COMMERCIAL ORGANISATION AND TRADE
STUDIED REGIONALLY
9. 'PUTTING-OUT' SYSTEM IN COROMANDEL

The 17th century witnessed an interaction between the European merchant capital and the traditional Indian economy. This interaction had many aspects, but one of the most interesting is the organisation of local artisans to meet the European Companies' demand for craft goods. We propose to examine here the effort of the Dutch East India Company (V.O.C) to mould the organisation of craft-production at Nagapattinum in the Coromandel to suit its requirements.

Nagapattinum was for centuries a prominent port of South India. The Dutch conquered the Nagapattinum fort from the Portuguese in 1658.¹ To it, the Dutch subsequently added surrounding villages either by force or through lease from local rulers. Owing to their restrictive commercial policies a shift of trade from Nagapattinum to Nagore took place. The latter port handled substantial trade of the V.O.C. in textiles, rice and other products of the countryside.²

Philippus Baldaeus who visited Nagapattinum as early as 1660, did not mention any of the commercial products of Nagapattinum.³

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2. S. Arasaratnam, Merchants, Companies and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast 1650-1740, pp.28-29.

Perhaps it was because only the manufacture of coarse cotton piece goods was practised here. He also describes a severe famine at this port.\footnote{Ibid., p.155.} D. Havart observed, “the trade or the purchase here (comprises coarse cotton cloth, not very fine, or painted/printed goods...”).\footnote{Havart, I, p.17.} Among modern authorities H. Terpstra pointed out that Nagapattinum was economically not very important.\footnote{H. Terpstra, p.50.} It had turned out “to be a liability rather than asset”.\footnote{Tapan Raychaudhuri, pp.64-65.} By 1661 the Dutch had secured from the Nayak a very advantageous kaul. The income from ten villages was granted to the Dutch. They were exempted from the payment of half the usual toll and were permitted to mint pagodas on payment of only 50% of the usual duties. In 1662 the Nayak’s representative made an abortive attempt to realise full tolls from the Dutch, but the Company chose to extract a written agreement from the Nayak to abide by his earlier kaul.\footnote{Ibid., pp.64-65.} Nagapattinum witnessed its worst famine in 1662-63. The weavers fled from the area; but this, it seems, was a temporary phenomenon for by 1664, some 100 families of weavers and painters/printers had returned to Nagapattinum and the neighbouring villages, at the instance of the Dutch.\footnote{Ibid.}
Upon the return of these artisans, fresh contracts were concluded between painters/ printers and weavers, on the one hand, and the V.O.C. governor Cornelis Speelman, on the other. For convenience we will designate them as “Set =A” documents. These documents can be supplemented by a contemporary memoir prepared by Cornelis Speelman for the chief and the Council at Nagapattinum. Notwithstanding the relatively small number of these documents, they throw much light on the putting-out system in operation. Moreland’s assumptions that the putting out system prevalent in India “resembled in essentials that which prevailed in Europe at the period”. and his suggestion that “the advent of Dutch and English buyers was beneficial” need to be checked in the light of these documents. However a detailed description of the similarities and dissimilarities is beyond the scope of the present paper. Under the

10. See Appendix-B.


broadly accepted form of putting out system, the finishing of the cloth after it was woven was done by the merchant, not the weaver.\textsuperscript{14} So there are numerous references to engaging of a group of painters/printers and weavers. This practice continued till the end of the 17th century. The processes of dyeing, decorating and washing are also presumed to have been carried out under the superintendence of the merchant.\textsuperscript{15} However, our present set of documents do not agree with these postulations in totality. The major difference lies in the fact that cash advances were taken directly from the Company’s officials by the artisans to provide finished products. We will try to identify various aspects of putting out system in the light of our documents.

Let us first take up the “Set=A” contract documents. These are not chronologically arranged in the collection of the V.O.C. archives, K.A. 1145 (1666 IV), ff. 553-562. Some crucial details of these documents are provided in the Appendix-B. These documents are translations of contracts from the native ‘Malabar’s (obviously Tamil) language. The first contract was made on 17th April 1665 between Cornelis Speelman and 17 painters/printers of Nagapattinum and 3 of Nagore. This document

\underline{Contd....}


15. Ibid.
says that it was a translation from the barga (?) language. The native artisans professed to make a contract “out of their free will (uijt vrijen wille)” with governor Cornelis Speelman, so that they might paint/print (schilderen) all kinds of cloth which were contracted (aanbesteet) out to them by the merchants of the Company, and refrain from painting/printing any cloth for anybody without his orders. Further, all the cloths which they might paint/print for others should be confiscated (verbeurt) but this was to be on the understanding that they also should get all the works of the Company on contract.\textsuperscript{16} In return they promised to supply good quality (deugdzaem) cloth, good chay (dye) and decently painted/printed cloth.\textsuperscript{17} In case some bad quality cloth were supplied in return for the advance (ujitschieten) it was to be brought and shown to the Dutch chief of Nagapattinum. He would first select according to the quality of the cloths, else would be sold elsewhere outside. It was laid down that if 3 or 4 small holes (gaaties) or darns (stopjen) were found in one packet, it would be taken back by the painters/printers and would be replaced by good supplies. but in case more were found, all would be seized by the Company.\textsuperscript{18} They would along with their whole group/party (gezelschap) contract collectively for cloths of merchants of the Company and would also remain each others security for the money which was

\textsuperscript{16} K.A. 1145 (1666 IV), f.556.

\textsuperscript{17} K.A. 1145 (1666 IV), f.556.

\textsuperscript{18} K.A. 1145 (1666 IV), f.556.
advanced to them by the Company.\textsuperscript{19}

Next in the "Set =A" documents are those contacts which were signed on 24 April 1665. They comprise two contracts. Of these two, one was signed by 17 painters/printers of Trimelepantam.\textsuperscript{20} The clauses of this contract were broadly in agreement with that of 17th April 1665. However, the second one (3rd in the Appendix) was signed by as many as 61 painters or printers of Tammelepantam.\textsuperscript{21}

The fourth contract was signed with 13 weavers of Porwechery, one of the eight villages of the Company, on 27th April 1665. This was different from others in that it did not concern painters/printers. The weavers had collectively taken the work from the Company and had divided the work among themselves. They received the money before hand.\textsuperscript{22}

The fifth contract was concluded with 11 weavers of Mansiecoule. The clauses of the contract were same as above.\textsuperscript{23} The sixth contract was signed with the weavers of Nagapattinum on 4th May 1665. It was signed by three weavers.\textsuperscript{24} The seventh contract was signed with two weavers of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{19} K.A. 1145 (1666 IV), f.557.
\item \textsuperscript{20} K.A. 1145 (1666 IV), f.553.
\item \textsuperscript{21} K.A. 1145 (1666 IV), f.553-554.
\item \textsuperscript{22} K.A. 1145 (1666 IV), f.557-558.
\item \textsuperscript{23} K.A. 1145 (1666 IV), f.559.
\item \textsuperscript{24} K.A. 1145 (1666 IV), f.560.
\end{itemize}
Trimelepatnam on 4th May 1665. It specifically mentions the caste of the weavers as Kaikola (Kaiykula).\textsuperscript{25} The eight contract was signed with ten weavers of Trimelepatnam. Their caste has been mentioned as \textit{kasta scluenea(?)}.\textsuperscript{26}

Apart from references to two major occupational classes, namely weavers and painters/printers, these contracts are not very helpful in indicating the implicit interest rates, wages or nature of payment. They do not specify the kinds of cloths they were expected to produce. But it is obvious from these documents that the V.O.C. attempted to organise the procurement of textiles through contracts with groups (gezelschap) of artisans instead of individual artisans. Unlike other port towns, we do not hear of any big merchant operating at Nagapattinum. Perhaps the V.O.C. took advantage of this situation and tried to organise production on the basis of such group contracts. Such arrangements would be more effective in subjecting the greater number of artisans to Dutch control. The contracts involved various restrictions imposed on members of a contracting group. For example the document signed on 17th April 1665 refers to a prior settlement of all disputes amongst the members of the group.\textsuperscript{27} It was laid down that in case of defiance, the offending member

\textsuperscript{25} K.A. 1145 (1666 IV), f.561.

\textsuperscript{26} K.A. 1145 (1666 IV), f.562.

\textsuperscript{27} K.A. 1145 (1666 IV), f.554-555.
would be ostracised from the group.\textsuperscript{28} In case of continuance of quarrel among members, their houses and goods were to be confiscated by the Company.\textsuperscript{29} And if somebody desired to discontinue work, without fulfilling the contract, he would be banned from the Company's service.\textsuperscript{30} Of the sixty-one persons contracting with the Company, four persons alone were to be responsible for all the transactions between the Company and the particular group of artisans.\textsuperscript{31} It seems that initially these conditions contributed positively in favour of the V.O.C.'s monopoly status at Nagapattinum. Cornelis Speelman wrote in his memoir that these contracts with separate groups of artisans led to a regular flow of cloth to the Company.\textsuperscript{32} He refers to the supply of ramboetans, tapesarasse with flower work, baby cloths of tape sarasse, tape chindos, ballatios (smooth cotton cloths specially produced at Nagapattinum), black and white taffachelas, blue boelongs (head scarfs), brandams, tapeturias, sarassa gobar, salalous, dragon gobar, dragon tapy and chergien of Nagapattinum. These cloths were possibly not produced at Nagapattinum earlier. These were now exported to Pegu, Macassar, Japan and Batavia.\textsuperscript{33}

\begin{enumerate}
\item K.A. 1145 (1666 IV), f.554-555.
\item K.A. 1145 (1666 IV), f.554-555.
\item K.A. 1145 (1666 IV), f.554-555.
\item K.A. 1145 (1666 IV), f.554-555.
\item K.A. 1145 (1666 IV), f.554-555.
\item K.A. 1145 (1666 IV), f.521-522.
\item K.A. 1145 (1666 IV), f.522-525.
\end{enumerate}
Speelman counselled the establishment of apprentices to weave cloths in the Company’s weaving villages. In order to ensure quality, Speelman suggested that inspectors of V.O.C. should visit the artisans when they put warps on the loom.34

What was the outcome of such efforts of the V.O.C.? It seems it produced good results at the initial stages. The Governor General at Batavia acknowledged such an outcome in his missive of 30th January 1666. He wrote that “more and more workmen had started flocking around the city of Nagapattinum and since March 1665 had already sent cloths worth f. 13,5085.”35 It seems, however, that this was a temporary gain. It continued to be an economic liability in the subsequent period.36

A casual glance at the names of the artisans in the Appendix-B makes it clear that the chettis were no longer merchants only.37 They were weavers, and painters or printers also. It has been suggested that chetti weavers and painters might have sprung from Tamil weaving caste.38 Our documents provide supporting evidence in this regard.

34. K.A. 1145 (1666 IV), f.529.
36. Tapan Raychaudhuri, p.65.
10. GUJARAT AND COROMANDEL IN TEXTILE EXPORT TRADE

The History of commercial exchange between India and Europe dates back to antiquity. As is well known the 17th century marked some outstanding changes in the structure and pattern of overseas trade of India when the two North European monopoly companies, the English East India Company, founded in 1600 and the Verenigde Oost Indische Compagnie (V.O.C.) founded in 1602, entered into Asiatic trade. Both of these Companies tried to compete with each other in their trade in Indian commodities. Of them, the V.O.C., the subject of our present discussion, was the first to attempt an entry into the textile markets in India at the end of the year 1601.¹ Later in 1606, they started a factory at Surat which was closed in 1607 with the suicide committed by its factor Van Deynsen.² For sometime they could not establish a factory on the Western Coast. The VOC could reopen its factory at Surat in 1617.³ On the eastern coast, the VOC had established a factory in 1605 at Masulipatnam. By 1610, factories were established at Petapuli, Tirupapaliyur, and Pulicat. Pulicat was made the chief factory of the region. Pulicat was recaptured by the Portuguese in 1612, but they had

¹. W.H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, pp.31-32.
². Ibid., p.32.
³. Ibid., p.38.
to vacate it shortly.\(^4\) Thereafter, the trade and position of the V.O.C. stabilised in Gujarat and Coromandel, the two most important maritime provinces of India during 17\(^{th}\) century.

An attempt has been made here to ascertain the relative position of Gujarat and Coromandel in V.O.C.'s trade, as rival exporters by comparing the quantities and composition of the goods ordered from these places and the observations provided in the Dutch records. We have restricted our analysis to major common commodities of these two regions. They are indigo (Appendix-C), cotton textiles Appendixes-D, E, F and G) and cotton yarn (Appendix-H). This study will help us in gleaning the course of development in the above mentioned items of export. The evidence of this nature can be of help in understanding the nature of change in the pattern of Indo-Dutch trade.

There is a vast quantity of material that lay unpublished in the repositories of Algemeen Rijksarchief (ARA), The Hague. Our present study is based on a series of records of the V.O.C. called *Resolutien genomen op de ordinaris en extraordinaris vergaderingen van Heeren XVII* (Resolutions adopted at the ordinary and extraordinary meetings of the Gentlemen XVII). These records contain valuable information about

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4. Cf. H. Terpstra, *De Vestiging van de Nederlanders an de Kust van Koromandel*, pp.1-158; W.H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, pp.11-136; H. Terpstra, *De Nederlanders in Voor Indie*, pp.8-78; Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel 1605-1690*, pp.15-38. These provide along with statistical data some explanatory comments as well. I have offered a translation of some of these comments below.
the commodities ordered by the V.O.C. These mostly annual lists give information about goods to be procured at various places and sent to the Netherlands. These lists were sent to the Dutch governor generals and the High Council located at Batavia. They in their turn used to send these orders/demand lists to respective factories from where these goods were to be acquired. These lists specify the exact nature and quantity of goods, their qualities and the regions from where these were to be procured. They are of further help since they offer qualitative statements as well about the items. Nevertheless these records have their own limitations, it should be mentioned at the outset that these are only the lists of commodities ordered and detailed data of the receipt of the ordered items is not provided. Consequently, the comparisons are based only on quantities ordered because the value of these goods are usually not stated. Furthermore, the nature of the orders uptill 1680 makes difficult to present the available data in a tabular form. It is also not always possible to determine the places of origin of these fabrics which were commonly manufactured in both of these regions, as well as at other places (Appendix-G). For example baftas were manufactured in both the regions of our study.\textsuperscript{5} To get a region-wise break-down of cotton textiles ordered, 

\textsuperscript{5} Glamann, p.135 considers it "impossible" to determine the origin of the fabrics. However, it is not true in the case of all cloth and is rendered very easy after 1630. Om Prakash, \textit{The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal 1630-1720}, p.264 observes that the orders for the Bengal goods were included in the Coromandel section till 1655 and hence was unable to trace it under a separate heading until 1681.
is possible only after 1680 which facilitates a comparative analysis. However, the position is different in the case of other two items; namely indigo and cotton yarn. However, the most encouraging fact is that they are available in the continuous series except for 1637, 1654 and 1683.

Indigo occupied a fairly important place amongst the major common commodities exported from Surat and Coromandel. It remained a staple commodity of export through out the 17th century. To begin with, we may analyse the demand drawn up in 19 Nov. 1631, which is outstanding for its details and not only provides the quantities but also the estimated values of goods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order sent in</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Estimated Purchase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19 Nov. 1631</td>
<td>50,000 sacks Pepper</td>
<td>f. 375000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100,000 sockels Mace</td>
<td>f. 60000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>400,000 lbs. Nutmeg</td>
<td>f. 20000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>350,000 lbs. Clove</td>
<td>f. 105000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>140,000 lbs. Indigo Biana</td>
<td>f. 130000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>140,000 lbs. Indigo Sarkhej</td>
<td>f. 100000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100,000 lbs. Saltpetre</td>
<td>f. 10000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>400 balen Silk</td>
<td>f. 320000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>400 balen Coarse guinees</td>
<td>f. 38000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50 balen Chinese silk</td>
<td>f. 35000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fine cotton cloth</td>
<td>f. 25000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>400 balen Cotton yarn</td>
<td>f. 30000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Porceleyn, Ginger, Chinese silk stuffs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And other small things</td>
<td>f. 35000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>f. 25000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>f. 1308000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source . V.O.C. 101, f.32 v.

It appears that in the total estimated cost of 130,000 lbs. Biana indigo accounts for 9.93% and Sarkhej indigo for 7.64% though the
quantities to be purchased were exactly the same i.e. 140,000 lbs. It was perhaps owing to the lower price of Sarkhej indigo in comparison to that of Biana.  

A comparison of orders for indigo in the 17th century gives a complex picture. Indigo from Sarkhej formed 62.5% of the total demand in 1633. But it was soon reduced to second position from which it could never recover in comparison to indigo from Biana. The figures are available for Coromandel from 1635 onwards. In 1635-36 Gujarat indigo remained ahead of Coromandel (33.33%). During 1638-1640 they vied with each other, their share being 23.57% each. From 1641 onwards a close rivalry followed. In 1641 indigo from Sarkhej had a share of 38.46% in comparison to Coromandel’s 23.076% of the total order for that year. In 1642, Coromandel got an upperhand with a share amounting to 28.57%. Next year Gujarat was asked to send 31.25% in comparison to 27.08% ordered from Coromandel. During the period 1643 to 1646 the position of the two remained equal. From 1647 to 1670, Gujarat had an edge over Coromandel indigo as can be seen from Appendix-C. The demand for Coromandel indigo increased from 16.66% in 1670 to 19.35% in 1671. In the next two years, no demand for Gujarat indigo was made.


7. For the comparisons I have worked out the percentages of the quantities ordered from the two regions.
This was perhaps a result of augmentation in demand for Coromandel indigo. Its share stood at 28.57% of the total demand, Biana indigo accounting for 71.42%. In 1673, Coromandel surpassed all competitors in the sense that only indigo from Coromandel was asked for. Gujarat indigo reappears in the demand list of 1674, but in a much more humble way. Its share was brought down to 6.25% in comparison to 31.25% of indigo from Coromandel. It could rise to 7.48% in the two subsequent years. The indigo export from Gujarat ceased in 1683. This was not made up by any increase in demand of indigo from Coromandel, in fact the indigo demanded from these to registered a fall not in proportion but also in absolute terms. However, in 1678 its share had risen to 39.85% but fell again to 28.57% in 1679. It declined further to 20.5% of the total in 1680. Indigo from Biana gained at the expense of these two rivals. It shot up to 80% of the total demand by 1683. Gujarat indigo reappeared from 1684, but with a much reduced share of 7.14% in comparison to Coromandel's share of 21.42%. In 1685, it went further down to 6.66% against 26.66%. In the next three years i.e. 1686 to 1689, the Coromandel indigo superceded that of Gujarat. In 1689 both Gujarat and Coromandel came at par with each other with a share of 25% each. Increase in Gujarat's share seems to have been caused by the introduction of Jambusar indigo. The indigo from Jambusar sold well at Amsterdam.\(^8\)

\(^8\) V.O.C., 110, 14 December 1690.
Gujarat could compete closely with the indigo from Coromandel in the last decade of the 17th century as can be seen from Appendix-C. Both the trading rivals suffered owing to the emergence of a new and formidable competitor in 1697 namely Java indigo. However indigo from Java could claim only 13.40% of the total demand. In the last two years of the 17th century, Gujarat and Coromandel keenly contested. By 1700 Coromandel had a share of 5.35% and Gujarat of 5.34%. It may be pointed out here that one would have expected that demand of indigo from Surat would have been much higher owing to its proximity to Sarkhej and simultaneously being the outlet for Biana indigo, in which the Dutch apparently were dealing on much larger scale. But this was always not the case.

From out sources we can safely identify the places which contributed to the export to the Netherlands. From 1633 to as late as 1688, indigo from Gujarat was chiefly from Sarkhej. From 1689 to 1700 Jambusar also contributed in indigo exports by VOC. From Coromandel, it used to come from various places at a given point of time. Till 1640 it was coming from Pulicat and Catingan. In the demand order of 1641 there is a reference to indigo from Tegenapatnam. In almost all subsequent demand lists, there is no reference to Tegenapatnam. It was perhaps owing

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9. V.O.C., 112, 15 November 1696. This is perhaps the first reference to a prospective large scale import of indigo from Java. Therefore, Moreland, From Akbar to Aurangzeb, p.113, footnote 2, rightly refers to the disappointment at the absence of positive results in Java during the 17th century.
to its identification with indigo from the Coast. Dattcheron (Draksharama) was another important place of Coromandel Coast which contributed in indigo export.

It may be noticed that in the period between 1633-1643, there remained a near uniform trend of demand in indigo from both the places. The period from 1643 to the end of 17th century is marked by a great decline in the quantity of demand for indigo. It is well reflected in the fluctuations discerned from the order lists and one can legitimately assume that indigo exports to the Netherlands were substantially reduced. Factors responsible for this decline need to be worked out. At this point our source is not very helpful.

Cotton textiles are second important article of commerce. Moreland was of the opinion that the Dutch took little share in opening up the new market (in Western Europe), though they entered this when it was an established success.\(^{10}\) Accordingly he has treated it in a very limited manner. Later Glamann worked on this theme and categorised it as a very profitable article in V.O.C.'s commerce.\(^{11}\)

In addition to indigo, Gujarat and Coromandel were important suppliers of cotton textiles. The nature of our evidence makes it difficult to show the change in the structure of trade by a study of the Heeren XVII's orders. The difficulty is further augmented by the quality

\(^{10}\) Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, p.123.

\(^{11}\) Glamann, pp.134-135.
differential among different varieties of textiles. At the same time it is also not possible to be certain about the origin of the textiles till as late as 1680.¹² From 1680, the problem of identification of cloth is solved largely because of division of orders under specific place names. This facilitates the region-wise analysis of cotton textiles. It is widely believed that the last decade of the 17th century witnessed great rise in demand for Indian textiles.¹³ Our data push it further back to 1650s. This was caused by the change in the fashion and especially by the increased purchasing capacity of Europe.¹⁴ In order to reach a safer conclusion with regard to participation of Gujarat and Coromandel, we will rely on the data given from 1681.

¹². Ibid, p.143. Glamann is of the opinion that it could be possible to identify the places of origin of textiles from 1668-70 inclusive. But our study shows that it is possible to determine the origin of only few cloth from 1671 onwards. Like in the case of baflas, originating from both Gujarat and Coromandel, orders specifically name the places of their origin.


Total Number of Pieces ordered (1681-1700)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gujarat</th>
<th>Coromandel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1681</td>
<td>56,000</td>
<td>1,30,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1682</td>
<td>78,000</td>
<td>1,10,906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1683</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 1684</td>
<td>92,500</td>
<td>1,58,206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 1684</td>
<td>1,07,000</td>
<td>3,40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1685</td>
<td>64,000</td>
<td>1,07,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1686</td>
<td>46,000</td>
<td>1,59,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1687</td>
<td>1,19,000</td>
<td>1,78,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1688</td>
<td>1,04,000</td>
<td>1,60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1689</td>
<td>78,200</td>
<td>1,73,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1690</td>
<td>95,000</td>
<td>1,89,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1691</td>
<td>2,28,500</td>
<td>1,88,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1692</td>
<td>1,80,500</td>
<td>1,82,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1693</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1694</td>
<td>1,81,750</td>
<td>1,87,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21st March 1695</td>
<td>1,87,250</td>
<td>1,92,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Dec. 1695</td>
<td>1,65,500</td>
<td>1,31,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1696</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1697</td>
<td>1,23,300</td>
<td>1,10,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1698</td>
<td>1,35,500</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700</td>
<td>2,25,000</td>
<td>1,38,800</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Sources: V.O.C. 109-V.O.C. 112.
The figures demonstrate that a boom was witnessed from 1680 to 1700. It is seen that in the first decade, share of Gujarat in the export to Europe was comparatively less than that of Coromandel. In 1691, the exports from Gujarat exceeded the orders from Coromandel for cotton textiles the respective figures being 54.79% (2,28,500 pieces) to 45.28% (1,88,500 pieces). In the next three years they keenly contested with each other. In the order lists of the last seven years Gujarat had a lead over Coromandel, culminating in the year 1700 to a ratio of 61.84%: 31.15% of the total order from these two places. Gujarat, had thus replaced Coromandel as the chief source for supplying cotton textiles to the Amsterdam market.  

It is interesting to note that Coromandel was supplying a wider variety of cotton textiles, about twenty-three kinds in comparison to nineteen from Gujarat to the West European market especially Holland. These two rival exporters faced a tough rival from within the Mughal empire namely Bengal. By 1698 more than half of the textiles went from

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15. This inference drawn from our figures is not in agreement with that of Coromandel shown by Glamann in Return Cargoes of 1697 which again is a rough estimate (Glamann, p.144) In the absence of any serious complaint on account of unfulfilment of the demand and in the face of Dutch efforts to supplement the supplies from Ceylon and thus augment the exports to Holland lend more reliability to the demand orders. Moreover the figures of Return Cargoes of one year is suspect due to non-availability of one or more shipments in a given year. For a discussion on the export invoices see Om Prakash, The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal 1630-1720, pp.262-264.
The composition of cotton textiles in the demand orders did witness change from both the regions. In the case of Coromandel, Guinees, Parcallen, and Salempuris continued to dominate, bethilles underwent a decline from 12.68% in 1681 to 8.82% in March 1698. Trend was downward in Mouris (5.04% in 1681: 1.87% in 1700), gingham gained a little (1.52% in 1681: 2.95% in 1700). Negro’s cloth, Cambayes from the coast, recorded a decline while coarse camises, printed curtains printed table cloth, sailcloth, rumals d’esta, alibanis, were dropped from the demand lists after some time. Bafras and painted/printed chits maintained a relatively stable position. Dongris showed an obviously rising curve (1.26% in 1684 when it was introduced , to 10.80% in 1700) In 1695-96 some new cloth were introduced in the demand lists. Amongst them, ‘Dasjens’ were introduced in the list of 21st March 1695 and accounted for 10.24% of the total 1,95,2000. The proportion increased further in the demand list of 5 Dec. 1695 and rose to 15.22% and in subsequent years it went down to 4.64% (1698) and 4.32 (17 Feb. 1700). ‘Boelangs’ could not make much headway as its share was 0.76% in 1695 and could rise to a meagre 1.49% in 1700. ‘Randams’ were not well appreciated for these slumped from 1.14% in 1695 to negligible 0.36% in 1700. Thus, much information is available for relative position of various cotton textiles from Coromandel. It is not possible to compare them as

such with that of Gujarat. Nevertheless one item of cotton textiles renders limited help in a comparative study of the relative position of two rival exporters. As can be seen from the Appendix (G). Baftas from Coromandel continued to be more than that of Gujarat till 1679. But from 1680 onwards baftas from Gujarat dominated by a large margin. There was a relative stability in the number of painted chintz from Coromandel. As against it, the cheaper printed chintz from Sironj (Central India) claimed a significantly stable share amongst the Gujarati cloths over a period of time. The stability of Gujarat’s chintz assumes greater significance owing to the fact that by 1679 printing had started in Holland.\(^{17}\) Its export from Coromandel ceased. This commodity was passed over to Bengal which had an increasing share in the demand orders from 1681 onwards. At this stock taking, it becomes difficult to agree to any conclusion that painted chintz began to be exported only in the last decade of the 17\(^{th}\) century.\(^{18}\)

Amongst the cotton textiles from Gujarat, Chautar Dariabdis, cordots, baftas, patkas, birampouris, Surat’s and Sironj’s chintz, occupied a major position in the demand lists. Their relative position over a period of time can be understood from the Appendix-D given of cotton textiles


from Gujarat. Kannekins, niquanias, braules or chaders, tapij kannekins, bhermsor tapseels, can be seen as loosers in relative terms. Some cloth like guinees stuff, sester-gantijs, colawaij poos, bamboets or rottings, were dropped from the order lists presumably because they could not find a market in Holland or Europe. Unlike those, some new clothes were ordered for the first time in the last decade of the 17th century. Of them, sawaguzzees, birampuris and patkas showed remarkable progress and amongst the late comers lhymenias could not make a place.

Some qualitative material contained in the records under discussion does shed some light on reasons for the decline in the position of certain cloth in the goods ordered. Regarding mouris, it has been reported that the best and more profitable were from Tuticurin. In that year (1681) 1200 pieces were ordered from there. But Tuticurin could not compete with Coromandel, for very soon from 1687 we do not find any reference to it in the table of the goods ordered from Ceylon Appendix-F. Nevertheless it had acquired a stable market in Europe especially in France. Heeran XVII remarked in the list of 24 July 1698, “If one (you) had remitted some fine Mouris this year, the same should have obtained high price because (it) has been much in demand for France and wherefore we have now again demanded.” Guinees cloth were always in demand. From 1681, a curious phenomenon began. The Dutch started

19. V.O.C. 109 (Ceylon), 20, November 1681.

supplementing the deficiency in orders from Ceylon. Therefore in 1681, Heeren XVII advised “so much to be procured and to be sent towards here as without hindering the country trade (i.e. Asiatic trade), that there it must be preferred”.\textsuperscript{21} The guinees of ordinary kind (35,000 pieces) were asked for in the list of 14 Dec. 1682. Instruction was given to procure this cloth because it was used for dyeing and printing (“verwen en drucken”).\textsuperscript{22} The 35,000 pieces were to be supplemented by 10,000 pieces from Tuticurin for the same purpose.\textsuperscript{23} By 1684, Tuticurin was asked to supply 30,000 pieces along with 1,03,000 pieces from Coromandel.\textsuperscript{24} This expansion in the demand was presumably partly due to the quick dissemination of knowledge of printing in Holland and France and other parts of Europe.\textsuperscript{25} An advice was made to purchase from those places where it was cheaply available. Instruction was given to purchase them from Sadrasapatnam, Porto Novo along with Pulicat. These yeilded much profit.\textsuperscript{26} Those from Masulipatnam were reported to be very thin and bad

\textsuperscript{21} V.O.C., 109, 20 November 1681.

\textsuperscript{22} V.O.C., 109, 14 December 1682.

\textsuperscript{23} V.O.C., 109, 14 December 1682.

\textsuperscript{24} V.O.C., 109, 1 October 1685.

\textsuperscript{25} Ebeltje Hartkamp Jonxis, “Sits en Katoendruk, handel en fabricage in Nederland”, pp. 31-32 has traced the development and spread of cloth printing in Holland and Europe.

\textsuperscript{26} V.O.C. 109, 1 October 1685.
and were purchased for more price than they were worth. They were purchased for fl.206.5 fl.191.16. And fl.181.5. Therefore they could not yield much profit than those purchased at Pulicat for fl.142.10.27 Later in 1687, 65,000 pieces of bleached ordinary Guinees were to be purchased in the following manner; 15,000 pieces from Tegenapatnam, 6,000 pieces from Porto Novo, and 10,000 pieces from Negapatnam 15,000 pieces from Pulicat, 10,000 pieces from Bimilipatnam and mere 5,000 pieces from Masulipatnam.28

In 1688, no guinees cloth were to be purchased at Masulipatnam as “the price had gone too high”. Heeren XVII observed, “we consider when the English do not come so frequently to the said Coast and the same as a result do not come to purchase such great quantities of Guinees cloth as we normally do, that ours in such case might have been increased well over one third part of the earlier proposed demand about guinees, and, in case by any epidemic on the coast if our demand could not be satisfied, timely advice should be given thereof to Ceylon, because the same will supplement so much as is possible”.29 Our series is replete with such comments.30 Heeren XVII considered lime-washing to be the

27. V.O.C. 110, 25 October 1686.
28. V.O.C. 110, 6 November 1687.
29. V.O.C., 110, 26 November 1688 (Ceylon), 9 December 1689.
30. Ibid., 110, 26 November 1688 (Ceylon), 9 December 1689.
reason for raising the price which prevented the acceptance of colour in printing. In the demand list of December 1695, the demand was reduced to half because the earlier demands were not fulfilled due to "wars of Muslims and Marathas". Demand from Ceylon was also reduced to half. It appears that previous years demand from Ceylon was met and a high profit was made. They had come from Tuticurin and Manapaer (in Ceylon). Later in 1698, guinees from Pondicherry was found to be of good quality and similar to that from Porto Novo. But the Dutch were obliged to vacate Pandicherry by the treaty of 1697. Therefore they were perturbed at the loss of Pondicherry. They decided to have the trade or else they would ask the French to vacate Batavia or contemplated to transfer "few of the best weavers with their families, should be able to move (and) to remain under the obedience of the Company at Nagapatnam or where they wish to live". This shows the eagerness of the Dutch. They were so keen to acquire guinees and salempuris that they asked the Batavia Government not to follow specimen strictly and should collect

31. V.O.C. 111, 21 March 1695.
32. V.O.C. 111, 5 December 1695.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., 27 Maat 1697.
35. V.O.C., 112, 24 July 1698, see also S. Arasaratnam, pp.93, 197.
36. V.O.C. 112, 24 July 1698.
As far as chintz were concerned Coromandel seems to have occupied a relatively stable though not a very significant position in the total composition. Except 8,000 pieces (i.e. 7.41% of the total) in 1685, it fluctuated from 0.51% to 1.44% during the 17th century. Coromandel faced some competition from Tuticurin. But this competition did not last for long for it does not appear in the demand list after 1684. (See the Appendix E). The demand for it ceased since “thus nowhere in the country (Holland) is being produced much.”

Guinees, and Salempuris appears to be the most sought after cotton textile. It shows an absolute rate of increase in the demand lists. It started with a share of 2,000 i.e. 10.52% of the total demand in 1681 and very soon rose to a peak 42% in 1689 then fell to 32.42% in 1700. Instructions were given to procure 25,000 pieces of Salempuris at Tuticurin in the list of 20 March 1684. Very soon Ceylon was asked to provide as much as 28,000 pieces in 1687. Appendix-F of the cotton textiles from Ceylon suggests emergence of another trading rival of Coromandel. In the case of sailcloth, Coromandel was a loser to Ceylon. In the case of the former,

37. Ibid.

38. V.O.C. 109, 1 October 1685.


40. V.O.C. 110, 5 November, 1687.
the demand ceased by 1686, while considerable demands from Ceylon continued. It reached its peak in 1692 when no less than 15,000 pieces were asked from Ceylon.

In the orders for supplies from Gujarat and Coromandel as well as from Ceylon (Bengal needs to be checked) we find a sharply rising trend in the demand of cotton textiles. It was due to the demand at Holland itself. It was noticed by the Heeren XVII in 1690 and they wrote, “by the scarcity of coarse cotton cloth here in the country has got into trouble, for the printing shops and others, to meet the convenience of, so is the procuring of guinees, salempuris and other coarse linnen in conformity, of this demand, has been recommended very highly, and so at some factories (where) the quantity could not be found, one should visit the other to supplement”.* It is interesting to note that Holland was importing manufactured cloth to be printed and dyed there. By the second half of the 17th century, textile industry had developed so much that it is reported that three to four thousand looms had been erected at Harlem alone.**

As mentioned earlier another commodity which can help in determining the relative position of the two trading rivals is cotton yarn. There appears a regular demand for supplies of cotton yarn. Our source is not explicit till 1636. But from 1641 onwards figures stated in Dutch

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41. Ibid., 110, 14 December 1690.

weight are available. These figures can be tabulated to establish the share of the two regions to discern competition. (Appendix-H). It appears that Gujarat had a near monopoly as an exporter of cotton yarn to Holland for we do not find any demand made from Coromandel after the initial vague figures till 1641.43 Vengurla on the Malabar Coast appeared as a rival from 1662. It was soon joined by Bengal which too became exporter of cotton yarn. Coromandel could enter the race only as late as 1667 when it was ordered to supply one third of the total 10,000 lbs.44 Since then it maintained its lead up to 1684 though a strong rival emerged in the form of Bengal claiming much bigger share viz. 10,000 lbs. in comparison to 6,000 lbs. each from Gujarat and Coromandel.45 From 1689 to 1695 Gujarat was perhaps far ahead with a total of 10-15000 lb. While Coromandel was the close second with 8-1000 lbs. Around this time Harlem was witnessing a crisis and was holding V.O.C. responsible for it. The owners of the looms wanted that it should send cotton yarn and silk without any interruption. In 1695, fourth rival, Java entered into this trade and was asked to supply 8-10000 pounds.46 From the subsequent demand lists Coromandel was totally dropped. Around

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43. V.O.C., 101, 6 September, 1641.
44. V.O.C., 106, 18 November 1667.
45. V.O.C., 109, 9 December, 1634.
46. V.O.C., 111, 5 December 1695.
90,000 lbs. of cotton yarn were to be exported by Java alone in 1697.\textsuperscript{47} It was decided to improve the quality of yarn from Java and no yarn was to be received from Bengal, Coromandel, Tuticurin, Vengurla and Surat.\textsuperscript{48} But they could not continue to ignore Surat and Tutucurin. The reason assigned was that “we have not seen that the one at Java does not have turn of the action of the right hand straight action from the twist; becoming too firm and too crinkling (krinckeling) in one twisting becomes unsuitable for the work and so long that of Surat does not have this defect, one should send this quantity.”\textsuperscript{49} Therefore, similarly, cotton yarn from Tutcurin was ordered because it was desired “for spin and smooth in twisting, (so) has been most sought after”.\textsuperscript{50} In 1700, 20,000 lbs. of cotton yarn was demanded from Gujarat due to the policy of not letting the competitors getting any foot, “that they alone being in the market, they should come to purchase at low price to their pleasure so one should strive hard in order to deliver this quantity of the finest kind”.\textsuperscript{51}

Our pursuit of information in Dutch records on the Company’s purchases of Coromandel and Gujarat goods has led us through a long story of competition between Coromandel and Gujarat as alternative

\textsuperscript{47} V.O.C. 112, 21 March 1697.

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 112, 17 Feb., 1700.
suppliers in indigo, cotton textiles and yarn in the course of the seventeenth century. But while for most of the century purchases from one region compensated for declines of trade in the other; the picture changes substantially towards the close of the century. Java indigo begins to heavily supplant Coromandel and Sarkhej indigo. Textile printing in Holland adversely affected Dutch purchases of chintz and prints in India; and exports of cotton yarn declined sharply owing to factors yet to be fully investigated. This decline was not mainly because of any shortage of capital in the hands of the Dutch Company or local competition, factors which T. Raychaudhuri stresses; rather it reflected a major change in the pattern of production and demand on the world scale.
11. TEXTILE COMMERCE AT MALDA

The inland town of Malda and its relations with port cities of Bengal on the one hand and inland cities like Patna, Banaras and Agra on the other form an interesting subject of study. Malda is situated close to the confluence of the rivers Kalindri and Mahananda. It was accessible mainly by rivers from Murshidabad and Hoogly.

Bengal was a major exporting region of India by the second half the 16th century, notably, with silk emerging as an important item of export. Chittagong, Sonargaon and Bakla were important manufacturing centres of cotton goods. It seems, however, the Malda had not emerged as an important manufacturing centre by the end of the 16th century. Malda was an administrative centre, it is true, by the time of the Ain-i Akbari, being the headquarters of a juwar (group of parganas) in the sarkar of Gaur. Fitch (1583-1591) does not mention Malda while describing


important places of Bengal. He travelled from Agra to Tanda and touched the ruined city of Gaur. It is surprising to find Malda despite its proximity to Gaur and Tanda not attracting his attention.5 We start hearing about Malda from the second decade of the 17th century. The English East India Company factor Robert Hughes reported from Patna to the President and Council at Surat (12 July 1620) that the Portuguese, Mughals and other merchants were at Patna “like bees, whose cheefest provisions were mandyles, girdles, layches and doupattas of Malda.”6 These were purchased at Patna to be exported to Persia via Lahore.7 Patna continued as an important market for procuring textiles from Malda. Peter Mundy refers to four kinds of clothes namely malmalshashi, orhni, balaband and alachah from Malda.8 Subsequently Malda became an important centre of trade for the Dutch and English East India Companies. Also there were merchants from Persia and occasionally from Pegu.9 Hendricq Cansius was entrusted in 1670 with the task of exploring the prospects

5. R. Fitch, Early Travels, pp.24-25.


of trade at Malda.\textsuperscript{10} Cansius found that the town was full of weavers.\textsuperscript{11} Soon afterwards Constantin Ranst, despatched Hendricq Cansius to purchase cloth in Malda.\textsuperscript{12} He described it as a densely populated town, stretching out on both sides of a sprout of the Ganges.\textsuperscript{13} He observes that Malda was situated 14 miles north of the great Ganges, surrounded by several towns, villages and hamlets (gehugten). Interestingly, he gives description of some of them. The town of Douanhadt (?) was half a day’s journey from Malda where alacha, jamawar and gerrys worth Rs. 100,000/- were produced.\textsuperscript{14} Daudpur, Salgabasapour and Seret (?) together produced malmal worth Rs. 100,000/-.\textsuperscript{15} Alua and Caylgan\textsuperscript{16} contributed coarse and fine khasa to the amount of Rs. 150,000/-.\textsuperscript{17} Lagon and Dapot, around three days journey from Malda, produced coarse khasa

\textsuperscript{10} K.A. 1167, 1455r-1455v.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., f. 1455r.

\textsuperscript{12} K.A. 1168, f. 2173r-2175r. Cansius reached Gaur on 27 July 1670 and found it lay in ruins.

\textsuperscript{13} K.A. 1168, f. 2173r.

\textsuperscript{14} K.A. 1168, f.2173r.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{16} Perhaps Kaliganj village in Rangpur, W.W. Hunter. \textit{A Statistical Account of Bengal}, VII, London 1876, pp. 164, 304, 309. Cansius writes that it was only 1½ days journey from Malda.

\textsuperscript{17} K.A. 1168, f.2173r.
upto the value of Rs.80,000/-. This kind of coarse khasa was known as Lagon after the name of the place of production.\textsuperscript{18} Malikpur ('Melckpour')\textsuperscript{19} was about 2 day's journey and was famous for dopattas, mandils and gangajal, orhni. Besides these, there were Sialgan, Sripur (Ceerpour), Saijshaet, Haripur, Baazpur ('Baasepour') and Dadepur ('Dadepour') which were located all around Malda at the distances of 3, 4 and 5 day's journey.\textsuperscript{20} Together they (annually) produced several kinds of cloth worth Rs.200,000/- alongwith substantial quantity of silk and sugar.\textsuperscript{21} These places still had 150,200 to 350 villages under them.\textsuperscript{22} This

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{19} Atlas of the Mughal Empire, 11A, 23+, 89+.

\textsuperscript{20} K.A. 1168, 2173r.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid. However, Sushil Chaudhuri, "The Asian merchants and Companies in Bengal's trade, circa, mid-eighteenth century", Sushil Chaudhuri and Michel Morineau, eds., Merchants, Companies and Trade, Europe and Asia in the Early Modern Era, pp.302-303, moderates the figure of Rs.200,000/- given by Hendricq Cansius to Rs. 0.8 to 1 million.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid. See also Om Prakash, The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal 1630-1720, pp.98-99. Sushil Chaudhuri, From Prosperity to Decline: Eighteenth Century Bengal, Delhi, 1995, pp.136. Though it is not my direct concern here to show the incorrectness of Om Prakash's assesment of aurung. It will not be correct to characterize these 150-350 villages as aurung. See Walter K. Firminger, ed., "The Malda Diary and Consultations (1680-1682)", Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (henceforth "Malda Diary and Consultations"), New Series, XIV, 1918, pp.106,115, 122, 202. It may however, be emphasized that aurung was a different kind of organization meant
evidence give us an idea of the number of the towns, and villages surrounding Malda, where textiles were manufactured. The area also produced wheat, sugar and ginger available for export. The inhabitants of these places had apparently textile manufacture as their main source of earning.\(^{23}\) In September 1670, Cansius purchased various kinds of textiles and silk to the amount Rs.2315, 9½ annas. He also purchased 9-1/3 *sers* of divers silks at Basitpur.\(^{24}\) He found that a sum of Rs.150,000/ could be invested in obtaining silk alone.\(^{25}\) The silk produced here was sent to Surat, Diu, Daman and Goa. Each *ser* cost 84 Sicca rupees.\(^{26}\)

While enumerating the advantages of trade at Malda, Cansius observes that prices of cloth at Malda were less than other places. For example, on each pack of 20 pieces of fine or coarse cloth, the merchant had to pay in tax only 5½ annas whereas in Rajamahal or Patna it amounted to 6½.\(^{27}\) Similarly, in the whole route to Malda no illegal exactions took place.\(^{28}\) In a recent study, Sushil Chaudhuri had pointed out on the basis

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\(^{23}\) K.A. 1168, f. 2173.

\(^{24}\) Ibid.

\(^{25}\) Ibid.

\(^{26}\) K.A. 1168, f. 2174r.

\(^{27}\) Ibid.

\(^{28}\) Ibid.
of the evidence provided by Richard Edward's report of 1676, that the Asian merchants were exporting textiles from Malda worth around Rs. 2 to 3 million and in order to reconcile the figures of Cansius and Edwards, he assumed that Asian merchants alone were exporting textiles approximately between 1 to 3 millions in 1670s.\textsuperscript{29} Malda textiles were cheaper than those from Dacca.\textsuperscript{30} Considerable number of Persian and 'Hindustani' merchants visited Malda. Two of them came with bills of exchange, one for the sum of Rs.100,000/-, the other for Rs.65,000/- which were spent before the departure of Cansius, i.e. within very short time.\textsuperscript{31} Cansius observes that a sum of Rs.8-10,00,000/- were invested in cloth which were late sent to Surat, Persia and through land route upto Italy.\textsuperscript{32} This is perhaps the earliest estimate in the Dutch records of the volume of textile exports from Malda by both Asian as well as European merchants. Thus Malda had already emerged as a significant centre of textile production where by 1670 the Dutch East India Company alone had invested 80 or Rs.100,000/- in purchase of textiles. There were some traders from Pegu who had visited Malda for 6 years before Cansius.

\textsuperscript{29} Sushil Chaudhuri, “Asian merchants and Companies in Bengal’s export trade”, pp.303-304.

\textsuperscript{30} Generale Missiven 1655-1674, III, p.870.

\textsuperscript{31} K.A. 1168, f. 217r.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
They had brought rubies from Pegu which could not sell well. The items of import that sold well were copper, pepper, cloves, zinc, and sandal wood.

Nicolas Couckebacker and bookkeeper Servaas de Carpenter found most of the reports to be true. By October 1673, they found that the prices of various commodities have declined between 1670 and 1673. For example, price of copper in September 1670 was Rs.58/= to Rs.60/= per maund of 73-61 Dutch pound, which came down to Rs.43/= in October 1673, i.e. by about one fourth. They found that the English East India Company merchants and other inland merchants from Balasore, Hugly, Qasimbazar had brought considerable quantity of those commodities and that had caused decline in prices. Still, there was a great demand for copper because it was used for making copper/brass ware there. These brass and copperwares were sent to Rangamati and Arakan. The Dutch factors themselves had purchased cloth worth f.

33. K.A. 1168, f. 217r.
34. Ibid.
35. K.A. 1185, f.669r.
37. K.A. 1185, f.669vo.
38. Ibid. f. 670r.
39. K.A. 1185, f. 670r.
On cloth from Malda for Persia a net profit of 41½% was reported in to be usual in 1675.

Malda by this time had become a very important centre of long distance internal trade as well. According to Master, 15 to 25 'pattelaes' or large boats were loaded "Yearly" with khasa, malmal, mandil, and elaicha. When loaded with these goods, each patela carried worth one lakh of rupees, when these goods were mixed with silk, a patela-load was judged worth half of that amount. This would suggest a volume of textiles transported say, worth Rs.10 lakhs to Rs.20 lakhs rather than Rs.22.5 to 37.5 lakhs estimated by Irfan Habib on the basis of a different interpretation of this passage. Textiles worth Rs.3 lakhs were despatched to Dhaka, and same amount worth to Rajamahal and Makhsudabad.

Trade in Malda textiles carried on by the Dutch also continued to grow. The Dutch East India Company's records reveal considerable profit over its investments, as shown by the following table:

40. Ibid.

41. Generale Missven, 1675-1685, IV, p.10.

42. Master, I, pp.339-400.

43. Irfan Habib, "Notes on Indian Textile Industry in the 17th Century", p.188.

44. Master, I, p.400.
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<td>f. 2011. 10. 7</td>
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<td>&quot;</td>
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<td>1685</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>f. 3720. ---</td>
<td>f. 6187. --.--</td>
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Source: *Generale Missiven, 1675-1685*, IV.

Thereafter the Dutch officials started experiencing the difficulties in pursuing their trade at Malda by the beginning of 1684. It was found that it was hazardous to give money in advance to the producers. By February 1685, the Dutch had already given Rs.25,725/- in advance.45 By 1686 the Company withdrew its factory from Dacca and was contemplating to close Malda factory also.46 Due to political uncertainties in the last decade of 17th Century, Dutch started losing interest in Malda.47 It was found that Hugli was comparatively a better place to procure the commodities which were available at Malda.48


47. Ibid.

During the third quarter of the 17th century, English East India Company also began to deal in textiles from Malda. It was noted that, “Maulda goods we find the goods of which you sent us Musters are very well liked of here, and therefore we have ordered a large quantity thereof to be provided, to which end we order that you invest there, of the stock we now send you, invest there, in the goods we write for, to the value of Rs.80,000/= or Rs.100,000/=. Fyteh Needham and Jonathan Prickman hired a house in Malda after their arrival. This accommodation had three different rates of rent, one at Rs.7/=, the second at Rs.4½ and the third at 1½ per month. It seems it was quite easy to hire a house in Malda. On 20th August, 1680, they hired a house from Dilawar Khan for their godown. It was made of brick and the rent was Rs.2- 8 annas per month. They continued to pay rent for these houses even when they were not in use. In December 1680, they purchased a piece of land at Makhdumpur, 2 miles away from Malda on the other side of the river. The seller was Rajaray Chaudhuri. The piece of land was seven bighas and Rajaray

49. Master, I, pp.25-26, 399-400.
50. Ibid., p.26
52. Ibid., pp.65, 156-57
53. Ibid., pp. 156-57
54. Ibid., p.81.
55. Ibid., p.81. See also Irfan Habib, The Agrarian System of Mughal India, 1556-1707, p.335, especially footnote 110.
Chaudhuri was paid Rs.300/- for this. Apart from this, Rajaray was paid Rs.300/- for bringing bricks. In July 1681, they decided to purchase further 8 bighas of land from Rajaray. Rajaray was the main supplier of brick and stone for constructing house. He was paid Rs.2040/- The place came to be known as Englezaved within Makhdumpur. On 4th September 1681 Rajaray was paid Rs.500/ for bringing stones for the building. Between 24.8.1680 to 29.10.1682, a sum of Rs.4240/- was already spent on building the factory at Malda.

If we examine the records available in “Malda Diary and Consultations”, we find that the Company operated either by directly purchasing or contracting with weavers or local merchants and brokers (dalals). We give in Appendix-I an illustrative list of persons (merchants and artisans) from whom they obtained their supplies against advances. In one year of 1680, Shambhudas Brahman a respectable merchant


57. Ibid., p.122.

58. Ibid., p.123.

59. Ibid., p.125.

60. Ibid., 129.

61. Ibid., 138.

62. Ibid., pp.122, 123, 125, 129, 131, 134, 139, 146, 151, 185, 204, 205, 206, 212-13.
apparently was contracted for Rs.5300/= Shripal Dalal, broker by designation was given Rs.19,232/= to procure cloth. On 30th January 1681, alone the Company had contracted with individual weavers of tanjeebs upto the amount Rs.50,973/= In the whole year, Rs.2,49,190/= were contractually committed to procure cotton goods by the English East India Company. In 1682, it stood at Rs.1,36,086/. Trade was facilitated by the ready availability of money on interest. On 15th July 1680, Rs.1500/= were borrowed from one 'Perranaut' (Pran Nath) At the rate of 1 rupee per cent per month. On 15 July 1680, Rs.1050/= were borrowed from Herderum Twearee (Hardiram Tiwari). Rs.1000/= were taken on interest from Cunjemen Said and Harderam Teewri (Hardiram Tiwari) each on 21 July 1680. Herderam Tewari seems to be a considerably wealthy merchant at Malda. He was ready to give Rs.20/= 50,000/= rupees on interest. Ghanshyamdas had given


64. Ibid., pp.49, 52, 59, 62, 66, 81.

65. See Appendix-I.

66. Ibid.


68. Ibid. pp.54-59.

69. Ibid. p.59

70. Ibid. p.88
Rs.17,900/= on interest.71 Pran Nath had given Rs.5,850/- in January 1680.72 There are many instances of borrowing money on interest. This ready accessibility of cash would have naturally helped the expansion of trade.73

Various reasons have been suggested for the apparent late entry of the Dutch and following them English East India Companies in Bengal in general and Malda in particular. Om Prakash is of the opinion that Bengal did not attract the attention of the Dutch because they considered Bengal textiles to be not very advantageous in the Indonesian trade upto about 1650. They got interested only after their discovery of utility of Bengal silks and cottons in carrying out the Japanese and European trade.74 Dutch exports of Bengal textiles rose by more than half by the end of the century.75 An interest in the cottons is discernible from sale figures of cotton at Kamer Amertardam, 1649-50-1733-34. By 1697, the Company’s total import was to the amount of fl.5.4 million Bengal’s share was 1.75 million or just under one third. Glamann has suggested

71. Ibid. p.91.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid., pp.93, 155, 165, 167, 173, 178, 186, 188, 190, 192, 193, 194, 199, 208, 210, 212-13.

74. Om Prakash, The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal, 1630-1720, p.67.

75. Glamann, pp. 143-144.
that there was a fall in trade from Gujarat and Coromandel because of tense conditions there.\textsuperscript{76} In this burgeoning trade in Bengal textiles, Malda occupied for a considerable time a growing share. It seems that Bengal silk received preference over Persian silk by the mid-17\textsuperscript{th} Century.\textsuperscript{77} It gives more profit than that from Persia. Bengal silk was also found to be cheaper than silk from China. Bengali cotton textiles also yielded more profit in Persia, Europe and South-East Asia. This expanded the demand for textiles from Bengal and Bengal on the other hand was well equipped with its network of commercial practices and extensive production centres to cope with the expansion in demand. From the list of merchants in the Appendix-I, we find that mostly Gujarati merchants were involved in organizing the textile industry even in a far off place like Malda.

Thus we find that Malda continued to enjoy prominence as a trading and administrative centre throughout the seventeenth century.

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{77} K.N. Chaudhuri, \textit{The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company}, 1660-1760, p.345.
12. AWADH IN TEXTILE TRADE

In recent years, historians of European trade in pre-colonial India have paid considerable attention to the overseas trade conducted by the European companies through various coastal towns. But the hinterland serving them remains inadequately addressed. This is partly caused by the paucity of evidence and partly because the European sources were mostly concerned with either coastal areas or overseas trade. It is true that European sources are undoubtedly rich for reconstructing the commercial history of coastal regions, but, inland areas too deserve to be studied. It is by keeping this in view, that we have chosen to study the textile trade of Awadh. The commodities of Awadh origin were transported through Agra to the port of Surat to be shipped abroad from there.¹ In fact it has rightly been pointed out that a complex combination of inland trade through water and overland, by short-haul shipping and large caravans (10000 to 40000 pack animals) crisscrossed the entire subcontinent.² M.N. Pearson has characterized the “relation between activities on land and sea as symbiotic, but asymmetric. Most of the time sea activities had less influence on those on land than vice-versa”.³ We


will try to look at Awadh as a part of inter-regional and international trade. B.R. Grover in an important paper surveys the information on Awadh for different industrial products. He identified saltpetre and gumlac as the two major products of Awadh. Hameeda Khatoon Naqvi also touches upon some aspects of this trade. However, so far the Dutch evidence for Awadh, especially on the Dutch Company's export of textiles from the region, seems to have escaped scholarly scrutiny.

Awadh was a well recognized geographical tract which had five sarkars and thirty-eight parganas under Akbar. It covered an area of 135 kos from the sarkar of Gorakhpur to Kanauj and 115 kos from the Himalayas to Sidhpur bordering the suba (province) of Allahabad. It had on its east Bihar; in the north, Himalaya; in the south, Manikpur;

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5. Ibid.


and on the west, Kannauj. It was well suited for agriculture. Agricultural lands of Awadh were irrigated by the Saru (Sarju) and Ghaghara. Abul Fazl notices the seasonal inundations of the fields every year which was considered especially good for rice cultivation. The perennial river water and seasonal inundations provided natural enrichment of the soil through irrigation and fertilization. Close to Ajodhya/Ayodhya, there was a village called Dugaon which had a mint for copper coinage for a long time. Abul Fazl observed an exchange of commodities within suba of Awadh in an interesting passage. Awadh received gold, copper, lead, musk, tails of the kutas cow, honey, chuk (an acid composed of orange juice and lemon boiled together), pomegranate seeds, ginger, long pepper, majit-root (Rubia Cordifolia), borax, zedoary, wax, woollen stuff, wooden ware, hawks, falcons, black falcons, merlins, etc. In return, the people of northern mountains received “white and coloured cloth”, amber, salt, assafoetida, ornaments, glass and earthen ware. The goods had to be

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.


14. Ibid.
carried on the backs of men and stout ponies. Shireen Moosvi finds that Awadh was one of those subas which to judge by taxation had a lower degree of urbanisation than provinces like Gujarat and Agra. This, however, need not have affected the scale of its long-distance commerce.

The Dutch East India Company officials realized the commercial importance of Awadh as early as 1622 when they sent Trikam Das, a broker to Agra with bills of exchange worth 5000 mahmudis, to be invested presumably in textiles from Awadh. The Dutch subsequently went on pursuing trade in Awadh textiles. Agra was understandably the main transit market for textiles from Awadh to Surat. The English factors reported on 2 January 1636 that they had

"instantly dispeeded advise unto Dongee in Agra that he should with all convenient expedition buy and send downe unto Suratt Derriabauds, Keriabauds, and Echberryes (sortes of white cloth, and brought downe from that place in great quantitie) to the value of 1000 rupees. Some of these are already on their way".

It was found that in buying Awadh textiles Agra had a considerable advantage over Gujarat in terms of both price and quality. On 7 May

15. Ibid.


18. E.F.I.1630-1633, pp.82, 179.


20. E.F.I.1637-1641, p.57.
1636, an assistant Joan Tack and the broker ‘Moon Das’ were sent to Agra to invest 30 to 350000 rupees in purchasing cloths for Persia, Holland and Batavia.\textsuperscript{21} But due to some delay the caffila from Ahmadabad could not reach Agra in time. In order to avoid a year’s lagging behind they purchased some substitute cloths worth fl.30,000 which was worth fl. 22,000 in Ahmadabad.\textsuperscript{22} It still rendered considerable profit in Persia and Gambroon.\textsuperscript{23} The Dutch factor Barent Pretersen had sent cloths worth fl.31505.2 from Agra to Surat 14 November 1636.\textsuperscript{24} In February 1637 alone, textiles from Awadh worth fl.52278.16.8 were despatched to Gambroon.\textsuperscript{25} Agra thus emerged as a major market for cloth for we hear of the availability here of broad baftas and coarse baftas originating from Corseth i.e., Khursat, a place outside suba Awadh.\textsuperscript{26} The Dutch Governor General on 9 December 1637 reported to the Directors of the V.O.C., at Amsterdam, that at Neggapour (Nagpur?), Khairabad and the Purabs (‘eastern’ marts) or in the quarters of Benares, as observed by Sr. Wollenbrand Geleynssen de Jong and Arent Barents., there was a very

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid., p.103.
\item Ibid., p.103.
\item Ibid., p.267.
\item \textit{Atlas of the Mughal Empire}, maps, 8A-8B, 26+, 80+ 33; see also \textit{E.F.I. 1655-60}, p.70.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
brisk textile trade. According to one of their reports, Muslim merchants
carried a very vigorous trade in Awadh textiles, exporting these to Persia,
Arabia and Turkey through the caravan route via Kandahar. The cloth
came from the countries of Purab (Awadh etc.), Benaras, and
Farraabath(?). They used to transport 25 to 30000 camel loads of
textiles. This would amount to 1020000 to 12240000 Dutch pond which
was obviously a huge quantity. Thomas Cuyck, a Dutch factor was sent
to Benaras in 1639 to inquire into the varieties of textiles to be procured
there for Persia. In Ispahan in Iran, it was found that candy sugar had
declined in value but other merchants had reaped a profit of 50% from
importing cloth from Agra. Not to be left behind, two factors of English
East India Company John Turner and Francis Hamersly were exhorted to
ensure a supply of 20000 pieces of ‘Dereabauds’ (cloth from Daryabad,
Awadh). Francis Bornford was ordered to “invest such sortments of
browne cloth as the Ahmadabad merchants use to sell your people theare,

29. Ibid., One camel load was equivalent to 408 Dutch pound. This
equivalence is incidentally given in Van Dam, II(3), p.281.
31. Ibid., p.135.
32. *E.F.I. 1637-1641*, p.278.
as mercooles and eckbaries (whereof bryams and selaes are made) and
guzzees (which are usually transformed into blew baftaes), cannikeenes
of both sorts, ardeas, and other sortments required for Bantam and besides
very vendible in Persia, Bussora, Mocha, yea, all amongst the coast of
Arabia". In comparison to competing varieties from Ahmadabad, they
were 15 -20 per cent cheaper at Agra.

In December 1641, the Dutch had borrowed at Agra 1,63,300
rupees on interest. To pay it back they remitted 80,000 rupees with a
loss of 2-11/16 percent to be paid back in 18 days, and were contemplating
to send 60 to 70000 rupees at the first opportunity. This amount was
presumably to be spent on purchasing indigo and Awadh textiles. To add
to their woe, the coarse textiles in Jalalpur and Khairabad (Awadh) had
risen by 25 percent in comparison to the previous year due to a great rise
in the price of cotton. Even then it was hoped that market would be full
of textiles and purchases could be made. Broad baftas and other cloth

33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. H.T., Colenbrander, ed., Dagh-Register gehouden in 't Casteel
36. Ibid., pp. 185, 200.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
(red chelas at Jalalpur) had become dearer by 2 rupees per corge.\textsuperscript{39} The English had sent a broker to purchase cloth at Jalalpur.\textsuperscript{40} In Lucknow also some Daryabads were to be purchased.\textsuperscript{41} In 1641 the Dutch had exported a cargo worth fl. 1,10,880 which had 87 packs of textiles from Agra along with other commodities.\textsuperscript{42} The ship \textit{Snouck} also had a cargo of Muslims and banyas comprising 731 packs (two of textiles) worth fl. 9,501.\textsuperscript{43} For Mocha the Dutch already had ready a cargo of fl.41,294.5 of cloth.\textsuperscript{44} In December 1641, Weijland had purchased 527 corges (1 corge = 20 pieces) of a variety of textiles.\textsuperscript{45} The Director had sent 75,000 rupees for the dual purposes of procurement of textiles and to pay back the money borrowed on interest requiring repayment within 18 days at the rate of 2½ per month.\textsuperscript{46} By the end of 1641, it was estimated that the Dutch factory at Agra was assisted by an amount of 2,05,000 rupees to

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., p.186.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{42} J. A. Van der Chys, ed., \textit{Dagh Register gehouden in’t Casteel Batavia, 1640-1641}, Batavia Hague, 1887, p.309.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{45} \textit{Dagh Register 1641-1642}, p.187.

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
pay for rupees 1,63,000 borrowed on interest. By this time at Jalalpur and Khairabad more than 75000 rupees had been invested in purchase of textiles, because now this amount was withdrawn from these two places. This would make the total amount of money available at Agra to be 2,80,000, if considered along with 2,05,000 rupees previously sent. This is indicative of the rising curve of Dutch investments in Agra and Awadh to procure indigo and textiles. It was hoped that Persia would be provided with cloth exclusively from Agra worth fl.58458 because textiles from Ahmadabad were proving unprofitable in the preceding three years.

The Dutch factories at Surat, Ahmadabad and Agra had borrowed fl.6,30,894.17 at the rate of 1-7/8 per cent to invest in diverse commodities. On 12 October, upper merchant (oppercoopman) Weijland sent a caffila of 76 carts to Surat, which had not reached there, with goods worth fl. 1,75,988.8. It was found in 1642 that it would not be possible to fulfill the demand for the year 1643. Nevertheless 143 packs of Agra cloth were already purchased despite a 40 percent rise in their prices. Due to the scantiness of cotton harvest, the cloth had become

47. Ibid.
48. Ibid., p.188.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid., p.190.
51. Ibid., p.190.
52. Ibid.
dearer by 16 percent in comparison to the previous year.\textsuperscript{53} The upper merchant (oppercoopman) Sr. Weijland had invested Rs.31,165 in diverse kinds of textiles available at Agra (i.e. Awadh and Agra) to be despatched to Holland and Persia.\textsuperscript{54}

The English Company's records of around this time provide some additional information. The English factors observed that cloth purchased at Agra was not only cheaper but better also.\textsuperscript{55} Of the three kinds, Mercools or broad baftas were the best, but they were not well bleached.\textsuperscript{56} Daryabads were preferred over Khairabads (both varieties of Awadh cloth) which were more broad than required.\textsuperscript{57} Poor manufacture and bleaching, however, put the cloth from Awadh at a disadvantageous position vis-à-vis linen from Scotland, Germany and France.\textsuperscript{58} Mercools were found equal to broad baftas of Baroda or Broach, but they were more even and well made than the latter.\textsuperscript{59} The Surat Council demanded 15-20,000 of

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., p.205.

\textsuperscript{55} F. Foster, ed. \textit{E.F.I. 1637-1641}, p.57.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., p.57.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., p.311.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., pp.311-312. They decided to purchase them in 1644 if they were fifteen yards long and one yard wide, see, \textit{E.F.I. 1642-1645}, p.203-204.
Mercools and 2,000 Daryabads be bought.\textsuperscript{60} Subsequently, the two varieties were sent to England in good quantity.\textsuperscript{61} Akbaris were found a longer and broader sort of Agra cloth than the Mercools.\textsuperscript{62} A large quantity of these were purchased and “transformed in Ahmadabad into byrams, selaes, cassedees, large chints, and other sorts of sundry denominations, requested at Bantam and Mocha”.\textsuperscript{63} Still they were to be exported along with ‘guzzees’ which were to be transformed into cannekins,\textsuperscript{64} etc. Around 1000 pieces were due to be exported.\textsuperscript{65}

The value of the Awadh trade for the Dutch can be judged from the fact that they obtained a \textit{farman} from the Mughal emperor Shahjahan to protect it as early as 1642.\textsuperscript{66} We give below a translation of it from the Dutch rendering of the Persian original:

\textsuperscript{60} \textit{E.F.I. 1637-1641}, p.312.
\textsuperscript{61} \textit{E.F.I. 1642-45}, p.6.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., pp.6, 123.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., p.6.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., pp.7, 123-124, 137 204.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{66} Shahjahan’s \textit{farman} is available to us in a Dutch translation in H.T. Colenbrander, ed., \textit{Dagh-Register gehouden in’t Casteel Batavia 1643-1644}, ’s-Gravenhage, 1902, p.170. The scattered translations of \textit{farmans} from 1618 to 1729 were brought together by J. Schreuder. The volume is available in the “Archieves transferred from Asia, Documents deriving from the High Government at Batavia, 1602-1827”, in the Algemeen Rijksarchief, First Section, ’s-Gravenhage.
"Translation of the farman in the Persian language granted by the King Shahjahan for the benefit of the General Netherland’s Chartered East India Company to Mr. Paulus Krook director of Surat’s directorate in the 16th year of His Majesty’s reign on the 14 Shaban, 1052 and accordingly to our time in the year 1643.

All governors, foujdas, and zamindars, watchmen in the highways, from the port of Pipli up to Agra, are informed, that whereas the King has permitted the Dutch to bring to Agra the commodities which they collect in Banaras, Jualpoer (Jalalpur), Gairabad (Khairabad) and other places, and (whereas) when they bring to this place and convey expensive commodities, tolls and rahdaris are extorted (from the Dutch) in all villages, resting places and roads, by several watchmen there, and also under other pretensions they do trouble them, not allowing them free passage from place to place; now, therefore, the King has ordered that henceforth none will have the power to demand rahdaris, charges, etc, more than is authorized. But in the entire dominions of the King where His Majesty’s pen has granted the privilege, they be allowed to go to and fro freely, and may not be troubled in any part under any pretext whatsoever. They are exempted from everything: in this respect earlier farmans were granted to them, as are in their possession. The King also permitted them, to choose what roads they use, or in what resting places they desire to stay; none should trouble them (over this). Likewise in the purchase of indigo and other goods, wherein they may use such brokers
and servants as they themselves wished of their own; should they petition again to the King after this (farman), that someone had transgressed his order, (the transgressors) shall have to explain themselves before the King. It is written that the King's order as issued now is not to be deemed altered".

Thus, unlike the English, the Dutch were provided with royal protection against such abnormal custom exactions. This exemption was particularly important for the Dutch, since in 1643, the prices of textiles from Agra rose by 37 percent and in their the purchases of textiles they thereby suffered a loss of 10 percent on abaseys (abassis), though a profit of 27 percent still remained. The price increase was perhaps caused by the pestilence which had struck Agra in 1643. It was estimated that everyday 600 people were dying. Several thousand houses were deserted. Still trade in textiles continued. A hundred bales of daryabad were purchased of 10,000 pieces in the next season. The Dutch sent a cargo of Agra cloth worth fl.1,23,708 to Persia. In June 1644, they

67. Ibid., p.197.
68. Ibid., p.197.
69. Ibid., p.196.
70. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Dagh-Register 1643-1644, p.179.
desired 1000 pieces of ‘Guinea’ cloth from Jalalpur at the rate of Rs.6.00 per piece.\textsuperscript{74} It would be priced at 7½ rupees each at Ahmadabad, which would cover the other expenses involved.\textsuperscript{75} There was some slackness in trade in textiles from Agra in Persia.\textsuperscript{76} Some of them were sold at 10% profit, which was lost in exchange on the abbasis.\textsuperscript{77} Nevertheless by the end of 1644, the Dutch factors at Agra had already employed 3,00,000 rupees presumably to purchase indigo of Biana and Khurja and textiles from various places including Awadh.\textsuperscript{78} Similarly, the English also purchased 30000 pieces of Daryabads, of which 15000 pieces were meant for England and the rest for Mocha and Basra.\textsuperscript{79}

It is reported that the Dutch factors attached so much importance to cloth from Khairabad that they had their residence there before 1645,\textsuperscript{80} and this used to save Rs.5.00 per corge on purchase of Khairabads. These sold at Rs. 20 per corge and at Agra at the rate of Rs.25.00 per corge.\textsuperscript{81}

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., p.194.

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{76} Dr. J. de Hullu, ed., \textit{Dagh-Register gehouden intCasteel Batavia 1644-1645}, 's-Gravenhage, 1903, p.225.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., p.332.

\textsuperscript{79} \textit{E.F.I.}, 1642-1645, p.204.

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., p.300.

\textsuperscript{81} \textit{E.F.I.1642-1645}, p.300.
The English hoped to reap extra profit by directly purchasing Khairabads at Khairabad.\textsuperscript{82} It was found that there was a decline in their quality.\textsuperscript{83} Still they were instructed to purchase 15,000 Mercools and 20000 Daryabads.\textsuperscript{84} The English also hired a house at Lucknow to pursue trade there (19 July 1647).\textsuperscript{85} In 1648, the English purchased 261 bales of cloth (apparently Daryabads) at Lucknow worth Rupees 27,465 and 67 piece.\textsuperscript{86} They were despatched directly from Lucknow to Ahmadabad because bullock carts were not available at Agra. The King had impounded all the carts and camels to carry royal goods to Lahore.\textsuperscript{87} In February 1650, longe guzees were supplied from Lucknow and dyed at Ahmadabad.\textsuperscript{88}

By mid-17th century brisk trade had been established in Awadh textiles. The Dutch factors reported from Agra that the English, Muslim, Armenian and Banya merchants were busy purchasing considerable quantities to be exported to Gambroon.\textsuperscript{89} Other adjoining places were

\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{83} F. Foster, ed., \textit{E.F.I. 1646-1650}, Oxford, 1914, p.78.
\item\textsuperscript{84} Ibid. It seems that by 1647 Sanganer turned up as a competitor of Khairabad. Mercools were purchased there to be transformed into ‘tappi chindos’ and broad ‘chhints’ (chintz), Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{85} \textit{E.F.I. 1646-1650}, p.140.
\item\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., p.188.
\item\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., p.225.
\item\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., p.299.
\item\textsuperscript{89} \textit{Generale Missiven 1639-1655}, II, p.550.
\end{enumerate}
also explored for supply of such cloth. The English spotted Nowgaon (in Hardoi District) as a place from where Mercools could be obtained at the rate of 28-29 rupees per corge (which was eight rupees higher than last year).90 The cloth had become little expensive because of the failure of crops, dearness of cotton and scarcity of pyce.91 Mercools from Nowgaon were found to be of inferior quality and it was decided that they should be obtained at "Deraibaud" (Daryabad) towns.92

It seems that the English, eventually come to realize that they were not getting the desired results from investing money in cloth from Awadh. The demand for these textiles had suffered a setback in Persia.93 They found their station at Lucknow very remote and 'chargeable'.94 In May 1652 they ordered a dissolution of their house at Lucknow.95 Daryabads were indeed required, but were to be purchased at Agra.96 Apart from a fall in demand in Persia, the Lucknow factory suffered because of the "Illicit use of its funds", resulting in a heavy debt for the English

90. E.F.I. 1651-1654, pp.9-10.
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid., E.F.I. 1655-1660, p.16; E.F.I., 1661-1664, p.94.
96. E.F.I. 1651-1654, pp.177, 216.
The Dutch Company on the other hand, continued their trade. In 1655, they found that their trade in Persia with textiles from Agra had improved. They devised a new method of purchase. All cloth was neither to be purchased by Company factors nor by subordinate banias alone. Half of the demand was to be purchased by each of them, so as to keep them in competition. Secondly, the Company’s brokers were also suspected of foul play. Consequently the Dutch residents in Persia complained several times that the textiles sent to them from India were much dearer than previously. Their explanation used to be that owing to cloth brought by Muslim and Bania merchants from Surat to Gambroon, the Dutch could not sell their inland Indian cloth at good profit. This was explained as the cause behind cloth brought by Dutch becoming relatively expensive. The last batch of cloth from Agra was inspected by the Director and persons with expertise in Surat. Both


98. Generale Missiven 1655-1674, III, p.36.

99. Ibid.

100.Ibid.

101.Ibid.

102. Ibid.

103. Ibid.
kinds were compared. It was found that those purchased by banias were cheaper than those bought by the Company chief at Agra. But those purchased by the Company’s residents proved more profitable in Persia. Through this examination of the supplies, the Director could put some check on peculation and also ensured the quality of cloth. If we look at a contemporary profile of Company’s investments in various factories it will give us the relative importance of them in the Dutch scheme of things.

1. Agra (presumably dealing largely in textiles from Awadh and adjacent areas as well as indigo from Biana and Khurja).
   fl. 1,50,000

2. Ahmadabad fl. 69000

3. Sind fl. 36000

4. Broach fl. 6933

5. Surat fl. 40000
   Total fl. 3,02,533

Source: Generale Missiven 1655-1674, III, p.73

Thus Agra, the main entrepot for Awadh cloth accounted for half of the investments made from Surat.

104. Ibid.


106. Ibid.
But due to war of succession among the Mughal princes, 1658-59, difficulty was experienced in obtaining indigo as well textiles.\textsuperscript{107} In comparison to previous investments, in 1659 only £1,500 were to be invested.\textsuperscript{108} The textile production in Agra and Awadh suffered so much that in 1661 the English could not procure any Daryabad, Mercool or Akbari at Surat, or Ahmadabad.\textsuperscript{109} Even in England, there was a loss of 15 percent on the previous three years' stock.\textsuperscript{110} It sold at 85 percent of the purchase price.\textsuperscript{111} The things went so bad that they decided to dissolve factories at Agra, Ahmadabad, Mocha and Basra.\textsuperscript{112} The English Company resorted to purchasing these cloth through brokers on 'bemah' (Hind. Berra, assurance).\textsuperscript{113} Several shroffs were interested.\textsuperscript{114} But they promised to invest 100,000 rupees in Agra only if the Company paid them Rs.20,000 in cash at Surat.\textsuperscript{115} The second alternative they contemplated

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., pp.227, 275.

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., p.276.

\textsuperscript{109} E.F.I. 1661-1664, pp.18-26.

\textsuperscript{110} E.F.I. 1661-1664, pp.18, 22, 26, 94.

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., p.18.

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., p.86.

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid.
was the inducement of weavers round Surat to weave a cloth of 7/8 yard broad and 13 or 14 long to substitute for the Daryabads.\textsuperscript{116}

The Dutch East India Company sent their chief (Director) of the Surat factory Dircq van Adrichem (1662-1665) to the imperial court to seek a farman. He succeeded in obtaining a farman on 20 October 1662 from Aurangzeb which conferred valuable privileges upon the Dutch Company. The farman in a translated form is preserved in Kol. Arch. 1129, fol. 1321-6. The farman has also been produced in \textit{Dagh-Register gehouden in't Casteel Batavia}, 1663, pp.301-302. J. de Heers has published it in voluminous \textit{Corpus Diplomaticum}, II, pp.220-222. We have used the Dutch translation given by Schreuder.

\textsuperscript{116}Ibid., p.187.

\textsuperscript{117}Schreuder’s preamble does not mention the day of Hijri calendar while Dr. A.J. Bernet Kempers’ version does not mention the year of Hijri calendar. The day was 5th of \textit{Rabiul Awwal}, in Christian reckoning 20 October.

\textsuperscript{118}Bernet Kempers’ edition to “King’s capital Agra”, See A.J. Bernet Kempers, ed., \textit{Journal van Dircq van Adrichem’s Hofreis naar den
future, (ones), in the province of Ackberabaath (Akbarabad), Oeth (Awadh) and Allabaath (allahabad), who should be in expectation of favours from the Emperor.

Whereas in these days when the gateway of justice is open, Dirk van Adrichem, commander and ambassador of the Governor General of the Dutch, has appeared before his Majesty's throne through the medium of the persons concerned with the King's affairs and has petitioned that the Dutch trade in Surat in some goods and thereupon textiles, indigo, saltpetre, and other merchandise in Banaras, Jaalpoer (Jalalpur), Gairabaad (Khairabad), Licqnoov (Lucknow), Chorsa (Khurja), Beana (Biana), Hindoon (Hindaun), Besauwer (Bisawar), and other places (and) bring (them) to Agra and again carry some other merchandise from Agra to Surat; that they were granted several farmans by his late Majesty Sja Jehaan (Shahjahan), whereby they are free from all charges and rahdaris as are taken in Monthasabaad (Mumtazabad), further, that there was taken 1. percent brokerage of indigo from the sellers according to the old custom and then 1 percent is taken from the purchaser about which the Dutch had not yet petitioned; still their commodities were brought to the

Contd....

Groot Mogol Aurangzeb, 1662, 's-Gravenhage, 1941, pp.220-221. See also Tavenier, I, p.297. Tavemier writes that Dirck van Adrichem was received well by the Emperor. See also, Ishrat Alam, "Dutch Trade in Awadh: Farmans of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb", P.I.H.C., 62nd session, Bhopal, 2001, pp.256-260 for translation of these two farmans.

119.Bernet Kemper’s, p.221, rendering has Taasgentsche (i.e. Tajganj).
toll-house.

Therefore, he has prayed that the King be pleased to order that the Dutch might not have to pay the rahdari they were paying at Mumtazabad on account of some other charges which were not adjusted. Still the brokerage according to the old custom on indigo should not be claimed, but continue to be taken at 1 percent from the seller; and they should not be obliged to bring their goods to the toll house. Also in accordance with the old custom they were not to pay in the sjagens (Shahganj).

On this petition the King has ordered that the Governor of Agra was not to levy tolls, rahdaris, and other rates and taxes (lasten) from the Dutch according to the former customs which were taken in Montasabaad; there shall be brokerage on the purchase, but the brokerage will be demanded from the vendor according to the old custom. Also their goods shall not be brought to the toll-house, nor following the previous custom anything will be taken from them at Sjagens (Shahganj). Meanwhile nobody shall demand anything above the customary standard (afwjken).

The petitioner pleaded further that in the order of the King may be given that the Dutch may purchase indigo, textiles, saltpetre and other goods from such merchants as they wished, and that they may sell their commodities to such of them as they desired, also that they can use such brokers in their service as they may choose, so that nobody was to interfere with their servants without their special consent.
On this request, Kings order has been given, that none should cause any difficulty to the Dutch in the above matters.

Further the abovementioned suppliant pleaded that the king should give an order, that they should be able to hire as many carts, camels, etc. as they might need for bringing and transporting their merchandise and that in this nobody should harass them; that no merchants, lessors or other persons who are indebted to them (the Dutch), should try to evade payment, nor should anyone take such persons under his protection; that none of the authorities should demand of them any rahdari or charges on the road; wherefrom they are exempt in accordance with the farman granted by Shahjahan.

The King has therefore, ordered that nobody shall prevent the Dutch from hiring as many camels, carts, etc., as they might need to bring in and transport their commodities; that no merchant or other persons who are indebted should delay repayment of money, or make evasion, the Dutch be helped to recover their outstanding moneys (penningen. lit. money) according to right and reason; and no one should pose himself to protect the debtors. No one should trouble them by levying any charges on the way and rahdari, such as is prohibited by the King's court, but should protect them and their goods and each official is duty-bound to conduct their goods from one jurisdiction to another. Know that this was earnestly prayed for and that the order of the King does not diminish in strength; nor that every year a new farman need be procured". 
Armed with such a comprehensive farman the Dutch sent their broker Vallabh Das with 4,000 rupees to invest in purchasing 8,000 pieces of Daryabadis and 2,000 pieces of Mahmudis (perhaps Mercools) at Lucknow and Jalalpur. In the early 1663, the English made a contract with Piru Saddarang, of the Jooneja caste to provide 20,000 pieces of Daryabads and 1000 Mercools. Rs.10,000 were given in advance. It was promised that he would be paid Rs.15,000 on dispatch of the goods, and he had to receive the balance a month after the cloth was received. He was to be paid 10.5% commission along with all transport charges. They found it to be an extremely difficult proposition. Their assessment was that despite their approaching the weavers in their houses in villages or suburbs, they had failed to convince them to change the size of the cloth. Secondly, they held the Dutch responsible for their failure. They observed, "they (the weavers) would with lesse trouble have been brought to, were it not for other buyers, that stand not upon it soe much as wee doe, especially our never faileing obstructers the Dutch, who look neither to thicke nor thin, broad or narrow, if they want not above half or three

121. E.F.I. 1661-1664, pp.188-189.
122. Ibid.
123. Ibid.
124. Ibid., pp.208-209.
quarters of a yard in length and two or three and a half inches in breadth; which makes us thinke sometimes that they doe it on purpose to wary us out and hinder our buying any ..."\textsuperscript{125} Thirdly, the objections of contract merchants were that prices fluctuated because of rise in the prices of food crops or cotton.\textsuperscript{126} The transportation was subject to several customary taxes as well as frequent raiding of caravans by robbers.\textsuperscript{127} Fourthly, the contract merchants demanded 20-30,000 rupees in advance to get cloth from Agra or Awadh.\textsuperscript{128} The English factors were ready to purchase Sovaguzzees as substitute of Daryabads.\textsuperscript{129} In 1666 and 1667, there was a fall in the demand for such cloth in Persia.\textsuperscript{130} Nevertheless, the English could get Piru Hingola, a broker, to procure such goods from Agra and its neighbourhood after receiving an advance of 30,000 rupees and a commission of 10 per cent.\textsuperscript{131} He agreed to supply 16,000 pieces of Daryabads and 8,000 pieces of Mercools.\textsuperscript{132} With the same person a

\textsuperscript{125}Ibid., p.201.

\textsuperscript{126}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{127}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{128}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{129}Ibid., p.200.

\textsuperscript{130} Generale Missiven 1655-1674, III, pp.502, 568.

\textsuperscript{131} E.F.I. 1665-1667, pp.15, 263.

\textsuperscript{132} E.F.I. 1668-1669, p.6.
second contract was signed on 6 July 1668. The Dutch also continued to invest in indigo and cloth from Agra. They had fl.2,92,054.11.5 at Surat in December 1679, out of which fl. 1,09,327 were earmarked for investment in Agra, i.e. 37% of the total capital available at Surat, and 34,000 rupees at Agra. But by now instead of textiles, the Dutch investment was predominantly confined to procurement of indigo and silk at Agra. So far as their trade at Lucknow and other places in Awadh is concerned, the Dutch interest had slackened. Aurengzeb's farman of 4th July 1693 refers to Farangi Mahal as nazul property. It was given to Mulla Said and others for the residence of the family. Nevertheless the Dutch continued to have business there. Hendrik Zwaardecroon and others wrote on 14 May 1700 that the Dutch factors had been ordered to procure 30,000 pieces of chautars of Daryabad and 2,000 Dutch pound of indigo Biana. J.J. Ketelaar was appointed as second in 1698 at

133.Ibid.


135. Muhammad Raza Ansari, Bani Daras-i Nizami, Mulla Nizamuddin Muhammad, Aligarh, 1973, p.76, for the text of the farman; see also Iqbal Husain, “From Traditional Roots to Nationalism - A History of the Farangi Mahal Family”, Islamic Culture, LXXIV(3), July 2000, pp.1-3, See footnote 1, especially for the controversy about its seizure from the Dutch.

136. Iqbal Husain, p.3.

Lucknow.\textsuperscript{138} He appointed Meyders as subaltern chief of Lucknow.\textsuperscript{139}

Thus the Dutch trade continued in Awadh throughout the 17th century with fluctuating fortune.

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., p.28.

\textsuperscript{139} J.J. Ketelaar's Hofreis, 1711-1713, p.99.