CHAPTER THREE

MARITIME TRADE IN STRATEGIC GOODS

The Portuguese began their trade activities in the Fishery Coast with marine products like pearls and chanks, but widened their horizon later. In the second stage, they began trading in essential commodities like rice and textiles. Finally, they moved from intra-region trade to intra-Asian trade by bringing West Asian horses and Sri Lankan elephants to the Fishery Coast and carried saltpetre to Lisbon from the hinterland of Thoothukudi.

The Portuguese showed keen interest in conducting trade in war animals also. They began importing horses from the very beginning of the sixteenth century. Trade in horse was already in progress in the Fishery Coast even before their arrival and the Portuguese indulged in this lucrative trade also as the situation demanded this greatly. The lust for war animals by the Vijayanagar emperors and their governors, the local disputes between them and the Hindu-Muslim rivalry resulted in the Portuguese monopoly in horse trade. The boom in the overseas import of war horses dates from the thirteenth century both in the north and south India.

Need for Horses

The horses and elephants were both highly expensive animals and had very close associations with the rich and powerful. There was a great demand by the government of Vijayanagar for elephants and horses that played an important role both in wars of period and royal paraphernalia.
The enormity of the demand for western horses in the Vijayanagar empire was often referred to by Fernão Nuniz. He himself was a horse trader and mentions fabulous prices for his Portuguese horses. He says that once Krishnadeva Raya himself came to the roadside and bought six hundred horses from the Portuguese at the rate of $4 \frac{1}{4}$ for 100 pardaus. Krishnadeva Raya wanted to possess the exclusive right to trade in horses.¹

The commercial and legal institutions did not come in the way of the free trade in the commercial emporia of the Indian Ocean. The rulers were keen on giving all forms of concessions to the merchants to attract them to their ports. The policy followed by Krishnadeva Raya of Vijayanagar bears out this attitude. He instructed that the foreign traders should be treated well. In his earnestness to encourage the merchants he went out of his way even to pay for those horses that died on the way from the West Asian ports to Vijayanagar.²

Moreover Krishnadeva Raya recommended for improving the harbours to facilitate the smooth transportation of important imports, including horses:

"Make the merchant to distant foreign countries who import elephants and good horses attract to yourself by providing them with villages and decent dwellings in the city . . . and allowing decent profits. Then the articles will never go to your enemies."³

¹ Vasundhara Filliozat (ed.), op. cit, p. 208.
² Robert Sewell, A., Forgotten Empire-Vijayanagar, New Delhi, p. 150.
³ Ibid.
The Vijayanagar even thought about having complete control over the Tamiraparani delta so that they could have another door for the entry of horses from Persia and Arabia.⁴

Krishnadeva Raya’s enemy Adil Shah of Bijapur also approached the Portuguese government with a similar request. Albuquerque is said to have laid down certain terms and conditions to both the interested parties, as he was clearly in a position to bargain.⁵

The Delhi Sultanate in the North, the two arch rivals in the Deccan (the Vijayanagar Empire and the Bahmani Sultanate) and also local powers in the far south were interested in the regular overseas supply of war horses for strengthening their respective cavalry units. The long drawn hostilities between the two maintained a steady demand for war horses which now began to be regularly disembarked at Konkan harbours. The arrival of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean scenario and the formation of a centre at Goa soon paved the way for the rise of the Portuguese as a force to be reckoned with in this trade.⁶

Chroniclers and travellers have left accounts which speak about the lust and greed of the Vijayanagar rulers for war animals. Ludovico di Varthema (1502-1508) says that the King of Vijayanagar was a powerful king who kept constantly 40,000 horsemen.⁷

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⁵ Mathew, K.S. (ed.), *India Ocean and Cultural Interaction*, p. 155.
The Portuguese were reported to have sold horses as early as on 11 October 1512 to the Nayak of Kanyakumari region.\(^8\) Even before the arrival of the Portuguese, the Great King had an upper hand in selling horses to the Muslims of Kayalpattanam.\(^9\)

In the initial stage, Kilakkarai provided an opportunity for the Portuguese to supply horses to its chieftain. Tumbichi Nayak, who had a few coastal villages like Vembar, Vaippar, and Kilakkarai under his control\(^10\) defied the authority of the Vijayanagar ruler Achyuta Raya and joined hands with the latter's enemies.\(^11\) He also rebelled against the Madurai Nayak, captured several towns and built a fort which he called Paramakudi.\(^12\)

To fight with his enemies he needed horses from the Portuguese. The other Nayaks and their subordinate chieftains also depended on horses to carry them in their warfare. The Nayakdoms and the Palayams were only military fiefdoms which were expected to provide military help to the Vijayanagar king and the Nayaks respectively. So horse was in great need in Tamil Nadu, at least up to the battle of Talikota in 1565.

The trade in horses began to flourish in concrete terms during the period of Martim Affonso de Souza (1542-1545) the Portuguese Viceroy of Goa. He

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\(^10\) Ibid., p. 243.


issued instructions to the Portuguese captain in Ormuz to send a minimum of twenty horses to the ports of the Bay of Bengal, as there was a lucrative trade on the east coast of India.\textsuperscript{13}

Therefore, the Portuguese on the Fishery Coast requested the Portuguese Viceroy of India to arrange for the supply of horses, which came from Ormuz to the ports of Goa, Chaul and Cannanore.\textsuperscript{14}

Horses were imported from West Asia to the western ports of India by the Portuguese. Some casodos (married settlers) like Pedro Alvaro de Mesquita and Diogo de Lisboa who had specialized in horse trade with the Coromandel ports stayed at Kanyakumari for the convenience of knowing in good time the arrival of horses from West Asia to the western ports. They sailed and brought the horses to Coromandel ports.\textsuperscript{15} They made frequent visits to Ormuz and brought horses to Cochin also. The horse trade continued to be in a flourishing condition even after the fall of the Vijayanagar kingdom. The casados maintained their commercial controls between Cochin and Ormuz, either through Gujarat or Goa.\textsuperscript{16}

Though Goa was the main Indian port of import for the horses from Arabia (2000 horses per year), the casados of Cochin attempted their luck by importing horses to Cochin to be taken to the Fishery Coast, Travancore and to the kingdoms of Tumbichi Nayak and Vettum Perumal. In 1546, Henriques de Sousa

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} Pius Malekandathil, Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime Trade of India 1500-1663, New Delhi, 2000, p. 216.
Chichorro said that the horses taken to Kanyakumari from Ormuz via Cochin did not yield much profit. So he asked permission to take sugar, rice and lac from Satgao (a minor port in Bengal) to Cochin. But in 1547, we find the Ouvidor of Cochin remarking that many casados of the city were taking horses to Kanyakumari from Cochin for trade, where they enjoyed themselves with girls, while their wives and children were dying of hunger at home.  

Apart from the casados, the native merchants and Portuguese captain were also involved in the distribution of horses and earned good profit from it. Cosme de Paiva supplied horses to Vettumperunal who fought against the Great king of Kanyakumari who in turn was very friendly with Xavier. Though the sale of horses by Cosme de Paiva was opposed by his own men, he did not stop his lucrative business and for that he was imprisoned.  

The Portuguese had absolute monopoly over the trade in horses. The privilege of selling horses had to be obtained from them only. In the case of João da Cruz, he asked John III, King of Portugal for the privilege of selling horses to several local rulers. João da Cruz made a promise to the Great King that the Portuguese would sell him horses, and (the Great King) in return he should allow his subjects to be Christians. The Great King allowed the conversion and when Martim Afonso with his fleet came to Manapadu he allowed the Great King to collect the needed horses from the Portuguese.

17 Ibid., p. 119.
18 Letters of Xavier, August 19, 1544, p. 89.
19 Ibid., pp. 270-271.
The knowledge about the transportation of the horses is very scanty. The Chinese used the term “Machuan”, literally meaning horse-ships, to denote ships with the capacity of carrying about hundred horses from Ormuz. Abdur Razak (1470) observed that ships from Ormuz carried both horses and men. According to Morland’s estimation, a ship around 125 tonnes could carry seventy war horses, besides one hundred men, including soldiers, crews and passengers.\textsuperscript{20}

These horses, though a sum of 40 ducats as customs to the Portuguese in Ormuz had to be paid, were sold in south India for a value varying from 300 to 1,000 ducats. Some of the ships carried 80 horses, and some even 124 horses, to Goa, as observed by Caesar Frederick and Ralph Fitch respectively in their voyages from Ormuz to Goa. Though we do not know the approximate tonnage of the vessels or the number of the horses taken to Cochin, it is believed that they amounted to considerable proportions.\textsuperscript{21}

On March 1594, the Portuguese king had to design a special intervention in the horse trade from Ormuz to Cochin. The king was of the opinion that, the import of the horses to Cochin and Kanara was prejudicial to the royal service, and that they should be taken to Goa, where the Estado might extract customs duty. As the taxes that were levied on the horses in Cochin went to the native king, there was a strong pressure to centralise the trade on horses in Goa, for this could become a great source of revenue to the Portuguese treasury.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{21} Pius, Melekandathil, \textit{Portuguese Cochin}, p. 216.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
Under the passport system adopted by them, the King of Portugal received a duty of 40 cruzados on each horse and on the whole collected a revenue of 40,000 ducats.\textsuperscript{23}

There are two frescos available in two temples in the extreme south of Tamil Nadu which throw light on the horse trade. The first fresco is found at the entrance of the Sri Alakiyanapirayar Temple of Tirukkurankudi in Tirunelveli district. “It shows the arrival of a sewn plank ship with a single mast, possibly with a flat or square stern (though the steering mechanism is not seen). The scene depicts the figure of a king or an administrator (seated under a covered structure) before whom are brought cargoes from the ship. This includes two horses, a camel and an elephant, along with boxes of other merchandise. All men shown here wear full long sleeve jackets and elaborately pleated dhotis.”\textsuperscript{24}

Deloche dates this on stylistic grounds, and also because of the absence of guns in the weaponry of soldiers, to the fifteenth or early sixteenth century. Deloche identifies the ship as sakouna, a type of sambuk which was popular in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.\textsuperscript{25}

There is another fresco depicting a sea going ship in the sea carrying merchants and horses. This painting is from another temple in this Tirunelveli district, and shows the ship on the sea, with six figures of horses and twelve figures of men.


\textsuperscript{24} Jean Deloche, ‘Konkan Warships of the XII\textsuperscript{th} and XV\textsuperscript{th} Centuries as Represented on Memorial Stones, BEFCO XXXVI, 1987 : 165-84, cited in Mathew, K. S., \textit{Indian Ocean}, pp. 156-157.

\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Ibid.}
This too is a single masted vessel with a large sail. The men are wearing typical European dresses and match locks are carried by them. All these indicate this painting to be a later one than the one stated first.26

Deloche opines by analysing the structure of the ship that it did not belong to the batela or baghola class, but was of European origin. A European ship carrying passengers dressed in European garments and transporting horses may be related to the effective participation of the Portuguese in the import trade of horse to India.27

There was a decline in the demand for horses by the Vijayanagar empire after it met with defeat in the battle of Talikota. The successors of Tumbichi Nayak also did not extend their patronage to the Portuguese in getting supply from them. However the Lusitanians found another lucrative trade in the elephants of Sri Lanka.

Export of Saltpetre

The international rivalry particularly between the Portuguese and other European countries in establishing their colonies in the newly discovered areas and the Thirty Years’ War (1600-1648) resulted in the export of saltpetre from India to Portugal. This (saltpetre) was used mainly in preparation of gunpowder. The Portuguese showed much interest in exporting saltpetre from 1630s onwards. They

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27 Ibid.
located the available areas and made a series of contracts and agreements with the local rulers to obtain saltpetre.

“The demand for the Portuguese gunpowder was locally fulfilled by the *casa da polvora* (gunpowder factory). But since the demand for gunpowder increased constantly, and the factory at Goa failed to produce as much quantity as was needed, the requirement had to be filled by the Crown from the gunpowder factory at Lisbon. However, because gunpowder for India was to be produced in Portugal, the Portuguese authorities at Goa sent much saltpetre to Portugal on the annual carracks.28

As mentioned earlier the Portuguese were looking out for alternative trade due to the long absence of pearl fishing from 1605 to 1621. The pearl fishers also did not show interest in pearl fishing due to the oppressive Portuguese tax system and, so, finally, the latter had to attempt new trade ventures with the local rulers. Their experiments in conducting trade in strategic goods resulted in the exchange of elephants with saltpetre in the territory of the Nayak of Madurai.

Saltpetre was produced mainly through natural processes. Normally, it was mined in the form of brown-black dust and washed in the factories with water and certain chemicals. Saltpetre which was washed only once or twice was supposed to be of an inferior quality. The Portuguese normally had it worked again in their factory at Goa before sending it to Portugal or to in the gunpowder factory in India.

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28 Afzal Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p. 128.
Saltpetre which was washed thrice was of a medium quality and that which was washed four times, was considered to be the best.29

The Portuguese officials collected saltpetre from the regions of Sindh, Balaghat, Granganore, Thoothukudi and Maduari. It is believed that Madurai was better than other regions in supplying saltpetre in the sense that the saltpetre received from there required only two washes for purification.30

Both Vithal Nayak on the west coast and Tirumalai Nayak on the east coast not only collected the saltpetre from their own territories but even sent their agents on such missions to places like Mangalore and other places in the interior.31 The Nayak of Madurai brought saltpetre from Palleacate to the Cochin factory where it was refined and sent to Goa, either for reshipment to Portugal or for consumption in Goa. But the Nayaks did not yield to the demand for saltpetre made by the Portuguese or any other European power unless their requirements were met.32

In order to procure saltpetre from the hinterland of Thoothukudi, i.e. Madurai, the viceroy sent the casado, Pero Soares de Brito from Cochin as captain of Thoothukudi in 1630. The Portuguese needed a representative to be at Thoothukudi for the collection of saltpetre since Madurai region produced enormous quantities of saltpetre.33 The captain of Thoothukudi was there upon conferred the title of

29 Ibid.
30 Assentos do Conselho de Fazenda (hereafter ACF). Livro 5, Codice 1163, fl. 47, 1637-1643.
31 ACF, Livro 4, Codice 1162, fl. 144, 1631-1637.
32 Afzal Ahmad, op. cit., p. 129.
It was Linhares who facilitated the move to establish a contract with the Nayak of Madurai regarding saltpetre in 1631. Before him (Linhares) and even after having made several agreements, the Portuguese, the Dutch and the Danes made a few attempts to procure saltpetre from the Nayak of Madurai. It demonstrates that saltpetre was in abundance in and around Madurai and it was in great demand both in India as well as in Europe. The important point is that saltpetre was carried all the way from India to European countries. The procurement of saltpetre created and intensified the rivalry between the Portuguese and the Dutch.

**Elephant Trade**

The Portuguese were not the pioneers in the introduction of elephant trade to the Tamil kingdoms. The Marakkayars were already importing elephants from Sri Lanka to Kilakkarai and further they were distributed in various places in the Tamil coast. The Nayaks of Senji and Thanjavur were in need of the elephants from Sri Lanka. Since the Portuguese were in demand of saltpetre they started supplying it to the Nayak of Madurai. The merchants who traded in elephants went to seek them in Sri Lanka and exported them to different countries where they sold them according to the tariff, which varied with the height of the elephants.

The efforts taken by the Portuguese for procuring saltpetre did not go in vain. The first agreement was made between the Nayak of Madurai and the

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Viceroy Conde de Linhares on 3 February 1633. The Nayak promised to sell all the saltpetre only to the Portuguese. The Portuguese also agreed to sell the elephants only to the Nayak of Madurai. He (the Nayak) agreed to sell one bhar (local weight) of saltpetre at the rate of twenty seven and a half xerāfins to the Portuguese for each elephant delivered at the port of Thoothukudi at the price of 662 xerāfins.36

Diogo de Mello, the captain and Amaro Roiz, the revenue official of Sri Lanka did not like the agreement and thus delayed the sending of elephants to Thoothukudi. They put forward two reasons. First, the price of saltpetre was high and of the elephants very low. Second, due to the dry season, the elephants would take a longer time to cover the distance of thirty leagues between Colombo and Mannar and again to disembark at Thoothukudi.37

The second agreement was made in the following year between Miguel de Noronha, the Viceroy of Goa and the Nayak of Madurai. Both of them agreed to exchange elephants with saltpetre. Since the Nayak reserved saltpetre for the Dutch, the captain refused to send elephants.38

On 8 February 1635, the Nayak promised to deliver one bhar of saltpetre at the price of twenty five xerāfins to the Portuguese captain António de Meirelles Andrade. The Nayak also invited the Portuguese to exchange not only elephants with saltpetre but with other precious items also. The following table shows the commodities exchanged by the Portuguese for saltpetre.39

36 Jeyaseela Stephen, S., Tamil Coast, p. 103.
38 Jeyaseela Stephen, S., Tamil Coast, p. 105.
39 Ibid., pp. 104-105.
Quantity and Price of Commodities Exchanged for Saltpetre by the Portuguese from Tirumalai Nayak of Madurai in 1635

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Price Xerafins - Tangas - Reis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cloves</td>
<td>5 quintals</td>
<td>1184 - 8 - 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivory</td>
<td>2 bhars</td>
<td>0922 - 0 - 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>60 quintals</td>
<td>1200 - 0 - 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulphur (Siam)</td>
<td>53 quintals</td>
<td>1107 - 1 - 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey velvet</td>
<td>21 covados</td>
<td>0094 - 2 - 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chita velvet</td>
<td>21.5 covados</td>
<td>0096 - 8 - 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agra velvet</td>
<td>41 covados</td>
<td>0102 - 2 - 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silk (tabby)</td>
<td>1 piece</td>
<td>0032 - 0 - 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silk (blue &amp; yellow)</td>
<td>1 piece</td>
<td>0034 - 0 - 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silk (white)</td>
<td>11 pieces</td>
<td>0068 - 0 - 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silk (lacquer coated)</td>
<td>11 pieces</td>
<td>0080 - 0 - 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silk (camisole)</td>
<td>1 piece</td>
<td>0034 - 0 - 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silk (damask)</td>
<td>34 covados</td>
<td>0064 - 0 - 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silk (cochineal)</td>
<td>180.25 covados</td>
<td>1982 - 3 - 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold necklace</td>
<td>5.2.3. Marc</td>
<td>1186 - 2 - 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold necklace</td>
<td>6.3.50 Marc</td>
<td>1422 - 9 - 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necklace</td>
<td>4.5.1.48. Marc</td>
<td>1069 - 3 - 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necklace</td>
<td>3.7.24. Marc</td>
<td>0944 - 4 - 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chain (3 pendulums)</td>
<td>4.1.1.48. Marc</td>
<td>1008 - 2 - 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necklace</td>
<td>3.1.7.24. Marc</td>
<td>0745 - 0 - 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necklace</td>
<td>1.1.1.24. Marc</td>
<td>0263 - 2 - 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cordao</td>
<td>1.4.1.30. Marc</td>
<td>0331 - 9 - 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necklace</td>
<td>3.4.18. Marc</td>
<td>0705 - 1 - 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold powder (China)</td>
<td>17.4.18. Marc</td>
<td>4126 - 8 - 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11 packets)</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.805 - 2 - 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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In 1635 the Portuguese obtained 8,129.5 quintals of saltpetre from the Nayak of Madurai and exported it from the port of Thoothukudi to Goa and thence to Portugal.

The exchange of trade between the Nayak and the Portuguese suffered a set back due to the arrest of the Portuguese captain António de Meireles by the Nayak in 1635. It was followed by a severe retaliation from the side of the Portuguese and in the Council meeting held on 25 June, they (the Portuguese) drew the following regulations:

i) If the Nayak of Madurai needed elephants, he should appoint a factor, of course his own man, in the island of Sri Lanka to take the measurement of the elephants.

ii) The price would be fixed as per the contract and accounts would be settled as soon as the measurement was over.

iii) Elephants would be sent to Thoothukudi by ship at the risk of the viceroy.

iv) If they wished to have horses by the same contract they would keep another factor in Goa. After the price is fixed, the viceroy would put them at the port of Thoothukudi.

v) If the Nayak wanted to have gold, gold jewellery, silk or any other clothing he would come to the port of Thoothukudi with the help of the factor or Mudaliar and they would decide the price as per the value of the land.41

In the year 1633, three elephants were brought from the region of Mannar to the ports of Cochin, probably for presentation. It is also reported that they were usually brought to the port of Cochin and only later sent to Goa. In addition, a few elephants were occasionally sent to Madurai from Sri Lanka for the purchase of saltpetre. In 1648, five elephants were sent as presents, to the Nayak of Madurai, for his services against the Dutch. However this never proved to be an item of regular import, at least during the period under discussion.

In a letter dated 24 Feb. 1633, the king asked the viceroy to load 500 quintals of saltpetre that too in the form of gunpowder from Thoothukudi. He also expressed his anguish that the ships of the fleet of the state might stop sailing due to the short supply of gunpowder. Gunpowder was in great demand and the king told the viceroy to send more gunpowder by any ship that came to Lisbon.

Another letter of 1638 spoke about the availability of more salt. Also the letter said that though Thoothukudi and Bengal had sent 1200 quintals, some more quintals could be added from the same places. This quantity was to be sent to Cochin and Goa. This was of great importance to the forts of the State.

The king appreciated the actions taken by the viceroy in collecting more saltpetre and made requests that the viceroy would continue to send great quantity that were required for the fleets and the forts, which should always have great stock.
Decline in the Trade of Strategic Goods

From the moment the Portuguese and the Nayak of Madurai signed contracts and agreements regarding trade of elephants and saltpetre both of them had been experiencing only uncordiality. Since the Portuguese were in dire and constant need of gunpowder they made several attempts repeatedly to procure saltpetre from the hinterland of Thoothukudi. They even paid exorbitantly high rates to the Madurai Nayak. Yet the Portuguese were unable to fulfill the demands of their king, who was continuously asking them to send more and more ammunitions.

The disputes between the Tamil rulers resulted in the decline of trade in saltpetre. The Marava kingdom under the Sethupathis was created by Tirumalai Nayak as a buffer state in order to prevent the intrusion of any foreign power through the Pamban strait and also to check the Portuguese power in the east coast.\(^42\)

In 1635, in the civil war between Sadaika Tevar II and his brother Thambi Tevar in the Marava kingdom, Tirumalai Nayak supported the latter. As Tirumalai Nayak sought the help of the Portuguese, Sadaika Tevar was backed by the Dutch, who were awaiting to enter into the east coast. In return for the assistance, Tirumalai permitted the Portuguese to propagate Christianity, to build churches and to occupy a fort.\(^45\) This enhanced the commercial relations between the Luso-Nayak powers. But at the same time, it paved the way for the Dutch involvement in the east coast. The Marava power was on the rise and the ruler became more autonomous in his dealing with other political powers.


\(^45\) Rajayyan, *History of Tamil Nadu*, p. 146.
In 1639, Tirumalai Nayak realised the growing power and popularity of the Sethupathi and the impending danger to his kingdom. Tirumalai Nayak wanted to wage a war against the Sethupathi as the latter had direct dealings with foreign powers on the east coast and he did not get the approval of the Nayak of Madurai for his transactions.  

The Portuguese firmly declined any help to the Madurai Nayak. But the Maravas procured the alliance of the Dutch. This is the origin of the break up of the Portuguese-Nayak relationships once and for all. The Nayak not only refused to supply saltpetre to the Portuguese, but invited the Dutch to have trade alliance with him.

The Portuguese made several attempts to renew their contracts with the Nayak but in vain. A final attempt was made on 5 March 1643 but Tirumalai felt insulted by the Portuguese negative response during his fight with the Maravas. He sent an ambassador to Arnold Heussen, the Dutch Governor of Pazhaverkadu in 1645 inviting him to trade at the ports of his Nayakdom. The Dutch were allowed to open a factory at Kayalpattanam, a place located south of Thoothukudi. Thus the Marava-Nayak issue ended in rivalry between the Portuguese and the Dutch and it continued up to 1658.

Mode of Payment and Prices

From the availability of gold and silver coins in the Fishery Coast, one can surmise that goods were paid in cash, in gold or silver coins. Sometimes goods

44 Kadhirvel, op. cit., p. 22.
45 Ibid.
were exchanged. For instance, the Nayak of Madurai and the Portuguese exchanged saltpetre with elephants. As the price of the saltpetre was high, the Portuguese could not strictly follow the agreements and so, instead of supplying elephants, they exchanged goods like textiles, gold, silver, ivory, etc. and received saltpetre. The Portuguese fixed the price of the elephants by taking into account the current value. It was always felt that the price of the salt was much higher than the rate of the elephants. Payment took place at the port of Thoothukudi at the time of delivery of the goods.

There were fluctuations in the price of saltpetre during the first half of the seventeenth century. Prices also differed according to the area of procurement. The price of saltpetre from Thoothukudi fluctuated between seven and ten and a half arofis per quintal.\(^\text{47}\) The following table gives an idea about how the variation took place in different areas in different times.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Price in Xeralfs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1625</td>
<td>Balaghat</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1631-4</td>
<td>Balaghat / Kanara</td>
<td>10.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1634</td>
<td>Balaghat / Kanara</td>
<td>12.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1636</td>
<td>Balaghat / Kanara</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1638</td>
<td>Thoothukudi</td>
<td>7-10.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1652</td>
<td>Balaghat</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1656</td>
<td>Balaghat</td>
<td>7.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

International politics affected Indian trade very much and so there was a gradual decline in the trade of certain commodities like pepper, cinnamon and

\(^{47}\) ACF, Livro 5, Codice 1163, fl. 49, (1637-1643).

\(^{48}\) Afzal Ahmad, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-133.
textiles after the third decade of the sixteenth century. But the Portuguese were in great need of saltpetre not only to protect their settlements in India but also because there was a constant plea from the King of Portugal for the same commodity.

The profitable goods like pepper, cinnamon and textiles were gradually on the decline soon after the end of the third decade by the margins of 25.50 and 90 per cent, but in the fifth decade came down by 25 per cent and remained the same in the sixth. The following table gives a picture about the total volume of saltpetre sent to Lisbon through Goa, particularly from Thoothukudi:

**Exports of Saltpetre to Portugal during 1631-1640**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Volume in Kgs.</th>
<th>Directions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1631</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Sindh - Goa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1633</td>
<td>4,353</td>
<td>Bengal - Goa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1635</td>
<td>8,130</td>
<td>Thoothukudi - Goa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1636</td>
<td>3,14,700</td>
<td>Thoothukudi - Goa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1636</td>
<td>1,04,900</td>
<td>Balaghat - Goa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1637</td>
<td>2,09,800</td>
<td>Thoothukudi - Goa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1640</td>
<td>26,225</td>
<td>Bengal - Goa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table, it can be understood that within a period of sixty three years, only twenty years successive trade in saltpetre was conducted by the Portuguese. Secondly the maximum trade was carried out from the regions of Thoothukudi. It was almost 28.12% of the total saltpetre from this region.

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49 Ibid., p. 132.
50 Ibid., p. 133.
Medium of Exchange

The monetary arrangement of the sixteenth century was conducive to accelerate trade in the Indian Ocean. The Portuguese used gold, silver and copper in their transactions so that the absence of the common measure of value was not very obvious in their settlements. The import of cash was also very common in the sixteenth century. In 1500 the Portuguese brought 60,000 cruzados (in cash) to the Malabar Coast which increased to 80,000 cruzados in 1506. This increased further upto 1000,000 cruzados in 1524. Coins were issued in the sixteenth century from Diu, Bassein and Daman to cater to the needs of maritime trade. Besides the coins of Indo-Portuguese origin, there were other coins too in circulation along the coastal regions of India, especially for trade and commerce.\(^{51}\)

In the Fishery Coast, fanão or fanam (rupee) was very much in use. It was a small gold coin and four thousand of them were worth 210 cruzados. The teachers, catechists and sacristans were paid in fanam during Xavier’s time.\(^ {52}\) Pardau was in use among the Portuguese officials and captains. The other coins like ashrafi, cruzados, reis, xerafin, pagoda, pattacus were also in use in collecting revenue and buying and selling goods.\(^ {53}\)

Analysis of the Trade on Strategic Goods

The Nayaks in general, and Tumbichi Nayak of Paramakudi in particular, kept up the open door policy in the introduction of horse trade by the

\(^ {52}\) *Letters of Xavier, January 15, 1544*, p. 63.

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According to Jeyaseela Stephen, the Portuguese were led by profit motive and a desire to monopolize the pearl fisheries at Kilakkarai and Vedalai. More than the pearl fisheries, the Portuguese concern was oriented towards the strategically important places located in the northern end of the Fishery Coast. Kilakkarai and Vedalai were strategically important due to their proximity towards Sri Lanka. Their prime objective was to control the west coast of Sri Lanka and the Gulf of Mannar. The introduction of the cartaz system immediately after their settlement at Vedalai demonstrates the monopolistic policy of the Portuguese than their commercial interest in horse or pearls. Therefore the open door policy was altered and challenged by the Lusitanians in the Indian Ocean.

The Portuguese were not very successful in the introduction of elephant trade. They were exchanging elephants to the Nayaks of Thanjavur for cash. As soon as they came to know that saltpetre was in abundance in Thoothukudi and Madurai they decided to exchange elephants with the Nayak of Madurai for saltpetre. These two regions (Thoothukudi and Madurai) were part of the Fishery Coast and fell under the control of the Nayak of Madurai. Though a number of agreements were made, the Nayak of Madurai did not receive the supply of elephants regularly. The reason being the Dutch were also given a share in the saltpetre. The Portuguese disagreed with the policy of the Nayak.

The main aim for the fortification of Mannar and the control of the entire Fishery Coast from the same island indicate that the Portuguese wanted to pay equal attention to the Fishery Coast and Sri Lanka. Through Sri Lanka which was
abundant in commodities of high value, the Portuguese promoted the overseas trade in Indian Ocean.

Horses were imported from Ormuz to Cochin and other western ports in the Malabar Coast and the merchants brought them to Kanyakumari to be sold in the Tamil coast. This shows the network of overseas trade created by the casados and other merchants who involved in every trade, particularly in strategic goods, during the period of the Portuguese.

Another aspect of trade in war animals is that the Estado did not conduct the entire trade all by itself. Individually and collectively, different merchant groups (captains and Portuguese officials, including the viceroy) had private trade affairs. The Marakkayars of Kilakkarai who were the pioneers in importing elephants from Sri Lanka even before the arrival of the Portuguese were no more in the scene.

According to Jeyaseela Stephen, the Portuguese reacted quickly to the situation and sought whatever was advantageous to them. Two instances could be cited in this regard: First, the Portuguese did not hesitate in giving up trade with Thanjavur as soon as they found the scope of exchanging elephant with saltpetre with the Nayak of Madurai. Second, when the Portuguese realized the difficulty in loading and unloading of elephants in small ships and especially fifteen elephants at a time forced them to build huge cargo ships of high tonnage in this period.54

The Portuguese felt that they would succeed in establishing their authority in Tamil coast with the new political strategy through “a new fuel mix of

54 Jeyaseela Stephen, S., "Trade in War-Animals", p. 120.
overseas trade and gun powder diplomacy”. This diplomacy worked well in the case of Goa and Malacca. The cause of the failure in implementing such a policy in the east coast is due to the sporadic settlement of the Portuguese in the same coast.  

It is good to make a little comparison of the Portuguese horse trade with the horse trade of the Pandyas in the fourteenth century in the same Fishery Coast. Both the Pandya rulers and the Nayaks purchased war animals for their army. While Pandyas followed a semi monopsonistic policy by allowing Muslims and Hindus to trade in horses and supply animals to the Pandya rulers, the Portuguese enjoyed a monopoly in war animals.

The Kudiraichettis and Muslim merchant groups who conducted horse trade during the period of the Pandyas seemed to be absent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Portuguese favoured the new Christians, and casados and encouraged them as their great supporters. The non-Christians must have moved to other places seeking prosperity. The Kudiraichettis flourished in their multifaceted trade in the Coromandel Coast and promoted overseas trade with Malacca.

Those who supplied horses from Kanyakumari to other areas were Christians. João da Cruz, sought permission to deliver horses to almost all the rulers and the Nayaks who ruled the Fishery Coast with partial jurisdiction under the region of the Vijayanagar.  

55 Jeyaseela Stephen, S., Tamil Coast, p. 113.
56 Jeyaseela Stephen, S., “Trade in War Animals”, pp. 120-121.
The two frescos found in the Hindu temples in the extreme south of Tamil Nadu also have something to say about the Luso-Tamil trade in war animals. These paintings give the impression that horse trade flourished in the Fishery Coast. Since the coast east of Kanyakumari was declared free from custom duty, horse trade must have been conducted in great volume. The horses were in great demand for the rulers of Travancore, Kayathar and Paramakudi. The Vijayanagar rulers particularly Krishnadeva Raya also showed much interest in buying horses.

In the Pandya period a large number of horses died during transportation and this money was paid by the same rulers as per the contract. Since the Portuguese had entered into arrangements to treat the sick horses, the death rate was reduced to a great extent. Incase the horses died before sale, they were not paid for by the Nayaks from their treasury. But Krishnadeva Raya, in his earnestness to encourage the merchants, went out of his way even to pay for those horses that died on the way from the west Asian ports to Vijayanagar.

The role of the Jesuit missionaries as agents in the promotion of the Estado's trade and commerce was unique. When the elephant-saltpetre agreements failed and the Madurai Nayak was stubborn in not yielding to the demands of the Portuguese, the Jesuits were asked to be the mediators between the two parties. The Jesuits and the captains differed in their policies several times. Yet in this case, the influence of the Jesuits at the Madurai court was much utilised because of the fear of the Dutch on the Fishery Coast and their (the Dutch) influence with the Nayak.

58 Mathew, K.S., Maritime History, p. 17.
59 Jeyaseela Stephen, S., Tamil Coast, p. 114.
Though elephants were available in North India it is not clear why the Vijayanagar monarchs imported them largely from Sri Lanka incurring a lot of expenses. Perhaps, the Sri Lankan elephants were of a better breed and secondly, the presence of the Bahmani Sultans must have been a hurdle. The Vijayanagar sovereigns were on inimical terms with these sultans who stood on the way of the importations of the animals from North India.

**International Trends and the Portuguese Trade**

Some of the commodities which were exported from the Fishery Coast had implication both at the local and at the international levels. The production of textiles, rice, and saltpetre increased when the Portuguese demanded them more. These items were collected from the hinterland of the Fishery Coast. When other European powers also began procuring the same item, production got accelerated but in proportion to the increasing demands.

The inflow of Portuguese money for the purchase of these goods increased the monetisation of the Indian economy. Later, it paved the way for mercantilism in other parts of the world and sowed the seeds for industrialization.60

The cultivators of rice and the producers of textiles and the merchants complained to the King of Portugal that they were paid low prices for their produce by the Portuguese officials. The Portuguese rulers did not pay heed to their words. But when the Dutch and English appeared in the seventeenth century, the Portuguese were forced to consider the legitimate demands of this suppressed sect of the trade.

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60 Afzal Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p. 185.
The arrival of the Dutch was considered as a boon by the producers and the merchants.⁶¹

Often Portuguese ships reached Lisbon without the required needed Indian commodities. So the Portuguese decided to increase the purchase rate. For instance, in the third decade, the cost of per quintal saltpetre was two and a half ashrafis, but during the fifth and the sixth decades it rose to twelve ashrafis per quintal, which was almost 300 per cent. Similarly, the cost of per quintal rice fluctuated between one and a half and two and a half ashrafis.⁶²

The rise in saltpetre price was responsible for the Luso-Nayak conflict and their agreements were thereafter not implemented smoothly. Since the Dutch appeared in the waters of the east coast, the Portuguese complied with the rate proposed by the Nayaks. As a result Estado faced financial crisis but the merchant class enjoyed good profits.

The _carreira-da India_⁶³ and the Portuguese power was already on decline by the second half of the sixteenth century. Though this view is supported by several historians, Afzal Ahmad finds slightly difficult to agree with this view. According to Afzal Ahmad while there was a decline on pepper and spice cargoes that belonged to the Crown and a few privileged contractors, there was no decline in the much richer cargoes of Indian textiles, furnishings of indigo, lacquers, pearls and the diamonds.⁶⁴

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⁶¹ _Ibid._


⁶³ Ships, men and merchandise in the route between India and Portugal.

⁶⁴ Afzal Ahmad, _op. cit.,_ pp. 185-186.
After a brief period of decline, textile trade had risen to a considerable volume during the first three decades of the seventeenth century. Other commodities like rice, saltpetre and precious stones rose to their climax during the same decades. But there was a paradigm shift in handling these commodities, particularly pearl and other precious stones. As the Portuguese Crown and their officials had lost the lucrative trade, it was complemented by the new Christian merchants. They preferred these light items and more profitable goods in which the state gained almost no custom duty and they occupied less space in the ships.\textsuperscript{65}

Another important aspect of the whole trade syndrome was merchant capitalism. The Estado was in a declining position and the merchants provided money on loan to the former and served as ambassadors between the Portuguese authorities and the Indian rulers.\textsuperscript{66} The Portuguese sea power and its trade were on the verge of decline at the end of the first half of the seventeenth century. But the Indian Ocean witnessed a transitional period from a dependent merchant class to a merchant capitalism.\textsuperscript{67}

The Fishery Coast also has contributed much as it played an important role to carry out Portuguese trade in the Indian Ocean. Trade in textiles, pearls, and saltpetre was continued by the Estado as well as the new Christian merchants till the fall of the Portuguese' regime. Hence Sanjay Subramanyam and McPherson say that the Parava community cannot be looked upon just as a converted group. Their

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.
maritime skill and labour promoted enormous changes, economically and commercially.

**Administration of the Fishery Coast**

The Portuguese king was the sovereign of all the Parava fisherfolk and he enjoyed complete jurisdiction over them. He deputed his authority to be exercised by the Viceroy who resided at Goa. He (the king) was sometimes addressed as Governor also. The Viceroy along with his *Conselho do Estado* (Council of the State) administered the *Estado da India* (State of India) and so the administration of the Fishery Coast also came under his control. The Council was a policy making body which passed several resolutions in order to regulate pearl fishing and trade. The main aim of the Council was to make all the officials stationed at the different ports of the Fishery Coast to collect the maximum profits from the pearl fisheries and other strategic goods. The Council was represented by priests, nobles and ministers.68

The royal letters which were sent from Lisbon to Goa during every monsoon are known as Monções de Reino. Once a year these letters reached the Viceroy and the Viceroy also replied to them promptly. The records under Monções de Reino contain nothing but the correspondences between the King and the Viceroy or between Lisbon and Goa.

All the major issues in buying and selling goods were dealt with in the Council. It made agreements and contracts with the local rulers. The Council decided the punishments to be given to the enemies who did any harm to the Portuguese

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captains, officials, clergy and the new Christians. All the decisions taken in the Council were signed by the priests and the high officials. The Viceroy took important decisions such as sending fleets to protect their settlements.\textsuperscript{69}

The important officials under the Viceroy were Captain-Mor (General Captain), captains, vedor da fazenda (comptroller of finance), factor (agent), providor-mor (chief supplier), providor (supplier), prefect, clerk, Pattangattis, topaz (translator), merinhos, and kanakkappillai. The religious jurisdiction was exercised by the vicar general who generally resided at Cochin. The Jesuit priests with the help of the above officials took care of the Catholics.\textsuperscript{70}

Functions of the Captains

The Fishery Coast was entrusted with the captain who resided at Mannar. He took oath in the name of the Pope, the King and the Viceroy that he would strive to bring good harvest and maximum profit to the Estado.\textsuperscript{71} There was a captain at Thoothukudi also.\textsuperscript{72} The captain of Cochin also had jurisdiction over the Fishery Coast.\textsuperscript{73} The captain of Thoothukudi made trade agreements with the Nayak of Madurai, who was the lord of the Fishery Coast in the name of the Vijayanagar kingdom.\textsuperscript{74}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[Ibid.]
\item[\textsuperscript{70}] Assentos, Vol. I, p. 21.
\item[\textsuperscript{71}] Ibid., p. 88.
\item[\textsuperscript{72}] Ibid., p. 17.
\item[\textsuperscript{73}] Ibid., p. 70.
\item[\textsuperscript{74}] Ibid.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
From 1582, the Fishery Coast was administered from Mannar. The captain of Mannar had to follow all the provisions of buying and selling the elephants otherwise he had to meet all the expenses.\(^7^5\) He was supposed to bring the entire elephant consignment to the notice of the factor and his clerk.\(^7^6\) As per the order of the king, no purchase or selling or spending of money was done without the presence of the captain.\(^7^7\) The captain did all the collections from the Muslims and handed over the same to the factor.\(^7^8\)

The captain had to provide information about the samples of *aljofar* found in new places and find out a person who would understand the perfection of the pearls.\(^7^9\) Because of his service and quality he was given the title 'Captain-Mor' as decided in the Council.\(^8^0\)

When Conde de Linhares was the Viceroy, he requested the Councillors to appoint a captain cum revenue official of the king. The judges of the court elected Soares de Brito who was living in Cochin. He had jurisdiction over the coast, from Vembar to Kanyakumari.\(^8^1\)

When George de Mello de Castro was in charge as captain, factor and providor in the island of Mannar, and the administrator in the Coromandel Coast he issued cartazes to Muslims. Here, he played the role of the adjutor and would serve as

\(^{75}\) Pissurlencar, *Regimentos*, p. 363.
long as the king would wish well.\textsuperscript{82} The captain put things in order. He had to provide money for the security of the boats, people and the priests.\textsuperscript{83}

The fine collected was taken by topazes, merinhos and kanakkappillai. It should be given to the treasurer elected by the Pattangattis. Even the Pattangattis were responsible for the money. They had to keep a separate note book for the account.\textsuperscript{84}

The Pattangattis entered into agreements with the pearl fishers and made the collection. They were the supervisors of the Fishery Coast.\textsuperscript{85} The important work of the factor was to effect the lease.\textsuperscript{86}

According to an unpublished manuscripts in the National Archives of Lisbon, Dom Filipe I (1580-1598), the King of Portugal appointed Francisco de Sa as ouvidor (judge) for the first time with civil and criminal jurisdiction for the entire Tamil Coast. He resided at Punnaikayal as this settlement had a large Portuguese and native Christian population.\textsuperscript{87}

The Portuguese judge of Punnaikayal, appointed by the Crown of Portugal was subordinate to the High Court in Goa. The judge was the representative of the king of Portugal who exercised his judicial power in the region. Thus the administration of Punnaikayal was brought under the Crown. All this was done by the

\textsuperscript{84} DL., Vol. XI (1577-1580), 1970, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{85} DL., Vol. I, pp. 159-160.
\textsuperscript{86} Regimentos, pp. 479-480.
\textsuperscript{87} Jeyaseela Stephen, S., Tamil Coast, p. 179.
Portuguese without the approval of the local Nayaks because it was not based on territorial but social control.\textsuperscript{88}

If the people did not pay, the vicar general had to send money to be paid to the navy for guarding the people. The captain wrote to the vicar general and told him that if there was no money, there would be tyranny and people would go back to their old religion. Such a situation was created during the off season when there was no pearl fishing on the coast.\textsuperscript{89}

**Fishery Coast and Sri Lanka**

A special mention has to be made regarding the commercial contacts between the Fishery Coast and the Portuguese in Sri Lanka. The proximity of distance between the ports of the Fishery Coast and Sri Lanka facilitated a quick transportation of goods from one place to the other.

Sri Lanka had to depend totally on the Tamil country for rice. There was a scarcity of rice in Sri Lanka\textsuperscript{90} during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and Sri Lanka relied on imports.\textsuperscript{91}

"Coromandel, being the closest producing area, was a major supplier. Hundreds of small boats and larger would make this short voyage immediately after

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid.


harvest in Thanjavur and Madurai.\textsuperscript{92} There is a reference about Madurai which was fertile in rice and supplied it to the neighbouring isles.\textsuperscript{93}

It is mentioned in Assentos de Conselho do Estado that 1000 fardos of black rice (fardos = small bags) and 1000 fardos of white rice were sanctioned to be sent to Sri Lanka on 17 Feb, 1638.\textsuperscript{94}

Sri Lanka also imported other items like cotton, textiles, salt, sesame oil, vegetable oil and palm sugar. Luxury goods were imported into Sri Lanka from Coromandel.\textsuperscript{95} The Portuguese supplied gunpowder, ammunition spares, soldiers and equipments, whenever the island was in war.\textsuperscript{96} Portuguese men, soldiers and other provisions were also sent to Sri Lanka.\textsuperscript{97}

In return Sri Lanka exported large quantities of areca nuts, coconuts and coconut produce, wood especially from the palmyrah tree, precious stones and elephants.\textsuperscript{98}

The people of Coromandel ate areca with betel. It was a food stuff and was very cheap. It had a great deal of areca, which was called \textit{avelana da Indie} (hazel

\textsuperscript{92} Sinnappah Arasaratnam, \textit{Revista}, p. 154.
\textsuperscript{93} Albert Gray and Bell, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 164.
\textsuperscript{94} \textit{Assentos, Vol. I}, pp. 198-199.
\textsuperscript{95} Sinnappah Arasaratnam, \textit{Revista}, pp. 198-199.
\textsuperscript{96} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{97} HAG, MDR, Livro 22B, fl, 435, 1652.
\textsuperscript{98} Sinnappah Arasaratnam, \textit{Revista}, p. 154.
The trade between the Fishery Coast and Sri Lanka was in the hands of Chetty, Chulia and Parava merchants of the Coromandel and Madura ports. The shipping ranged from small one-masted boats to large three-masted ships (capable of taking up to 100 tons). Most of the trade was of the peddling variety, in owner operated vessels, calling at a variety of ports to the east and the west of the island, as the situation demanded.

Most of the merchants gradually established small settlements of kinsmen in the island's ports with whom they dealt in partnerships or agencies. Many merchants travelled into the interior to buy and sell goods in small boats and some had contacts with the king of Kandy and the nobles of the kingdom to whom they supplied luxury goods produced in Coromandel. The number of vessels and merchants taking part in this trade was so large that its total volume made a major impact on the economy of the two regions.

The important trade route from Coromandel to Sri Lanka was both through the straits for small vessels and through open seas for the larger ones. This

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100 Sinnappah Arasaratnam, Revista, p. 154.
101 Ibid.
102 Ibid.
was a vital trade link for both the regions i.e. southern India and the island, and took in articles of basic consumption for the common people.  

Private Trade

The Portuguese experienced a transitional period after 1535 and it affected their commercial activities very much. Private trade which was unknown during the first three decades of the sixteenth century raised its ugly head in the fourth decade. This period witnessed relaxation and weakening in the royal arrangements made to maintain the monopoly. The commodities reserved for the Crown became wares for regular Asian trade, both for the Portuguese and non-Portuguese merchants. Though there are a number of reasons for this development, Pius Malekandathil highlights three major reasons responsible for rampant private trade. They are: 1) the exigency to incorporate the Portuguese individuals into trade, 2) tensions in the hinterland and 3) the general economic crisis.  

Private trade was carried out by the captain and other Portuguese officials. Organized rice trade by the Portuguese seems to have taken shape when Cosme de Paiva became the captain of the Coromandel Coast. He retained monopoly of rice trade and exported rice from Coromandel to the Fishery Coast and Malabar, which he sold at a price of his choice. This was, quite likely, a personal enterprise. He also involved in horse trade and sold the same to Vettumperumal who had jurisdiction on Thoothukudi. Even though he had received warnings and had been jailed for

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103 Ibid.
104 Pius Malekandathil, Portuguese Cochin, p. 170.
selling horses to the enemy of the Portuguese, he continued his enterprise and earned covetous profit.105

The viceroy and the captain had private trade in salt. There are several examples and incidents to prove this. Just to avoid any bad image to himself the viceroy asked the captain to hand over a letter to the Nayak of Madurai.106

The captain bought and sold aljofar which was available in the land with his money without causing any loss to anybody like any other merchant. In his residence he sold clothes brought from China. The topaz helped him in this deal.107

Many Portuguese hid themselves on the Fishery Coast and went to Bengal and Pegu on trade. They had their own ships and were well versed in navigation.108

The religious also were drawn towards lucrative trade and earned a good income. One of the ex-Jesuit superiors of the Fishery Coast and the procurator took money from their friends to invest in the fisheries of aljofar which was much more than it required. It should be around 10,000 Pardaus that each person invested.109

Illicit Money

The Paravas considered the Portuguese as saviours as they had emancipated them from the clutches of the Muslims. But the economic freedom of the

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105 Letters of Xavier, August 29, 1544, p. 91.
Paravas was short lived as the saviours turned oppressers. The Portuguese officials like the captains and factors, were involved in extracting more money, apart from the usual tax from the fisher folk, and invested it in pearl fishing. The Paravas were paying 15,000 *fanams* per annum to the King of Portugal. But the captain demanded 75,000 *fanams*. The Catholics were illtreated by the captain at Thoothukudi for not paying this stipulated amount.\(^{110}\)

During the sale of *aljofar*, the people indulged in verbal abuse against the Portuguese officials. The captain indulged in robbery and tyrannies.\(^{111}\) Sometimes the representatives of the Nayak and the captain became friendly and took some money from the tribute paid by the people. When the ships were going from Thoothukudi to Punnaikayal, the captain purchased some pearls. Also a part of the catch (30 patacus) were given to the representatives of the Nayak. Both had known that it was against the conditions of the Portuguese king.\(^{112}\)

Besides the tax, the captains demanded money from the people for his personal use. They took a share in the fishing of chanks and sent them to Bengal. The divers of chanks were under the control of the captains. They were not allowed to sell the chanks to whom they wanted. So the people brought these atrocities to the notice of the king. They felt they had never paid tax like this.\(^{113}\)

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\(^{112}\) HAG, MDR, Livro 19D, fls. 1105-1108, 1633-1635.

While patrolling the coast, sometimes the captain took over the enemy ships, imprisoned them, sold the goods and made money. The Viceroy had ordered that whatever catch was brought to the fort, the sale had to be decided by the factor and the magistrate. If there was a catch, inventory of the same was done by the clerk of the factor and the goods were sold to the highest bidder and the amount was treated as per the regulations of the catch.\textsuperscript{114}

When Alexandre de Souza was the captain of Mannar, there were many complaints regarding materials of the fort as well as new taxes proposed and imposed by him on the fisherfolk. The king wanted to know how much money as taxes had been collected and the manner in which it was collected and how many ships were in this area.\textsuperscript{115}

After the conversion, the Paravas felt that they had the protection of the Portuguese fleet and could follow their profession undisturbed. But the Portuguese were not always fair in their dealings with them and there were cases of extortion of money from them by the officials. During the governorship of D.Estevão da Gama (1540-42), João Fernandes Correia, the captain of the Fishery Coast, who was not content with extortion, ordered some Christians to be hanged. Da Gama immediately had him replaced and imprisoned.\textsuperscript{116}

"Da Gama's successor having proved no better, Martim Affonso de Souza, the next Governor was despatched to the Fishery Coast in May 1542, under

\begin{footnotes}
\item[115] HAG, MDR, Livro 6B, f1s. 19-20, 1605.
\item[116] \textit{Ibid.}
\end{footnotes}
António Roiz de Gambôa, a high official, to conduct an inquiry and put an end to the high-handedness of the Portuguese bureaucracy. De Gambôa found the captain guilty. He compelled him to make restitution for his extortions and took him in chains to Cochin. The Paravas were impressed by the sense of justice of the government which visited condign punishment on its offending officials.¹⁷

Merchant Communities

Merchant communities played an important role in the Tamil coast, particularly in the Fishery Coast, before and after the arrival of the Portuguese. They acted as real agents in their own region, between different coasts and in the overseas trade. A number of merchant groups were involved in such trade and they were the Mudaliyars, Chettis, Marakkayars, Mappilas, Kayalars, Lebbais and Ravuthers. Among all the above merchants groups, the Marakkayars' unique role in maritime history is much remembered even today with regard to the Fishery Coast.

Even before the arrival of the Portuguese, the Marakkayars had been involved in pearl and chank fishing and supplied rice and textiles to the Malabar region. They were good sailors, boat owners and as merchants promoted trade. Barbosa says that the Moors (Muslims) were merchants and owned many sails and they lived in the seaports. They were mainly based in Kilakkarai.

These Marakkayars (belonging to Kilakkarai) had not only common trade interests, but also group solidarity and partnership as they were all friends and relatives. So it was easier for them to have links with the Marakkayars of the

¹⁷ Ibid.
Coromandel and the Malabar coasts. The strong network of trade of the Marakkayars promoted inter-local trade and so they knew the demand and supply of the three coasts. They were vibrantly in touch with the producers at the grass root level.\textsuperscript{118}

These Marakkayars enjoyed monopoly over rice and textiles even during the Portuguese time and they too participated in it as the pearl fishing was only seasonal. The Marakkayars of Cochin collected rice and textiles from Kunimedu in Coromandel, Kilakkarai and Kayalpattnam in the Fishery Coast and sold rice at Cochin which was cheaper than the Kanara rice.\textsuperscript{119} The Marakkayars of the Coromandel Coast carried the same items to Malacca, Achin, Pegu, Macão and Pasai.\textsuperscript{120} Rice and textiles were also collected from the hinterland area of the Tirunelveli coast. In this way the Marakkayars had established economic relations with their own clan groups in other coasts. The family network and partnership among the Marakkayars promoted inter-local trade by supplying needed materials to their customers and made trade very active.

The Marakkayars as pilots, sailors and navigators in the Portuguese ships received \textit{cruzados} and rice as payment for their service. A team of Portuguese sailed from Cochin to Kunimedu in 1506 on the way to Malacca in a \textit{‘navai’} (ship) that belonged to Nina Marakkayar.\textsuperscript{121} The Portuguese first admired the vast commercial networks which the Muslim merchants had established and won them

\textsuperscript{118} Pius Melakandathil, \textit{Portuguese Cochin}, pp. 111-112; 151-152.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., pp. 111-112.
\textsuperscript{120} Jeyaseela Stephen, S., \textit{Tamil Coast}, p. 138.
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid.
over to their side. In this way the merchants of Pazhayakayal and Kilakkarai yielded to the demands of the Portuguese.

The Marakkayars went as far as Malacca too and helped the Portuguese to obtain commodities from the other ports of South East Asian countries. Mamale Marakkayar and Cherina Marakkayar had more influence not only among the Muslim merchants but also among the Portuguese. They brought cinnamon from Sri Lanka, cloves, mace and other commodities from Malacca and delivered them to the Portuguese factories on the east coast. The Marakkayars of Kilakkarai exported rice and textiles to Sri Lanka and imported cinnamon. The Marakkayars were the pioneers in importing elephants from Sri Lanka and it was replaced by the Portuguese. The important point here is that the Marakkayars had initiated overseas trade even before the arrival of the Portuguese, especially in Malacca. The Portuguese continued the same and Malacca formed an important trading centre in the Indian Ocean.

The Mass Conversion had an adverse impact on the Marakkayars. The Kavalars and the Marakkayars were deprived of their privileges of enjoying the benefits from Pazhayakayal and Kilakkarai respectively. The Muslims were totally scared at the decision of the Hindu Paravas to embrace Catholicism. Realising the future danger, the Muslims also sent an embassy to Cochin after the return of the Pattangattis. Pero Vaz de Amaral, the Vedor de Fazenda was persuaded to change

122 Ibid.
123 Jeyaseela Stephen, S., Tamil Coast, p. 108.
124 Ibid.
the decision of the Paravas. The Muslims even offered a tribute of eight pearls of high price, 20,000 *fanams*, and valuable articles of cloth. But the Portuguese refused to accept the gifts and they continued to look upon the Muslims as rivals.\footnote{125}{Jorge Manuel Flores, *Os Portuguez*, p. 179.}

From this time onwards the prosperity of the Marakkayars was in danger, both in the east as well as west. The Kayalars were expelled from Pazhayakayal and they had to find an alternate port at Kayalpattanam. The Marakkayars of Kilakkarai were supported by the Mappilas of Malabar and Marakkayars of Kozhikodu.

At this juncture, in 1537, the famous Pate Marakkayar, Kunjali Marakkayar and Ibrahim Ali Marakkayar undertook an invasion on the Fishery Coast with the help of the Zamorin of Kozhikodu.

There were endless quarrels between the Portuguese casados and the Marakkayars. The Paravas' conversion into Christianity not only affected the coastal trade of the Fishery Coast but the entire Malabar and south Coromandel Coasts and Sri Lanka.\footnote{126}{Charlie Pye-Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 81.}

After the conversion of the Paravas, the Muslim merchants were not completely evacuated from the Fishery Coast by the Portuguese. They still continued to be rich boat owners. They did not want to work for the foreigners and so destroyed the pearl fisheries.\footnote{127}{*Di.*, Vol. I, pp. 159-160.} The Mappilas considered themselves as absolute lords of the
fisheries. They were also supported by the Zamorin of Kozhikodu. So the Portuguese had to carry out their commercial activities amidst all tensions and the mounting anti-Portuguese sentiments of the Mappilas.

The Marakkayars' prime position was reduced to a great extent after the submission of the Kunjalis. But they did not leave Kilakkarai. Jeyaseela Stephen says that the Marakkayars were relegated to the role of petty merchants, pirates and smugglers, particularly trading with Sri Lanka. Born traders, the Marakkayars were replaced by the casados who also played a great role in trade but they (the casados) did not come in touch with the producers at the grass root level like the Marakkayars.

Chettis

The Chettis were another group of Hindu merchants whose business has been described in the writings of the Chinese travellers in the fifteenth century. The Tamil Chettis had their settlement in Malacca. The Chettis with a strong base in the ports of Coromandel, were great merchants, owners of ships and used to trade with Cambay, Dabul and Chaul in areca, coconuts, pepper, jogra and palm sugar. The Tamil Chettis were called 'nagarathar' (city dwellers) who resided in nagarams (cities).
The Telugu Chetti castes ‘Komatis’ and ‘Kavarai’ had migrated from Andhra during the Vijayanagar period and had settled down in Coromandel. There were many groups among the Chettis on the basis of their specialisation in particular commodities. The Kudiraichertis specialised in precious stones, gold, and other metals. Komachettis dealt with food items and all kinds of fruits and vegetables. Berichettis collected textiles from weavers and exported many varieties of textiles to Malacca.\(^{131}\)

The Kudiraichertis supplied horses to the Pandyas. But the Chettis did not take active part in the horse trade between the Portuguese and the Vijayanagar empire. But João da Cruz who was responsible for the conversion of the Paravas belonged to a Kudiraichetti community.

The Kudiraichertis dealt in precious stones, metals and bullion. They also assessed and valued them. They fixed the price of pearls, seed pearls, precious stones and polished rough corals according to their carats, beauty and goodness. All these show the different activities of the merchant communities.\(^{132}\)

**Casados**

The role played by the casados was very important in promoting Portuguese maritime activities. In India, the Lusitanians conducted their trade through the Estado da India representing the Crown and the private Portuguese merchants. The latter consisted of two groups: the first group enjoyed the protection of the Estado and the merchants lived in official Portuguese settlements known as

\(^{131}\) Ibid.


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casados. The second group consisted of purely private merchants who did not come under the control of the Estado and enjoyed no privileges.\textsuperscript{133}

The casados enjoyed certain trade concessions granted by the Crown. They were to trade on certain sectors, on a specified number of routes in Asia and to trade in a wide range of goods. So the casados enjoyed concessions like 'concession' routes as well as free routes but at the same time the Captain-Mor had authority over them. The volume of intra-Asian trade carried on by the casados increased to a greater extent during the second half of the sixteenth century. They operated their transactions through thirty routes. The casados' role in the promotion of Lusitanian trade cannot be relegated secondary to the merchant communities.\textsuperscript{134}

In the first decade of the sixteenth century only a few Portuguese women were permitted to sail to India but in 1542 even this was severely forbidden by the viceroy. On the other hand, marriages between the Portuguese and the native women were encouraged. The married men were known as casados.\textsuperscript{135}

Casados were not just married men. Only those persons resident under the authority of the Estado da India could be termed as casados. Moreover, they were associated with a specific place of residence. In this way they were distinguished from the ecclesiastics (church officials), soldados (soldiers) and officials who came from Portugal.\textsuperscript{136}

\textsuperscript{133} Mathew, K.S., Maritime History, p. 31.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{135} Letters of Xavier, May 16, 1546, pp. 148-149.
\textsuperscript{136} Sanjay Subrahmanyam, The Portuguese Empire, p. 220.
Affonso de Albuquerque was the pioneer in introducing casados in India. He had two aims in introducing them: one, to settle a Portuguese population and two, the casados were expected to be strong supporters of the Estado. He even supported the casados by giving economic incentives to them.\footnote{Ibid., p. 222.}

The newly converted Christians also joined the casados. There existed two groups of casados now as white casados and black casados. Sanjay Subrahmanyam says that in Mannar seventy white casados lived. Though they formed a small number, they carried out trade with multifaceted dimensions and quality.\footnote{Ibid.}

Apart from the royal goods like pearls, elephants and saltpetre, the casados also carried textiles, rice, tobacco, etc., to the places where they were in great demand. Sri Lanka and Malabar depended totally on these items.

Horses imported to Cochin from Ormuz were brought to Kanyakumari and then they were taken to the Tamil coast by the casados. The casados of course promoted the commercial interest of the Estado. But they were involved in illegal commercial traffic also especially in the east coast. The big casado merchants hired the services of the small scale casado entrepreneurs to collect commodities and exchanged them in South East Asia.\footnote{Pius Malekandathil, Portuguese Cochin, p. 129.}

Clandestine elements were never absent in the casados system. One of the greatest casados Joáo Fernandez Correia claimed that the entire eastern coast of

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Ibid.}, p. 222.
  \item \textit{Ibid.}
  \item Pius Malekandathil, \textit{Portuguese Cochin}, p. 129.
\end{itemize}
India from Kanyakumari to Satgão and the whole of Bengal belonged to him. In 1547 he took with him seventy casados and went to the Fishery Coast and moved to Bengal. Sometimes the new Christians also took up the role of the casados. Goa was alarmed at the progress of the casados in horse trade.  

The reasons for the sudden emergence of the casados are:

1. The economic position of the traditional Muslim merchants got weakened. The Portuguese looked at them (the Muslim merchants) as rivals and imposed the cartaz system and when the Muslims failed to carry cartazes they were attacked severely. In order to fulfil the vacuum created by the merchants, the casados emerged.

2. When the trade on royal goods failed the Estado looked for alternative goods like horses, rice, textiles, tobacco and other essential items which were in great demand. The casados took care of this.

3. There existed low custom duty. Even the local kings introduced low custom on the duties to encourage the activities of the casados.  

When Lopo Soares de Albergaria was the governor, he made the area east of Kanyakumari free from state interference.

The casados were given protection from the attack of the corsairs. From Kanyakumari to Cochin, they were provided fleet protection. The merchants were asked to travel in caravans or small ships (cafila) which were guarded by a fleet.

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140 Ibid., p. 120.
141 Ibid., pp. 121-122.
142 Ibid., p. 119.
The *cafila* system was a common practice in the seventeenth century to withstand the threat from the Dutch and the corsairs.\(^{143}\)

In due course, the casados rose to the position of bourgeois and wielded enormous power, economically and politically. This ended in the struggle between the casados and the *fidalgos* (nobles). The Crown extended its full support to the casados.\(^{144}\)

**Trade Routes**

Trade routes play a vital role in the promotion of trade and commerce. Generally these routes link the coastal ports and the hinterland towns and end with the capital cities or towns. The Vijayanagar ruler or the Nayak of Madurai did not have any direct contact with the administration of the ports in the Fishery Coast under whom it fell but they were content with the annual tribute.

In Tamil Nadu the once capital cities like Madurai, Thanjavur, and Kanchipuram were not only the important hinterland trading centres but they were religiously important also. The famous temples of these cities promoted more economic activities rather than mere religious activities. Temple economy was promoted in Madurai, because of the Meenakshi temple at the centre of the city and all the streets in and around the temple were occupied by the weavers known as Saurashtras. These people excelled in weaving and were responsible for supplying hinterland textiles to the ports of the Fishery Coast. The Hindus of Madurai or any

\(^{143}\) *Ibid.*, pp. 210-211.

\(^{144}\) *Ibid.*
other religious place believe that the sarees they buy in Madurai would bring prosperity to their homes. In this back ground only the routes between the sea ports and the capital of the Vijayanagar had linked with the temple towns.

The trade routes from Viayanagar to Rameshwaram covered all the important religious centres viz., Chandragiri, Tirupathi, Kanchipuram, Tiruvannamalai, Chidambaram and Madurai. The sea routes between Cochin and Mylapore included all the chief trading centres viz., Kanyakumari, Thoothukudi, Punnaikayal, Talaimannar, Nagapattinam, Tranquebar, Chidambaram and Gingee. These routes fostered internal trade by linking commercial centres with various destinations in South India.

Just like Thoothukudi, the littoral was also linked with the hinterland Madurai, and the line of communication between the interior and littoral was the line between Madurai and Rameshwaram, which was used by the pilgrims, soldiers and merchants alike. These ports and cities belonged to the Vijayanagar empire, and a lot of autonomy was granted to them by the Vijayanagar ruler.

Cartaz System

The Arabs who succeeded to the supremacy of the sea after the breakdown of the Chola naval power were only commercial navigators and were not instruments of any national policy. During the Hindu supremacy in the Indian Ocean there was complete freedom of trade and navigation. Only the pirates were extirpated

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and sea routes kept open. Thus the supremacy of the Tamils on the seas remained unchallenged even after the arrival of the Arabs.\textsuperscript{146}

But the Portuguese had three options when they entered the Asian waters. One was to pay off Asian authorities as necessary. The second was to furnish their own protection by fortifying certain port towns. Thirdly, they went one step further to sell “protection services” to the Asian merchants to pay for the privilege of sailing in the seas.\textsuperscript{147}

The Papal grant and the title of “Lord of the Conquest” by the Crown after Vasco da Gama found a sea route to India resulted in the introduction of the cartaz system. By this the king of Portugal asserted monopoly in relation to his own subjects and forbade them from trading on certain goods; secondly certain ships were denied the right of navigation without permit passes.\textsuperscript{145} To enforce their supremacy over navigation the Portuguese introduced the cartaz system.

The cartaz was a document of safe-conduct for navigation issued by the Portuguese to the native ships. It showed that these vessels did not belong to the enemy camp.\textsuperscript{149} The Muslims and the Hindus were forced to take the safe-conduct under the pain of confiscation and death.\textsuperscript{150}

“All the native ships had to take cartazes, which contained the following particulars: the name of the vessel and of the captain, the nature of the

\textsuperscript{146} Sanjay Subrahmanyan, \textit{The Portuguese Empire}, p. 77.
\textsuperscript{147} Pius Malekandathil, \textit{Portuguese Cochin}, p. 123.
\textsuperscript{148} Sanjay Subrahmanyan, \textit{The Portuguese Empire}, pp. 77-78.
\textsuperscript{149} Pius Malekandathil, \textit{Portuguese Cochin}, p. 123.
\textsuperscript{150} Mathew, K.S., \textit{Maritime History}, p. 44.
cargo, its origin and destination (which factors attest the economic significance of these licenses) and the name of the authority issuing the cartaz. The fee charged for the cartaz was only one pardao (13 fanams) per ship, but the Estado received a huge amount by issuing cartazes to the native ships.151

Certain commodities were reserved for the King of Portugal and nobody was allowed to trade in these items. The passes issued to the rulers and merchants specifically made mention of the cargo thus reserved for the Portuguese. Any breach of this regulation was liable to confiscation of the ships carrying the forbidden items. Besides the nominal charges for the issue of passes, the ships on their return voyage were bound to visit the specified port under the Portuguese surveillance or occupation and pay the customs duties.152

According to chronicler Gaspar Correia, in 1502 cartazes were first issued to ships from the Malabar ports of Quilon, Cochin and Cannanore in order to certify to the fact that they pertained to areas that were not at war with the Portuguese.153

In the Fishery Coast, when the Portuguese introduced the cartaz system, they were trying to control the pearl fisheries at Kilakkarai and Vedalai. In 1522, Bastião Rodrigues, the captain of Kilakkarai was authorised to issue cartazes to the Muslim merchants for sailing in the sea at Kilakkarai.154

151 Pius Malekandathil, Portuguese Cochin, pp. 125-126.
152 Mathew, K.S., Maritime History, p. 18.
When Vedalai was made a Portuguese settlement, the officials kept a strict watch over the sailings in the Gulf of Mannar. They collected money by issuing cartazes to the ships.\textsuperscript{155} The new Christians were exempted from buying the cartaz system and so they went to the Coromandel and Sri Lankan coasts and settled there.

In 1562, when the Muslim merchants of Cochin came to the Fishery Coast with cartazes, it resulted in religious tensions between the Christians and Muslims. Fr. Gasper Barzeus asked king John III not to issue cartazes to the Muslims. But the Muslim merchants used cartazes in great number in order to bring horses from Ormuz to the ports in the west and from there to Kanyakumari.

The cartaz system gave legitimacy to the merchants for the conduct of trade in the Asian waters. But it had its own adverse impact. It also resulted in illicit trade and smuggling. The Portuguese could not prevent this as they too had become victims of this system.

**Jesuits and the Paravas**

From the time of the appearance of Xavier on the Fishery Coast, the Paravas were led by just two objectives in their lives namely, to go fishing for their livelihood and to live in a spiritual domain. Primarily they were concerned about their livelihood and went fishing; secondarily they were forced to live in a spiritual domain, learning, listening, practising faith and memorising some prayers. When the income they received from the pearl fisheries was distributed unjustly between different officials, the Jesuits rescued them.

\textsuperscript{155} Jeyaseela Stephen, S., *Tamil Coast*, p. 66.
It is not true that the Jesuits were always motivated philanthropically and therefore helped the poor Paravas. The Jesuits were also allured by the high value of the pearls and their provincial had once said that they could not live on air and thus justified their involvement in business. They had clashed with the captains and took the Paravas on their side. Several times the Jesuits, particularly Miguel Vaz, appealed to the king of Portugal and asked him to reduce the amount to be paid by the coastal Christians.

For the protection which they enjoyed, the Paravas contributed seventy-five thousand *fanams* to the Portuguese treasury. This was considered rather exorbitant by Miguel Vaz, on whose representation to the governor; it was reduced to sixty thousand *fanams*. Miguel Vaz desired that it should be reduced to one-third, a proposal which was beyond the competence of the authorities in India to entertain, as it needed the sanction of the Crown.\(^{156}\)

The favours made by the priests, were included in the royal letter of 1 February 1547. The Paravas were not paying any tax when there was no pearl fishery. This had been the practice of their kings before they were converted. Since they had paid for two years, in the absence of pearl fisheries, it was reasonable that sum would be substrated from the taxes when they fished again.\(^ {157}\)


\(^{157}\) *DI., Vol. I*, pp. 159-164.
Money Spent by the Paravas

Apart from collecting money through illicit means from the Paravas, the Portuguese, particularly the Jesuits, expected them to spend money on teaching catechism and other religious activities.

No mission had any fixed income. The missionaries either lived on alms or on the contributions which the Paravas had agreed to pay as a kind of compensation for the protection given to them by the Portuguese fleet. The Paravas were very generous in contributing money for the training of the priests and the catechists.\footnote{Ferroli, D., *The Jesuits in Malabar*, Vol. II, Bangalore, p. 343.}

When the fort of Mannar was in a damaged condition, the Jesuits who lived in that area persuaded the Christians of the Fishery Coast to spend money and render all help to repair the fort. Half of the expenses was to be met by the people which was around 2000 *Paraus*.\footnote{HAG, MDR, Livro 7, fl. 152 (1601-1603).}

The Paravas paid 500 *cruzados* to the custom office. They had to pay to the priests and meet the expenses of the school also. Yet there was no use of force to collect the money. They paid their taxes voluntarily.\footnote{DL, Vol. XIII (1383-1385), 1975, p. 180.} They spent from their purse, on the college, seminary and printing press.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 184-186.} The Paravas were considered not only as a military reserve but as a source of tribute from the same fishery as well.
Opposition to Paying Taxes

The new Christians of the Fishery Coast were not docile and submissive to the wishes of the captain and the factor. After receiving the royal letter dated 20 November 1546 the, fisherfolk were reluctant to pay taxes to the Portuguese officials. Influenced by the Jesuits, the king had exempted the Paravas from paying any taxes in the absence of any pearl fishery.162

Taking advantage of the above royal letter, the fisherfolk refused to pay whenever the Fishery Coast was invaded by the Badagas. In this case the captain found it difficult to pay the soldiers and consequently left for the west coast.163

There were several reasons as to say why the Paravas were not paying their due to the Estado da India. According to one version, thirty to forty leading men on the coast (of course rich) and having ships and wares allowed the pearl fishery to go ruin. All the divers and slaves were in their possession because of the prevalence of usury. This had an adverse impact on the Portuguese and the poor Paravas on the Fishery Coast. But the captain’s view was that it was the Jesuit priests who had stirred the people up against him and had prevented them from paying to the king. The captain described the situation as “contrary to the service of God and of the King”.164

162 Dl., Vol. I, pp. 159-164.
163 Ibid.
164 Ibid.
The trading voyages which the king had granted to the Christians of the Fishery Coast had made them more interested in trade than in pearl fisheries. The king's revenues were consequently reduced and a door was opened for the depopulation of India.\textsuperscript{165}

When captain António Moniz Bareto came to the Fishery Coast in the middle of April, 1547, he found that there was no pearl fishery. At once he wrote a letter to the viceroy saying that diminution in the pearl fishery was due to the following reason: Certain leaders who received favours as Christians from the Portuguese had now become rich. They built numerous champanas and excelled in trade now.\textsuperscript{166} They believed that their business was more profitable than the pearl fishing. Also the poor pearl divers, now preferred to dive for chank rather than for pearls which was more profitable for them. They sold one chank for fifteen or twenty \textit{fanams} which was formerly worth only five \textit{fanams}. These chanks were exported to Bengal. Therefore the Paravas did not undertake pearl fishing, not because there were no pearl mussels in the sea.\textsuperscript{167}

Of course it took many years for the Portuguese to realize that the Paravas were right when they said that in certain years there were no pearl mussels in the sea. There were different reasons for this, for example, the pearl banks were at times covered by shifting mounds of sand on the bed of the sea.

\textsuperscript{166} \textit{Di., Vol. I}, pp. 165-170.
\textsuperscript{167} \textit{Ibid.}
There were times, the Paravas in order to show their displeasure of staying with the Portuguese, preferred to join the Badagas. The Paravas who harvested pearls by going deep into the sea at the risk of their lives brought ashore the valuable and beautiful pearls. And like any other working class subjects, they too were alienated from the pearls they caught. The worst part of the whole episode is that the Paravas had to give a stipulated amount of money for the slippers of the queen of Portugal. At each pearl fishery season certain big pearls were reserved for this purpose.

The Portuguese made use of the political rivalry among the various native rulers. The Hindu-Muslim conflict and the power struggle between the Vijayanagar ruler and his viceroyes motivated the Portuguese to take to supplying horses and other war related goods. The hinterland areas of Thoothukudi fulfilled the trade demands of Portugal. The Portuguese paid a high rate for saltpetre only to prevent the Dutch from gaining the same from the Nayak of Madurai.

The merchant groups maintained grass-route level contacts with the farmers and catered to the demands of the people and the Portuguese. Though the casados were loyal to the Portuguese in the beginning, they became an impediment to the Portuguese trade later on.

The Portuguese entry into the Indian Ocean altered the open door policy. They controlled the trade routes by introducing the cartaz system. The Portuguese also procured strategic goods available, all for themselves. They were parochial in their approach to trade for they supported only the new Christians to invest and reap the benefits of trade.
When the Portuguese met with financial crisis, the Parava merchants came to their rescue by providing them capital. In this way the merchants promoted monetisation of Indian economy and it resulted in industrialisation later on.

Though the Portuguese came in search of pearls in the east coast, they did not confine themselves to that particular item alone. They widened their horizon and their trading policy was so flexible that they quickly answered to the demands of the situation. The political disunity and the religious rivalry among the natives were made use by them. ‘Mammon’ and ‘God’ went hand in hand and sometimes religion became a tool to promote the interests of the Portuguese.