Chapter: Three

Role of Chief Merchants and their Trading Activities under the English East India Company

This chapter examines the leading chief merchants, working under the English East India Company in Madras. The English after they establish their factory at Madras realized the importance of well-defined tradition of merchants who is going to take care of large procurement of cloth in the hinterland. The procurement of goods cannot be done by the English Company alone as it involved large man power for collecting at lowest level and store them in the godown. In this condition they need one very reliable person who can guarantee to supply the Company’s need, thus they appointed one local merchant as their chief merchant who is going to look after the procurement of goods at the local level and to dispose their goods. In one way it also freed from many of the onerous responsibilities of supervision and work within the Company officials. The chief merchants were also given privileges and these privileges were considerable. They were the sole agent for the supply of the large textile order every year as well as other export commodities required. They also tend to be monopolists both in the export and import trade. They mediated between the lesser merchants and the Company. The lesser merchants did not negotiate contracts with the Company, that’s why the English Company in Madras dealt with only one local merchant as chief merchant.

The foremost among the merchants of Madras, who owned several ships and had great share in the trade with Tennasarim, Pegu and Arakan in the early seventeenth century, was Malaya Chetti.\(^1\) Malaya was a Dutch agent based at Pulicat but he also work for the English Company’s before Madras was found. Malaya is from a Balija caste, a community of Telgu-speaking merchants claiming closed connection with the ruling Nayaks of Vijayanagar Empire. Malay was

considered to be one of the richest merchants of South Coromandel region during the first half of the seventeenth century. The port of Tegenpatam was his original base of commercial operation. In the early days of his career he was not more than a broker and interpreter. By around 1620, his power as an independent merchant grows, as was his influence in the local politics of southern and central Coromandel. The Dutch probably came in contact with Malaya in 1608 when they established their factory at Tegenapatam. Soon he left for Pulicat to join the Dutch and become a chief agent for the Dutch Company. After arriving in Pulicat, Malay quickly established himself as the Dutch Company’s most important agent. Yet, as important as Malaya was to Dutch trade, by the 1630’s he chose to make even greater investments in revenue farming.

The first figure revealing the extent of Malaya’s participation in Pulicat’s textile trade, available for the year 1632, show that Malaya received a Dutch contract to supply 23,000 pagodas in textile while seven other merchants were to supply a total of 9000 pagodas. The burden which this contract placed on Malaya’s capital resources depended on whether the Dutch supplied any of their capital. Assuming that they did not and entire capital required for this year came from Malaya’s resources, Malaya would have had to supply local weavers with between one-third and one-half of the total value of the cloth in advance. At a maximum, therefore, he would have to invest no more than 12,000 pagodas from his own capital resources. This level of investment in cloth brokerage may be compared with Malaya’s subsequent investment in revenue farming. In 1633 Malaya succeeded in persuading the ruler of Chandragiri, whose area of authority encompassed Pulicat, to grant him Pulicat’s revenue farm on payment of 33,000 pagodas, considerably more than twice the investment he had made in Dutch trade a year before. Other than this, Malaya also invests in shipbuilding especially in

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the Burma Coast. Malaya's trade in Pegu was sufficient to require him to maintain an agent there. ³

On the other side, Malaya first contact with the English Company began when they were planning to establish a factory at Karikal on the Tanjavur coast in 1624, instruction were sent from Batavia to the emissaries that 'there is a great Committee in the nayak's country named Malaya, which will be your chief merchants and undertake great matters.' ⁴ The English were very much satisfied when Malaya lent them money at the time of great financial distress. ⁵ For Malaya it was opportunity to have better contact, if possible, to all the mercantile European nations who come to trade in the Coromandel Coast. But the relation with the English was often in trouble as he changed side in favour of the Dutch for a larger benefit. Such trouble especially, become at the head when the English attempt to settle a factory at Armagon in 1626, on the northern strip of Lake Pulicat. ⁶

The English learnt that it was Dutch who sent Malaya 'to farm the government of Armagon at treble its usual rent,' ⁷ from the local nayak to monopolise the trade at Armagon. However, the English Company keeps on insisting Malaya to comeback to the English Company to be their agent. Thus, in 1632 Malaya again made overtures to the English to resume their trade on the coast. He offered the English, cloth at much cheaper rates than were paid by the Dutch. ⁸ After he came back Malaya did not live for long as he passed away very soon in March 1634. Nevertheless, Malaya names does not figured much as the English were still in the process searching their foothold and was not that strong in the Coromandel Coast.

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⁵ E. F. I., 1624-1629, p. 288.
⁶ E. F. I., 1624-1629, pp. 131, 358.
⁷ E. F. I., 1624-1629, p. 358.
⁸ E. F. I., 1630-33, p. 243.
Chinnanna (1630s-1640s)

After the death of Malaya one of his brother Chinnanna take up his position and he further extended his brother business and pursued more vigorously the avenues on the overseas commerce, revenue farming and political influence. Chinnanna had high political ambition and participate in the struggle for the throne of Chandragiri, leading to an armed force in support of the contender favored by the nayak of Ginji. But he lacked military tactics to support his political ambition. One such failure was in 1638, when Chinnanna’s nephew, Konara Chitti, a resident of Ginji, quarreled with the powerful Ginji noble, Tupaki Krishnappa Nayak. Konara foresee the consequence and fled to Tegenepatnam where he sought his uncle’s protection while Krishnappa Nayak was pursuing him. Chinnanna put up in defense but he was not capable to organize any military resistance. He lost the battle to the invading troops and the consequence was that he paid heavy indemnity of 40,000 pagodas, three elephants and the lands which he held in the vicinity of Tegenepatnam. 9

Chinnanna then leave for Pulicat to assume his late elder brother’s position as the Dutch Company leading agent. While this was happening there was a significant development in the coast of Coromandel. The English East India Company secures a permission to open a factory at the village of Madraspatam in 1639. 10 In the hinterland, King of Ghandragiri died in 1642, his throne was succeeded by Sri Ranga III. On Sri Ranga’s coronation he offered a large gift to and a promise of service. 11 He got favor but soon loses as Sri Ranga was involved in a dispute with the nayak of Ginji and suspected Chinnanna allied with the nayak of Ginji, he later imprisoned Chinnanna. 12 With his released he preferred to remain loyal again to Sri Ranga. During all these political experiment, he continued to

10 E. F. I., 1639-1641, p. xxxvii.
11 E. F. I., 1642-1645, p. 81.
trade from Pulicat and others ports, both on his own account and as an intermediary for the Dutch. Despite all this difficulties he succeeds as a merchant, and his trade was probably of greater magnitude than that of his late brother Malaya.\textsuperscript{13}

The Dutch relation with the Chinnanna had many ups and downs. In 1644 the Dutch had imprisoned members of Chinnanna’s family in Pulicat in order to secure the payment of his outstanding dues of 15,000 pagodas.\textsuperscript{14} This brought an open hostility for Chinnanna, who mobilized 50,000 troops with the help of Sri Ranga and blockaded Pulicat from 12\textsuperscript{th} August 1645, till January 1646.\textsuperscript{15} It was lifted only when the Golconda troops under Mir Jumla advance in the southern territory.\textsuperscript{16} The situation was worsening for Sri Ranga and he began to move his troops toward Udayagiri and had also ordered to lift the siege and given the task to defend the Udayagiri’s fort, but sensing the inability to defend from the Golconda forces, Chinnanna decided to surrendered the fortress in exchange for his people to go free: ‘the Meir Jumlah is Generall for the king of Gulcondah, whoe hath allreadie taken three of the kings castle, whereof one of them is reported to bee the strongest hould in this kingdome, where Molay was sent to keepe it, but in a short tyme surrendered it unto the Meir Jumlah, upon composition for himselfe and all his people to goe away free.’\textsuperscript{17}

After the surrender, Chinnanna return to Pulicat and the Dutch also wanted him to come back forgetting all the past differences. There was reconciliation from both sides, “Molay, by many letters of solicitation from the Hollanders Generall of Jaccatra (i.e. Batavia) to Molay, is returned againe to Pulicatte and receaed by the Governor with great honnour and respect.”\textsuperscript{18} Chinnanna resume his trading activities again and also acted as a mediator for the Dutch Company, his last

\textsuperscript{13} Mukund, Kanakalatha, \textit{The Trading World of the Tamil Merchant}, p. 65.
\textsuperscript{14} E. F. I., 1642-1645, pp. 279-280.
\textsuperscript{15} E. F. I., 1642-1645, p.279-282.
\textsuperscript{16} E. F. I., 1646-1650, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{17} E. F. I., 1646-1650, p. 26.
\textsuperscript{18} E. F. I., 1646-1650, p. 165.
service for the Dutch came nearly a decade when he mediated for them with nayak of Tanjavur, and negotiated the cession of Nagapatnam to the Dutch in 1658.¹⁹ Whereas Konara eventually go to different side by joining his uncle Shesadra in Madras, who is already established as chief merchant under the English East India Company.

Seshadra Chetti (1640-1660s)

The first chief merchant reported to reside at Fort St. George was Seshadra Chetti (nephew and son-in-law of both Malaya and Chinnanna), who later claimed that he was the true heir of Malaya Chetti's. In 1641, he appealed to the king to return the property taken over by Chinnanna should be restored to him. This resulted in protracted feud, which compel Seshadra to trasfer in Madras to start a new business and here he was employ by the English East India Company as chief merchant.²⁰ By 1646, Seshadra was given the title as "our chief merchants Sesadra."²¹

In this prosperous port Seshadra and his partner Konara Chetti established their business and remain as chief merchants of the English Company until they were removed by Thomas Ivy (Chief Agent of Fort St. George, 1644-1648) as they could not pay their debt. In their place was appointed one Brahmin named Venkata, whose brother Kanappa also holds a very important position as local magistrate. This started a strain relationship between the two groups of merchants who competed to get the post of chief merchants. Seshadra didn't remain quite for long and he reclaim his post when Henry Greenhill who is his associate, became Agent in 1648 (1648-1652) reinstate him as chief merchant again. When both side wanted to keep the post of chief merchant there was an open conflict, aggravated by the fact that both sides have their own supporters in the Council. Seshadra, a right hand caste, Balijas was incited the right hand caste group and on the other

¹⁹ Mukund, Kanakalatha, The Trading World of the Tamil Merchant, p. 66.
²¹ E. F. I., 1646-1650, p. 52.
side was the Brahmin, a neutral but instigated the left hand caste Beri Chettis leading to caste conflicts.

The first riot occurred in October 1652, shortly after Aaron Baker arrived as President, shifting the head quarters of ‘Presidency’ from Bantam to Fort St. George. Baker found himself involved in a wrangle between his second in Council and the Company’s merchants. Venkata and his brother accused Greenhill and Gurney of various malpractices, and the two factors replied by a series of charges against them and Edward Winter. The riot started when the right-hand castes took marriage procession through a street which is claimed by the left-hand as their territory. The residents reacted violently, supported by the two Brahmins, leading to a full scale riot between the two parties.

This is not the end; soon riot occurred spontaneously, in early 1653, only a few months after the first riot in Madras had been settled, a second occurred. This time a prominent left-hand merchant caste, Beri Chettis, went before Seshadra and insulted him. Seshadra responded by bringing: ‘40 or 50 armed men into the town to begin a new quarrel with them againe.’ President Aaron Baker on this situation wrote a long letter to the President and Council at Surat on 5th February 1653, which read,

“wee know not what spirit of factious madnesse hath of late possess’d our townes people in generall, ... all other townes in this kingdome are divided into two generall caste, namely the Belgewarras (right-hand) and the Bereewars (left-hand), who for many hundred years together have ever had a quarrel one with the other who should bee the more honourable cast and have presidency of the other ; which quarrel between our townes men by the instigacion of a crew of beggarly villanes... a Belgewar (Seshadra) told a Bereewarr that he was not worth a cash ;

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22 E. F. I., 1651-1654, p. xxx;
23 E. F. I., 1651-1654, p. xxxvi.
24 E. F. I., 1651-1654, p. 135.
27 E. F. I., 1651-1654, p. 155-156.
to whom the Berewar replied again that, if himself were not worth a cash, the
other was not worth two cash. Upon this the Belgewar runnes presently into the
towne, raiseth the whole cast with sword and clubs, who runn into the Berewar
streets, plunder there houses, and cut of two mens heare of their heads... since
when all the perswansions we can use between these people cannot reconcile
them. They have called in all the countrey round about of both casts to fight one
against another, and, corrupting the towne watch, have brought in four or five
hundred armed men by night. Soe that tis not our feeble crew of 26 English
souldiers that we have is able to deale with them; ... (wee should say Fort) to
withstand theire power, if they should altogether come upon us.”

The English Council was unable to give justice, perhaps confused and
disturbed, and refused to hear their appeal. This makes the situation more
complicated when the left hand castes seek justice from the local rulers Mir Jumla,
who was stationing nearby. But the situation cannot be resolved as: ‘finding that
the ‘Berewar’ were not likely to get any support from Nawab, he (Vankata)
forsook them and joined with the painters again.”

Without any agreement both
sides returned again to Madras.

The situation turn in favour of the right-hand castes, when Henry Greenhill,
becomes agent once again this time as President, replacing Aaron Baker in 1655.
Greenhill at once arrest the rival Venkata and Kanappa on suspicion of fraud. The
two Brahmins were found guilty on most of the counts and imprisoned. They
were released a few months later, but no longer get any contract and forced them
to leave Madras forever. Seshadra thought that he may completely secure his
position by now but he was heavily indebtedness to the Company. In a final
reference to Seshadra the Council wrote to the Company’s Directors in London in
1655, that the Madras Chief Merchant, “Koneri Chetti and Seshadra Nayak, are

28 E. F. I., 1651-1654, p. 240.
29 E. F. I., 1655-1660, p. 31.
utterly undone and although charged in the books with large sums, are quite unable to pay. Most of their indebtedness is for private goods sold to them or money lent to them unable to pay, reimbursed himself, principal and interest, out of the Company’s cash and transferred the debt to it account.”  

From the very beginning Seshadra had tied up with Greenhill’s private trade and it was he that Seshadra owed his largest debts. It was on the understanding of Seshadra that he allowed these debts to grow in the hope that they would insure Greenhill’s continuing support as a protection of his investment. However, Greenhill, to secure immediate payment, manipulated the Company’s book and shifted Seshadra’s debt to a Company account, paying himself out of Company funds. The consequence was too heavy for Seshadra that he was deprived the credit which he used to enjoy to trade as chief merchant. Consequently, and he never able to come back from this entangle and left him completely ruined in his business.  

All this time Seshadra nephew’s Konara Chetti who dutifully followed in his uncle’s trade, suddenly shifted his ambition in the politics; it was perhaps due to his uncle’s financials condition or maybe persuaded by the local chief to lead a revolt on behalf of the exiled Sri Ranga against the government of Mir Jumla, who left for Bijapur for the Emperor Aurangzeb service in 1656. Konara Chetti revolted and decided to capture Ponnamalle but he made many wrong decisions to take Ponnamalle, it was delayed by the time he marched, Mir Jumla assistance Tupaki Krishappa Nayak defeated him. Konara Chetti who has no military background was easily defeated, but he was treated friendly by Krishappa and soon set him free. This was the last influential merchants from the Malaya’s family, with his exit; the dominant role played by these merchants in the European trade was virtually over.

31 E. F. I., 1651-1654, p. 293.
32 E. F. I., 1651-1654, pp. 95-96,
**Beri Timmanna (1660s-1669)**

In the 1660s, Beri Timmanna, who belongs to weavers of Perika castes, emerged as one of the leading merchants in Madras while dealing with the English Company. Before becoming chief merchants Beri Timmaanna and Rudriga names appear way back in 1652 when they were involved in castes disputes. During the riot both name appeared on the list that had supported right hand castes leading under the leadership of Seshadra, ‘Timmanna and Rudriga tried to persuade to mooree and cangaloone weavers to put themselves under Seshadries protection.‘

Timmanna was also accused of monopolizing all the rice trade in Madras, which increased the price so much that all the artisans were discouraged from moving to the town, ‘the inhabitants of your towe, as painters, weavers, etc., should be encouraged by a good treatment of them, they have on the contrary bin much discouraged by the enhancing the price of rice; which is occasioned by the engrossing all into the hands of one man (its easily imagined whose), which is no better then a monopoly of his owne raisyng, and by this means makes a famine where God sends none,...I have severall complaints from honest men about it; which discouraged them from bringing rice and other provision to our port, and forces them to carry it to other places where they have more freedome.’

In spite of such negative character earlier, Beri Timmanna, was chosen as chief merchants for the English Company being, ‘the investment at Madras was to be entrusted to ‘Timane, the Companies ancient broker, a person only experienced and to bee trusted at present in this extremity of times and great want of goods.’

He was a close trusted man to Edward Winter but soon he ran out favour for being too close to him. In 1664, Winter arrested Timmanna and threatening to hang him. Later Winter extorted 15,000 pounds from Timmanna. Winter imprisoned

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33 E. F. I., 1651-1654, p. 258.
34 E. F. I., 1661-1664, p. 58.
35 E. F. I., 1661-1664, pp. 165-166.
Timmanna and threatened to hang him because he suspect him to used to kill him; “I did then threaten to hang him for his sorcery used to me, and that he should pay soundly for his rouguery.” With his released he was employed again, and he became one of the trusted friend for Edward Winter again: ‘This Tymonah was noe sooner released but Sir Edward Winter employed him to be the Companies broker, to buy and sell all their merchandize, to receive the customes and buy and sell all their merchandize, to receive the customes and profits of the towne, and so far intrusted him on all occasions that neither the Companies factors nor he that was the second in Council knew much of the Companies factors, the chiefe transaction being privately managed by Tymonah and Sir Edward Winter.

George Foxcroft who was sent in 1665 to replace Edward Winter, who was charged of serious financial disapprobation, believed that the main allegations were true and that his predecessor had not only shared in high profits the brokers had made out of their contracts, but also permitted Timmanna to tyrannized over the inhabitants and monopolized the trade. But before the investigation begins Foxcroft was deposite, put in prison by Winter after a coup. The merchants were caught up in the tangle among the quarrel in the Company’s rank official.

Timmanna relationship with the Company was oscillating, sometimes a harsh treatment or sometimes praised to be the most trusted person for a Company business. Edward Winter who imprisoned him admitted that, “But I known him soe serviceable to them (i.e. the Company) that I would not, for any selfe interest, put him out, for he is the only person that take off all their goods, when none others will, and secures all bad debts; which if he should not doe, we could not possibly send home full retumes annually nor be free from making some bad debts.” The English wanted to retain him because of his willingness to take the imports goods and guarantee the debts of other merchants. Besides, it

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37 E. F. I., 1661-1664, p. 388.
38 E. F. I., 1661-1664, p. 389.
40 E. F. I., 1661-1664, p. 388.

Timmanna had come a long way, in spite of hostile account in the castes disputes in 1652, he was appointed chief merchant. He had migrated from Godaveri Delta where he himself established not long after the enclave of Fort St. George was established. In his early days Timmanna worked as an agent in an English merchant’s private trade, where he build his fortune by various means of illicit manner under the Company’s name. Some of complaints were recorded, ‘nor he remedy certain abuses by Timmanna and Rudriga in their dealing in rice.’\footnote{E. F. I., 1651-1654, p. 259.} Again in the next page: ‘Rudriga and Timmanna forced shopkeepers to but Greenhill’s goods at more than their value, and the latter, would heare thereof.’\footnote{E. F. I., 1651-1654, p. 260.} Further Timmanna and Rudriga took a bribe to restore them, and procured them a new custom of 1/10 fanam on each pagoda for all cloth brought in.\footnote{E. F. I., 1651-1654, p. 262.} He also built a temple and the money he collected were not hearty donations as some were collected by illegal and forcefully: ‘the inhabitants complaining of the exactions of those men for the purpose of building and maintaining pagodas.’\footnote{E. F. I., 1651-1654, pp. 260, 262.}

Timmanna rose from a low caste to a highly successful member among the merchants is a kind of opportunity offered by the English in the competition of willingness to guarantee to deal with the English. He died in 1669 and was succeeded by Kasi Viranna.

\section*{Kasi Viranna (1669-1680)}

After the death of Timmanna, Kasi Viranna was appointed as chief merchant of the English Company who acted as the ‘heir of Timonah.’\footnote{Diary and Consultation Book., (hereafter D&CB), 1672-1678, p. 6.} He is from Komati
caste, a large Telagu speaking merchant’s community spreading widely in south India. Unlike the previous chief merchant, he had vast trading network. Viranna’s trading practices made a strong Company support necessary, and it was presumably for this reason that in the two disputes between the Company and the merchant’s community, Viranna sided with the Company. The Council decided to imposed a tax on the construction of wall which is badly damaged, and it is very much needed to repair as the Fort was continue to threat from native rulers: “it is resolved by the Agent and Councell that the Jutices of the Choultry shall summon in the inhabitants of the place, without the wall, to contribute towards his damaged, as far as pagodas: one hundred the value of this materials.” 47

The local settlers opposed the decision of the Council and organized a general strike, Viranna declined to join along with the local inhabitants. Later, when the Council asked him quality of cloth being delivered be improved, Viranna sent his own agents to supervise the work of weavers supposedly under the direction of other merchants: ‘he was faine (fair) to send out five of his own Servants unto each head place being eighteen in number, having each their circuits & severall others subdivided, with: orders to looke after the business better and remedy.’ 48

The dependence on Kasi Viranna, in fact, could not be avoided, because they would be needed at short notice to supply cloth if the ships returning were not fully laden with the goods. In such case he performed his capability on 23rd June, 1678, when the Company’s ship Williamson arrived from England, followed by the Nathaniel and the Society on 2nd July. 49 They brought a dispatch, which ordered a considerable increase in the quantities of cloth to be provided. To cover this in a short period, a contract was made on 5th August with Kasi Viranna and his

47 D&CB., 1672-1678, p. 72.
48 D&CB., 1672-1678, p. 74.
49 According to K. N. Chaudhuri, in 1678 the English Company investment was 40% increased from previous year. The Trading World of Asia And The English East India Company, 1640-1760, Appendix 5, Table c. 2, p. 509.
partners for the supply of the whole amount required. Streysham Master also highly regards on Viranna capability to procure whatever demands in short notice by the Company. According to Abbe Carre, a French traveler who stayed Madras in 1672-1673, describes Viranna as 'Principal merchant who governs everything in Madras.' From time to time Viranna was included among the Council which takes decision for the year investment, 'the final arrangements for the year’s investment were made on the 24th, when they were discussed with Viranna and partners.'

On the other side, Kasi Viranna had a dark shadow where he manipulated and bribed the official to get a contract for his business. On this matter, William Langhorn was charged of accepting a bribe of 20,000 pagodas yearly from Viranna to gain contract for the Company. The charges were brought by the auditor: “the agent Sir William Langhorn finding himself charged by the Auditour with receiving pagodas twenty thousand yearly of the Humble Company's Merchant Cassa Verona to bribe his favour to them in their business with the said Company in prices of goods bought and sould, in sorting, in time or manner of payments, or other Clandestine wayes, and other that the Auditor having received this from the malicious, but ungrounded reports of people, whose misarryages resent to prove the Agents stricktness for the Humble Company interest.”

Viranna strongly countered the charges by saying that: “the whole charges and imputation is utterly fals, and the same in every part of it, and a mere slander, and expressed very much trouble of mind for the Humble Company’s hard thought... Saying that although his dealing with them be that of a free merchants, and no Servant of theirs, who having performed his contracts has no further obligation nor

50 E. F. I., 1678-1684, p. 3.
54 D&CB., 1672-1678, pp. 99-100.
ties upn him yet the spreading of such slanderous reports is a very great injury and dishonour unto him.”  

Kasi Viranna also ventured into the revenue farming, which was not very successful. Viranna total revenue farming investment under the Golconda came at 12,000 pagodas. He ran out of court favour and the consequence was that the revenue farm of St. Thome, which was undertaken by him, was taken back by Lingappa, Governor of Poonamale. Lingappa blame Viranna for not able to pay the revenue without the resources of the port: “the reason that he urged to the Diwan of Golconda to wrest it out of Veronas hands, and to let him have it, is that he had Rented in this Country 2 Lack Pagodas Revenue per annum, which he is not able to bring up, pretending that Madras and Pallicat People keep up the price of Paddy there, by which other People he sayeth, are hindered from fetching it out of his Countrey, and without having St. Thome to himself, He would not continue his said ffarme.” Viranna did his best to return by paying heavy bribes, but Lingappa refused to return on the ground that unless Viranna repaid him for his costs of appealing to the court, then he won’t allow taking it back. When Viranna asked to return, Lingappa replied that, “he had spent Pagda. 1000 at Gulconda about wresting St. Thome out of Veronas hands, and that unless Verona would give him Pagds. 1000 he would not part with it.”

On 28th March, 1680 Kasi Viranna died suddenly because of malignant fever, leaving his wife, daughter and adopted son from his elder brother. To honour him, thirty guns were fired at the Fort and its outworks at his funeral, which took place on the same day.

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55 D&CB., 1672-1678, p. 100.
56 Letters to Fort St. George, 1681, p. 6.
57 D&CB., 1679-1680, p. 53.
59 E. F. I., 1678-1684, p. 18.
Pedda Venkatadri (1680-1683)

After the death of Kasi Viranna, there remained only his two brothers Pedda Venkatadri and Chinna Venkatadri, as the surviving first partners in the stock of Viranna and partners. Pedda Venkatadri was accordingly appointed chief merchants on 5th April 1680, with great pomp and show. Pedda was unfortunate on being the chief merchant of Madras as during his tenure there was lots of strife in Madras. As soon as he assumed the post difference occurred between him and the rest of the merchants about their old accounts, which was not clear for the last five years. Streysham Master, one of the most able administrators during his days, concluded that the joint stock is the best option and the dispute between Pedda and the other merchants was because of a strong monopoly by the chief merchant. To prevent such differences in future, the Council proposed that the merchants should join the ‘joint stock’ for the whole investment required by the Company.

At first the lesser merchants hesitated; without the assent of the Chief Merchant, they could not take such a step. Pedda opposed the plan as it is going to reduce his income and the loss of his mediating position between the Company and Madras’ lesser merchants. Master threatens him that if he did not join then he would be excluded from Company trade entirely, but allowed him to retain his quarter share of the investment. Later the lesser merchants were convinced and agreed the proposal for a joint stock, provided advances were given as usual. Pedda and his brother, under a threat of dismissal from any share in the investment, agreed to join and the proposed arrangement was accepted by all the merchants, with an abatement of 6 per cent to on the former prices of the whole investment, and an allowance of 1 per cent to cover the wages of the Company’s native merchants.

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60 E. F. I., 1678-1684, p. 19.
61 D&CB., 1680-1681, p. 41.
The contract, which was signed on 10\textsuperscript{th} July, provided for a stock of 50,000 pagodas, composed of 100 shares of 500 pagodas each, is to be brought when the ships were dispatched to England, advances being made for the existing year.\textsuperscript{62} Pedda and Muddu Viranna, with their partners, were to hold twenty-five of the shares, and they, together with seven merchants, each held 2 \(\frac{3}{4}\) shares, were to be chief merchants, forming the committee of management.\textsuperscript{63}

In the first joint stock meeting nine of them were nominated and appointed as chief merchants for management, directing and ordering the stocks and trade for all others in the joint stock holders. Balanced are adjusted on the last day of March yearly or within next two month without fail. The nine chief merchants would go to the Governor and acquaint the account of all the joint stock holders.\textsuperscript{64}

Even after the formation of the joint stock, Pedda Vankatadri, who nourished the status of chief merchant for a long time could not accept it as it deprived him of monopoly and profits from the merchants. The result was enmity between him and Streysham Master, which brought serious conflict in Madras. The Tarafdar of Poonamalee who had been receiving significant gift from Pedda Vankatadri now informed him that these would be discontinue because of his reduced income. On the advice of Pedda Vankatadri, the Tarafdar of Poonamalee, Lingappa blockaded Madras, cutting all the supplies of essentials, foods and all trading activities. Later, Streysham Master blame that 'Pedda Vankatadri and his brother, Allingal Pillai, with their accomplices, had occasioned the stoppage, and had in many other ways endeavoured to hinder and damage the Company's business, so these three men were imprisoned in the Fort.\textsuperscript{65} On the next day (7\textsuperscript{th} October) the Council took up the complaint of the merchants that Viranna, Pedda Venkatadri and their friends had not during the previous five years allowed them

\textsuperscript{62} D&CB., 1680-1681, p. 45.
\textsuperscript{63} The names and their percentage of shares were given in Appendix-1.
\textsuperscript{64} D&CB., 1680-1681, p. 49.
\textsuperscript{65} E. F. I., 1678-1684, p. 25. See also D&CB., 1680-1681, p. 71.
the prices they had received for goods supplied to the Company, and had overcharged them for goods from it. After a hearing the Council passed a decree that Pedda and his partners should allow the other merchants the same rates and prices as they had been charged or received during that period.66

In the consultation the Council passed to look into the matter: ‘concerned in the Joynt Stock urging that Verona, Pedda Vankatadri & C: for five years last past had not allowed to the said Merchants the prices which the Company allowed and paid them for the goods provided for the Company, and had overcharged them for the goods bought of the Company, which case being heard, and Pedda Vankatadry acknowledge there was noe agreement betwixt them that the Merchants should be allowed less or charged more then the Companys prices.’67 By the end of the November the Council ruled that Pedda Venkatadry owed the lesser merchants 65,000 pagodas; and when Venkatadry refused to pay his shares, Master ordered the Chief merchant’s property to be seized to repay to the lesser merchants.68

Seeing all this aversion by Streysham Master and prosecution by the local merchants, Pedda Vankatadry’s families and supporter’s from the right-hand castes left the town: ‘This day it was discovered that Pedda Yenkatadrys and Chena Yenkatadrys Sons and Son-in-law, that Pedda Naique and the Chief Painter with other Painters, the Muckwa’s, Cattarmaran Men and Cooleys had left the Town privately the last night.’69 They all went to San Thome in protest and to: "sent severall letters to the severall casts of Gentues in Towne, and to severall in the Company service as Dubasses, Cherucons or Chief Peons, Merchants Washers and others, and threatned severall to Murther them if they came not out to them, now they stopt goods and provisions coming to towne throwing the Cloth off of the Oxen and laying their Dury...the Durm has beaten forbidding all People to

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66 E. F. I., 1678-1684, p. 25.
67 D&CB., 1680-1681, pp. 71-72.
68 D&CB., 1680-1681, p. 79.
69 D&CB., 1680-1681, p. 75.
carry any provisios or wood to Chenapatnam."\(^{70}\) The mutineers prevented all the goods coming to Madras, which seriously undermined the Company’s business. First, they gather at San Thome, but later they moved farther away, asking the inhabitants to join and stop working for the Company.

In the beginning of this blockade, the court of Golconda issued a letter not to hinder for trading at Madras to his deputy Lingappa ‘ordering him not to stop goods coming to our Towne or any ways to hinder our business but to assist us in all things.’\(^{71}\) The supporters of Pedda Vankatadri, then went to the Court of Golconda, Podala Lingappa and Akhanna for help. Later, the Golconda court had cold feelings towards the complaints from their own people and a warning letter was issued to the Company official’s objecting the imprisonment of Pedda Yenkatadry and two others, and saying that the ordinary merchants used only to receive something for their maintenance from Viranna and had nothing to do with the conduct of his (Pedda Yenkatadry) trade; and that consequently Pedda and his partners should not be called upon to answer for what Viranna did. Later Akhaana who sided with the right-hand side threaten to destroy the Company’s trade at Madras, unless the Council reinstated Pedda and Chinna as chief merchants and restored all that had been taken from the two brothers, who complained of having been imprisoned and robbed.\(^{72}\)

As the matter become serious the Council decided to have meeting and it recorded: ‘Braminy Ackana had sent for Mr. Horner and acquainted him that Pedda Yenkatadry and Chena Yenkatadry fad made their complaint at Court there, that they were rob’d, and put in prision, and forced to fly for safety to Conge Voram, and said Ackana required that they should be restored to their former Imployment as Verona had, and noe more taken from them then what was just for

\(^{70}\) D&CB., 1680-1681, p. 76.  
\(^{71}\) D&CB., 1680-1681, p. 76.  
\(^{72}\) E. F. I., 1678-1684, p. 27.
them to pay, and to return what we had taken from them, otherwise, he threatened we should not trade in the Country.\textsuperscript{73}

How far the revolt was success is unable to state as most of the sources were from the English records. In this revolt the left-hand castes didn’t join the blockade and remained in Madras and they continue to support the Company business. The discontent seems mainly from the right-hand castes; Tamil painters, the washers and the left-hand ox men.\textsuperscript{74} During these days the business were continue the supply of calicoes: ‘Fortunately the mutiny and other troubles do not appear to have interfered with the provision of calicoes for the four vessels, and on 7\textsuperscript{th} January all the warehouse were so filled with bales that another one was hired from Jearsey. The sloops \textit{Arrival} and \textit{Ganges} arrived Madras on 13\textsuperscript{th} and 28\textsuperscript{th} March respectively, with saltpeter from Bengal, but as there were no warehouse available for its storage; it had to be heaped up in the open.\textsuperscript{75}

Finally a settlement was brought by the merchants that their accounts had been settled and Pedda Vankatadri brought security for their debts, on this arrangement the brother were released: ‘Pedda Yenkatadry and Chena Yenkatadry having given the Merchants satisfaction for the money awarded them and passed Grall: Release one to another. It is resolved to discharge the said Pedda Yenkatadry and Chena Yenkatadry of their Imprisonment with the following sentence.’\textsuperscript{76} But to Allingal Pillai, he was released only after paying 5000 pagodas.\textsuperscript{77}

In the end of this conflict Pedda Venkatadri came out victories, first thing happening in Madras was, the Governor Streynsham Master was removed from the post of President.\textsuperscript{78} Later, Pedda Vankatadri was re-appointed as chief merchants, “the Council having sent for Pedda Vankatadry, Chena Yenkatadry,

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{73} D\&CB., 1680-1681, p. 87.
\textsuperscript{74} E. F. I., 1678-1684, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{75} E. F. I., 1678-1684, pp. 33-34.
\textsuperscript{76} D\&CB., 1681, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{77} E. F. I., 1678-1684, p. 32.
\textsuperscript{78} D\&CB., 1681, p. 30.
\end{flushright}
Allingal Pillai and Company who were turned out of employment upon noe just score of the Company’s as wee have seriously debated therefore have taken Consideration their resettlement.” A blowing counter charge against Master was now filed by Pedda Vankatadri, Chinna Vankatadri and Allingal Pillai along with several other settlers of Madras, about several abuses against them by Master who extorted large sum of money from them. Master was not able to answer the charges: ‘every one knew his memory was so bad that he was not able to return an answer.’

This is followed by a long enquiry, and Master was finally allowed to embark for England in 9th February 1682, on the ship George, after settling Pedda Vankatadri’s claims.

**Chinna Vankatadri (1683-1689)**

After a long struggle, Pedda Vankatadri didn’t live for long. He died on 9th March 1683, and his brother Chinna Vankatadri was appointed in his place as chief merchant. Chinna Vankatadri tenure as a chief merchant was peaceful. From 1682 the English at Madras began to make sustained efforts to expand their catchments in Conimere (Kunimedu) and Cuddalore. However, these initial attempts were not really successful since the merchants there either wanted a price higher than what English was prepared to pay or they wanted to supply too large a proportion of fine cloth, which the English did not want: ‘they standing soe positively to their resolution which the agent found were nothing amounting to any reasonable abatment.’

The major concern during Chinna Vankatadri’s tenure was encroachment of interlopers, which the English Company decided to restrict their activities in the coast. To stop this incursion by the interlopers the Company decided to sent Chinna Vankatadri to bribe the local Governor Lingappa for strict action by not

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79 D&CB., 1681, p. 35.
80 D&CB., 1681, p. 54.
81 D&CB., 1682, pp. 9-14.
82 E. F. I., 1678-1684, p. 62. see also D&CB., 1683, p. 22.
83 D&CB., 1682, pp. 41, 42, 43.
allowing the interlopers to trade in his territory: 'the sum of Six Thousand Pagodas which Agreement was to be paid to the Duan, upon condition therein mentioned, & more one Thousand Pagodas which is to given to Lingapa & Sangana as a Piscash, for their defeats of the interlopers in all parts of Lingapa country.' But nothing was done from Lingappa side, so the English decided to stop trading in Lingappa's territory: 'we have not as yet made any conclusion with Lingapa nor Recived any Redress for the Pagodas 7000: nor our Merchants that are wrongfully detained and imprisoned by him to, and dispute with him about, having also sent our Complaints to Court therein, do still think it the Honour and interest of the Honble Company not to commence any trade in his country till we receive an answer to our late letter to Court or Satisfaction from Lingapa.' By this counter Lingappa's revenue would fall and the English intended to make him more reasonable while curbing the interlopers.

Chinna Vankatadri as a chief merchant also did his trading business in the Southeast Asia with his own ship. One of his ship Taigai Raja was captured by the king of Siam navy while coming out of Siriam to Madras: 'Severall Pegu Merchants Inhabitants of this town of Madras coming hither from Pegu upon of Chinna Vancatadrys, were carried into Tenasseree by the Kings of Syams men of War, who plunder'd them of the value of Pagodas 2041 besides pagodas 3117.' The merchants mostly inhabitants of Madras, were robbed and kept as prisoners at Tenasserim without food for eight days until they were paid the ransom. After they were freed, the merchants came to lodge a complaint at President of Fort St. George, but he too was helpless as it was beyond his jurisdiction to take any action against the King of Siam.

The ambition of acquiring land by all powerful rich merchants, which usually happen when their status were considering a great significance in their

84 D&CB., 1683, p. 122.
85 D&CB., 1684, p. 112.
86 D&CB., 1686, pp. 29, 34.
87 D&CB., 1686, pp. 34-35.
economic activities also led Chinna Vankatadri to rent San Thome from the Brahmin Governor Madanata Pantulu of Kanchipuram on behalf of English Company. However, there was political disruption when the Mughal captured Golconda in 1687, where there is uncertainty on the payment of rent. During this instability the English give it to Chinna Vankatadri whether it is loss or profit the English were ready to take equal responsibility. 88

The uncertainty of political condition in 1687 make the matter worse for trading, which brought much more confusion and disruption in the economic activities. This instability took advantage in the account of joint stock and once again brought disarray. There was a lot of problem among the merchants and the English wanted them to settle their difference among themselves, if not, not to go ahead with the new contracts. 89 The grievances of the merchants were due to the Chinna Vankatadri, who had delayed to delivered his shares, ‘most of them having an aversion to Chinna Venkatadrys proceeding or being concern’d with them, from being behind hand in his parts of stocks & from other difference & disputes in account with them, tis therefore agreed that a new Stocks bee proposed. 90

The differences were settled on 19th August 1688 and agreed to form new joint stock again. In this new joint stock, there will be twelve chief merchants, two were to be heads and summons the rest to meet and consult. Two merchants from the ten chief merchants are to keep the keys of the cash and write down all the accounts. Three merchants were to take the charges of calicoes and Indian goods. Other two merchants are to look after the European goods and the other three are to take care of the washers, weavers, painters and dyers. 91 In this joint stock Chinna Vankatadri again top with 6% shares of 1200 pagodas. 92

88 D&CB., 1686, p. 56. See also D&CB., 1687, p. 115.
89 D&CB., 1687, p. 181.
90 D&CB., 1688, p. 106.
91 D&CB., 1688, p. 130.
92 D&CB., 1688, p. 132-133. For list of joint stock see appendix-2.
Allingal Pillai (1689-1696)

Chinna Vankatadri did not rule for long as chief merchants; he died after five years working as chief merchant in 16th May, 1689.93 He was succeeded by Allingal Pillai.94 His tenure as chief merchant was not successful for the English Company. The textile procurement remained poor due to the political instability and also witness severe famine: 'Alunghall and the Chief Merchants giving in a Petition in their present Investment, alleging great loss charge and many difficulties in bringing in their country.'95 In this political transaction, the English Company lost the manufactured goods of the peripheral surrounding villages of Madras, traditional, which the English Company used to buy from the very beginning. It was recorded in many consultation meeting for being poor procurement in cotton textiles: 'in consideration of the great Profits and revenues we made of the place, which now was under the Mogulls Dominion, and therefore not to be as in the Kings of Golconda time,'96...‘our Merchants here also being discouraged by the warrs, and troubles and obstructions in the Country, the weavers and the other necessary labourers being by the armies of the Mogull and Savagee encampt about us daly so rob’d and plunderd that the will not be perswaded yet to undertake a new contract,'97...‘there being little or noe course goods procurable in the Company for discharge of our merchants Contract by reason of the continued Warrs and troubles.'98 The merchants complained of severe losses, which were the result of their losses up to 30 percent on European goods and a shortage of weavers who had died in the famine or run away.99

This turmoil brings all the merchants into bankruptcy, which they complained that they could no longer supply the needed commodities for the

93 D&CB., 1689, p. 50.
94 D&CB., 1689, p. 60.
95 D&CB., 1689, p. 60.
96 D&CB., 1689, p. 27.
97 D&CB., 1689, p. 34.
98 D&CB., 1689, p. 97.
99 D&CB., 1690, p. 21.
The economic activities were further paralyzed when the Mughal troops have threatened to seize the Madras and destroy all the English settlements in the Coast.\textsuperscript{101} Madras was finally relieved when the Mughal troops diverted their attention towards Maratha Chief Rama Raja who was at Ginji: 'is come privately from his kingdom of Punnare, to the Chingye country.'\textsuperscript{102} There was no supply of cloths and the little one which they could procure were also considered unfit to send to England.\textsuperscript{103} To start afresh in Madras, the English decided to entice the weavers to come back to those who migrated in the interior part by giving loans, house, and yarn in advance.\textsuperscript{104}

Upon on this turmoil, there also differences occurred between the chief merchant Allingal Pillia and Beri Timmappa, the nominal head, the fall out was between the much proficient merchants and head of one caste, which led the merchants divided into two factions. Allingal Pillia stopped attending the business of the joint stock meeting for many months under the pretence of sickness. Because of this, most of the management was left on Beri Timmappa’s hands.\textsuperscript{105}

Besides this, the merchants also continued to quarrel amongst themselves about their accounts. In this complex social dimension, the English mediated to reorganize in the much divided representatives among the joint stock holders. The chief merchant Allingal Pillia and Beri Timmappa belonged to the right-hand caste, comprising mostly from Balijas, Komatis, Mundalis and Pillais. On the other hand the merchants who carried on most of the business and the contract were from the Beri Chettis who belong to the left-hand castes. To contain this conflict, two chief merchants, one representing the right-hand and the other the left-hand caste were also included in the joint stock.\textsuperscript{106} Three weavers’ were also

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{100} D&CB., 1689, p. 66.
\item \textsuperscript{101} D&CB., 1689, pp. 83,87.
\item \textsuperscript{102} D&CB., 1689, p. 92.
\item \textsuperscript{103} D&CB., 1690, p. 23.
\item \textsuperscript{104} D&CB., 1690, p. 29.
\item \textsuperscript{105} D&CB., 1694, p. 121.
\item \textsuperscript{106} D&CB., 1694, pp. 122-123.
\end{itemize}
taken into the newly reorganized joint stock in 1694, under the leaderships of Allingal Palai and Beri Timmappa.\textsuperscript{107}

There was again confusion among the share-holders, due to the usual tactic of delaying auditing of accounts. But the English refused to buy and pressurised to come out for auditing their accounts: 'the Merchants being sent for and enquired of whether they had stated and finished the accounts of their old Joint Stocke, as they long since were ordered and have promised. They answered on Friday next being a good day would begin. But they having so long defer'd it, to prevent delay. It is ordered that the Merchants Conicoples of the old Joint Stocke, doe meet dayly in the merchant's godown.\textsuperscript{108} The confusion was due to the alleged claim of both joint stock merchants and Beri Timmappa that the other party owed them 9000 pagodas: 'the old joint stocke merchants demanding of Timapa Chief merchants pagodas 9,061:21:2: as due from him and his family, upon the balance of the account of the old joint stocke, as by the translate of their account: It is ordered that Timapa deliver his answer to said demand to the accomptant in writing, who is to report as soon as record.\textsuperscript{109}

The Fort St. George Council decided not to buy cloth anymore from the old joint stock for the 1696 contract, which is yet to be cleared in their account.\textsuperscript{110} Instead, it constituted a new joint stock headed by Checca Sherappa, Beri Krishna and Sivakataksham Pillai. In this new joint stock the English Council ruled out that there would be no more chief merchant, but Checca Sherappa dominated in the same manner from the previous joint stock over the other merchants in the same old situation again.\textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{107} D&CB., 1694, p. 124.
\textsuperscript{108} D&CB., 1695, pp. 97-98.
\textsuperscript{109} D&CB., 1696, pp. 22,29, 52,55.
\textsuperscript{110} D&CB., 1696, p. 50.
\textsuperscript{111} D&CB., 1696, pp. 68, 70.
Checca Sherappa (1696-1704)

Checca Sherappa was not related to Timmappa’s and Viranna’s families. He became prominent when there was a tangle between Beri Timmappa and Alanigal Pallia, in which the English decided not to buy from their stock. Instead, Fort George Council decided to start a new from contract for the cloth from Checca Sherappa.113

In his tenure, as chief merchant, Checca Sherappa he successfully extended the procurement of cloth for the English Company, far down to the south.114 Under his leadership, new joint stock was constituted where he holds 15% shares and remains at the top along with fourteen chiefs.115 Most of the rules were same as in 1688 joint stock under Chinna Venkatadri except that this time fourteen chiefs were appointed instead of one. Out of fourteen, there will be two heads, two cash-keepers who would keep the keys of the cash and the joint stock seal, and the money which is received and paid, are to keep account. Without an order in writing under the fourteen chiefs or the major share holders, cash keepers are not allowed to pay out any money. The merchants who go in the country in search of clothes must give all the information, the letters which they send in the joint stock copies are to be kept in the account book. Once in a month the merchants are to examine and passé all account and sign on the same in the book; if the cashkeepers pay any money without their orders, they must pay the principal and five cent interest per mensal.116

With the intention to revive the trade of textile the English Company planned to extend to all possible places to increase in the production after by the famine and political instability. The chief merchant was sent to recruit all possible labourers, weavers and painters. Checca Sherappa was sent to Viluppuram to

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112 D&CB., 1696, p. 50.
113 D&CB., 1696, pp. 70, 86, 108
114 D&CB., 1696, p. 126.
115 For list of joint stock see appendix-3.
116 D&CB., 1696, p. 139.
explore the region as there were 3000 loom machines employed for the English Company. These workers were not paid during the recent famine and political instability so the other nations started wooing to sell to them. But, so long as they were provided with money the Viluppuram workers had promised and assured to work for the English Company only.

Checca Sherappa not only revived the trade in Madras but also helped other English factories, which were about to decline: 'Serapa having brought severall Painters who are willing to settle with their families here if they might have a convenient place about Triblecane. Hee went on the 12th instant to view the place they desired lying between Jangamnaige and Allingalls Gardens, where there was convenient Roome for twenty or thirty houses according to a platt produced. It is resolved that they be entertained and encouraged upon terms hereafter to be concerted.'

In 1698 Checca Sherappa proposed again for a new joint stock and promised to pay in the shares of total 10,000 pagodas. In this new proposal Checca Sherappa would have power to exclude any person concerning according to the last joint stock. He produced a list of 31 merchants who have subscribed 83 ½ shares at 100 pagodas each in the total amount of 10,000 pagodas.

The revival of textile trade perhaps owed much to Serappa’s management and also to the fact that Fort St. George raised the prices of long cloth and salempores by 25 per cent in 1698. On 14th April 1699 Checca Sherappa, along with his shares-holder (Nairo Verona, Checca Shevram, Qualo Narso, Coparte Cash, Vincate Krishna, Ecomburm, Cornapa Chitte, Iapa Chittee, Pedditombe Adimolum, Racca Chitte, Perpaudum Chittee), got an enormous contract to the tune of 1,51,125 pagodas to procure goods mainly in textile clothes which is to be

118 D&CB., 1697, p. 62.
119 For list of joint stock see appendix-4.
delivered by 10th February, 1700. In case of failure, 25% were to be deducted from their shares in the joint stock.\footnote{D&CB., 1699, p. 33.}

Table 3.1: List of clothes to be supply by Cheeca Sherappa in 1700.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Long cloth fine</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72 long</td>
<td>2 ¼ broad</td>
<td>pieces 3,500</td>
<td>At 75% core</td>
<td>13,125 pagodas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72 long</td>
<td>2 ¼ broad</td>
<td>pieces 3,000</td>
<td>at 43% core</td>
<td>6,450 pagodas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72 long</td>
<td>2 ¼ broad</td>
<td>pieces 15,000</td>
<td>at 34% core</td>
<td>25,500 pagodas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72 long</td>
<td>2 ¼ broad</td>
<td>pieces 12,000</td>
<td>at 32 % core</td>
<td>19,200 pagodas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salampones fine</td>
<td>32 long</td>
<td>2 1/8 broad</td>
<td>pieces 3,000</td>
<td>at 29 % core</td>
<td>4,350 pagodas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salampones   ordinary</td>
<td>32 long</td>
<td>2 1/8 broad</td>
<td>Pieces 10,000</td>
<td>at 16:18% core</td>
<td>8,250 pagodas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salampones   ordinary</td>
<td>32 long</td>
<td>2 1/8 broad</td>
<td>Pieces 8,000</td>
<td>at 14:18% core</td>
<td>5,800 pagodas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morees fines</td>
<td>18 long</td>
<td>2 ½ broad</td>
<td>pieces 5,000</td>
<td>at 36 % core</td>
<td>9,000 pagodas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morees   ordinary</td>
<td>20 long</td>
<td>2 ½ broad</td>
<td>pieces 8,000</td>
<td>at 20 % core</td>
<td>8,000 pagodas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succatums   fines</td>
<td>40 long</td>
<td>2 broad</td>
<td>pieces 1,000</td>
<td>at 70 % core</td>
<td>3,500 pagodas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bettelllas   original</td>
<td>32 long</td>
<td>2 broad</td>
<td>pieces 5,000</td>
<td>at 70 % core</td>
<td>17,500 pagodas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bettelllas   original</td>
<td>40 long</td>
<td>2 broad</td>
<td>pieces 1,000</td>
<td>at 36 % core</td>
<td>7,200 pagodas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bettelllas   original</td>
<td>50 long</td>
<td>2 broad</td>
<td>pieces 6,000</td>
<td>at 43 % core</td>
<td>12,900 pagodas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ginghamss</td>
<td>40 long</td>
<td>2 ¾ broad</td>
<td>pieces 1,000</td>
<td>at 65 % core</td>
<td>3,250 pagodas</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ginghamss</td>
<td>16 long</td>
<td>1 7/8 broad</td>
<td>pieces 1,000</td>
<td>at 32 % core</td>
<td>1,600 pagodas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chints Madrasse</td>
<td>20 long</td>
<td>2 broad</td>
<td>pieces 2,000</td>
<td>at 55 % core</td>
<td>5,500 pagodas</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total pieces</td>
<td>87,500</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,51,125 pagodas</td>
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</table>

(Source: Diary and Consultation Book, 1699, p. 33)
Once consider reliable, Checca Sherappa now become suspicious in the eyes of English Council for the delay of delivering the said goods, which involved a large sum of money. Checca Sherappa and their joint stock partners were summoned for not fulfilling their contract. They came and excused themselves 'of their hard sorted in the Godown and of great loss they had in taking off the cloth and lead, which fell considerably in price on their hands.' 121 Another excuse they gave was they sold all their 'cloth and lead' but the money was not yet paid to them, and the little money left with them was given to the weavers. 122

In spite of his failure to deliver the goods, Checca Sherappa was again reconsidered for the new contract by the Company: 'wee resolve forthwith to contract with Serapa.' 123 The English wanted to retain Checca Sherappa as chief merchant because of his social status and respect he gained from the local community, which was a very important criterion for the procurement of local goods. Besides, the Dutch seduced upon the Company's weavers, offering more money: 'the Dutch who have now made great contracts all along the coast, are tampering with all our weavers to seduce 'em from our services, and whereas it has been the custom in such considerable Contracts as has been lately made here, to deposit in the weavers hands five pagodas for each Loom, to be delivered in cloth at the last payment, the Dutch now to engrosses the weavers and get 'em from our merchants have offered to deposit in their hands ten pagodas for each loom.' 124 So, to maintain a speedy procurement the English Company again gave a new contract to Sherappa.

In 1701, the joint stock was again collapsed due to the appropriation by the joint stock holders: 'our joint stock merchants having lately had some differences amongst themselves about their account: as is pretended, also that they have great

121 D&CB., 1700, p. 60.
122 D&CB., 1700, p. 60.
123 D&CB., 1700, p. 64.
124 D&CB., 1701, p. 57.
losses by their former contracts.'

Some of them refused to work on any contract with Checca Sherappa, and now they preferred to work independently. Checca Sherappa summoned meeting to sort out the differences and to renew contract again. They agreed to invest 17,000 pagodas at 6% advance, provided the English made contract with no others. At last, there was an agreement from all sides to work together again: ‘the reasons of our agreeing with him are, that the others would not agree for the whole contract, and whereas if we should make more than one set of merchants, would occasion the rise of goods in the country and great division and strife amongst them, the ill consequence whereof would fail wholly on the Honble Company.’ The contract was signed on 11th November, 1701 to procure 1,05,500 pieces of cloth at 1,96,287 pagodas.

From time to time, the English Council reminded Checca Sherappa and joint stock merchants to clear the Company’s debt from the previous contract. The merchants keep on delaying the payment and holding meetings after meeting to sort out their difference: ‘they had made a considerable progress in settling the accounts amongst and that in few days more they would compleat the same, in order to the payment of the Companys Debt.’ The English Company decided to take action to get their debt by confining Serappa and other merchants in a godown: ‘with frivolous pretences of accounts depending amongst themselves as formerly; which being satisfactory. Tis agreed they be confined to the Brown Godown and there to remain till they paid the Companys debt, or given satisfactory for the same.’ This time one of the problems was that the merchants were already overdrawing 20,000 pagodas from the contract, which is to be supplied with cloth. Checca Sherappa and three chief merchants acknowledged

125 D&CB., 1701, p. 87.
126 D&CB., 1701, p. 95.
127 D&CB., 1701, p. 96.
129 D&CB., 1703, p. 33.
130 D&CB., 1703, p. 59.
their inability to pay back, but it can be only possible to pay from their shares.\textsuperscript{131} Other persons included in the list were Beri Chetti, Aiyappa Chetti, Ragga Chetti, but refused to pay anything claiming that they supplied cloths to Sherappa on a private contract and they didn’t know anything about the payments by the Company.\textsuperscript{132}

To put an end of these disputes between the merchants which caused many hurdles for the Company affairs, it was proposed by the English Governor that all concerned in the debts should jointly give security, after that they will be set free, as Checca Sherappa also complaining of hindering his business activities in bringing the goods for the last contract. In the end Checca Sherappa and his friend agreed to give security bond but Aiyappa Chetti and his friend refused to be part of it.\textsuperscript{133} To clear his debt Checca Sherappa gave security bond of 20,000 pagodas, where he mortgages all his houses and gardens, ‘upon which Seraupau, Naira Verona and Ponagette Narso were discharged from their confinement.’\textsuperscript{134}

After his release he was in a heavy debt and all his economic activities went into bankrupt, and he was no longer involved in trading. Nevertheless, the English keep on consulting him on numerous issues related to caste disputes,\textsuperscript{135} and later consulted him regarding writing petition to the Mughal King Shah Alam.\textsuperscript{136}

After Checca Sherappa exits the English stopped entrusting to one single merchant as their main broker while procuring their goods. It had many reasons for not relying on one particular merchant as chief merchant; the main reason being that the chief merchant was unable to fulfill the contract and even under the joint stock system they failed to clear the Company’s debt on many occasions. Therefore, from 1700s onward they started to demand goods from various individuals’ reliability to deliver at a specific time.

\textsuperscript{131} D&CB., 1703, p. 67.  
\textsuperscript{132} D&CB., 1703, p. 68.  
\textsuperscript{133} D&CB., 1703, p. 76.  
\textsuperscript{134} D&CB., 1703, p. 86.  
\textsuperscript{135} D&CB., 1707, pp. 36, 57, 77.  
\textsuperscript{136} D&CB., 1723, p. 4.
In this arrangement merchants were given opportunity for competition. Thus, Sunku Chetty and Karanappa Chetty came to the picture from 1698, Kalavi Chetty and Venkata Chetty from 1705, and Tambu Chetty from 1720 to till 1739. The joint stock form of organization, in which several merchants held one or two shares each, while the chief merchants had the controlling interest with 25 per cent share capital, had quietly died. It was replaced by the more traditional partnership form of organization in which the four merchants: Kalavi Chetty, Venkata Chetty, Sunku Chetty and Karanappa Chetty, had equal amounts of capital invested. In this partnership, the merchants were procuring cloth with their own money, if anything happen the risk of loss were borne by themselves. Given this twist the chance of failure to deliver goods at required time was minimized and the competition amongst the merchants to deliver goods gave the English an opportunity to terminate the post of chief merchant permanently.

One thing that clearly emerges is that while merchants were expanding and strengthening their economic status, they had also become acknowledgeable leaders in the society. This opportunity can be accomplish only in the English or other European port towns since in the hinterland the traditional society that linked with the rural economy always consigned the dominant status to the landlord’s class. The irony was that they were not able to emerge as a baron in this process and they always ended with failure. The system of Indian society which did not give space by the ruling class to emerging merchants was also one of the reasons where they could not emerge as a leading merchant.