dutch. Lastly, the factors asked the court of Directors not to send any gold and its proportion reduced in the early eighties and stopped all together in 1686.\textsuperscript{121}

So far as English manufacture are concerned Balasore was one of the important markets in the seventeenth century. But the factory records show that until the eighties of this century Kasimibazar was the most important investment centre and the next was Balasore followed by the other Bay Factories. Though we have no data for all the years, yet the available data show that the share of Kasimibazar was far more than Balasore. For example, in 1681, the court of Directors directed a definite amount of 80,000 to Kasimibazar and 20,000 to Balasore.\textsuperscript{122} Hence it can be said that Balasore was an important centre next to Kasimibazar. Thus, it not only received only a major portion of English investment, but also a handsome amount of treasure. For example, in 1684 the ship \textit{Ann} which brought six chests of treasure to the Bay, four

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{118} W.H. Moreland, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 68.
\textsuperscript{119} \textit{EFI}, 1678-1684, Vol. IV, p. 245.
\textsuperscript{120} \textit{EFI}, 1678-1684, pp. 168-169.
\textsuperscript{121} S. Chaudhuri, \textit{Trade and Commercial Organisation...}, p. 209.
\textsuperscript{122} \textit{EFI}, 1678-1684, Vol. IV, p. 264.
were allotted to Balasore, this very soon supplemented by 4,000 gold mohurs.\textsuperscript{123} But in the eighteenth century the relative importance of Balasore gradually declined with the rising importance of many fine muslin producing centres of Bengal and at the close of our period its importance was minimum compared to other Bay Factories.

\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., p. 332.