INTRODUCTION

The Indian Ocean has been a theatre of maritime activities since the birth of the first civilizations on its littoral. Ever since then its bays and seas have been criss-crossed by various people across time leading to the development of maritime contacts. Among the linkages, the one between Coromandel Coast on southeastern India and Southeast Asia developed distinctly around the 1st century A.D. The functional contact between the two regions was based on exchange of spices with Coromandel textiles and vice versa. The involvement of the Portuguese in this trade helped them to earn profits. Besides, the activities of the Portuguese also influenced the indigenous people (at least in the area of settlement) and with time, there developed heritage that left its imprints for the time to come. So it is this linkage on which the theme in concern would be discussed.

The story of the Portuguese retreat in the region becomes more interesting because of various reasons. Among the most cited one was the overseas expansion of Verenigde Oostindische Compaigne (VOC) or Dutch East India Company and English East India Company and the resultant conflict with the already present Estado da India. The other one of which an attempt would be made to understand in this work is the official and unofficial presence of the Portuguese and the question of retreat. Understanding the retreat of the *Estado da Índia* also involves hence a study of its structure. Did the *Estado* take help of its very institutions to stall the retreat? Besides this, there are other pertinent questions which come across one's mind like the way European powers interacted with the indigenous polities, how the matter of religion got dragged in the politics etc. Such aspects would also help us to explore the subject more. It would also be
interesting to situate the Portuguese prior to the 17th century and during the course of it as well.

The sources that have been used for the study are the contemporary travel accounts, the narratives written later, the official correspondences made by the Governor General of the East India Company to its various factors and vice-versa. The Portuguese sources like Assentos do Conselho do Estado (i.e., the proceedings or minutes of the State Council at Goa); Documentacao para a historia das missoes do padroado Portuguese do Oriente (1499-1582), Decadaes of Joao de Barros, Documentacao Ultramarina, Documentas Remittidos da India or Livros das monções, Diário do Terceiro conde de Linhares, Regimentos das fortalezas da Índia, Documenta Indica and Documenta Malucensia have been consulted for the purpose of the study.

The theme under consideration is derived from the sources which are either Coromandel-centric or the one with a focus on Southeast Asia or simply with a pan-Asian view. The early works on Coromandel are centered on the region’s political history. The economic aspect was first dealt by Tapan Raychaudhuri in his “Jan Company in Coromandel, 1605-1690”, published in 1962. The writings of Sinnappah Arasaratnam are highly valued. His three decades of writings on various themes related to the European companies and indigenous polity, society and economy culminated in his most distinguished work published in 1986 – “Merchants, Companies and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast, 1650-1740”. The recent writings of Sanjay Subrahmanyam related to Southern India – “The Political Economy of

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1 Other works in the group of regional commercial history are Ashin Dasgupta’s “Malabar in Asian Trade, 1740-1800” (1967) and Sushil Chaudhuris’ Trade and Commercial Organization in Bengal 1650-1720” (1975). K.N. Chaudhuri’s “The English East India Company: The Study of an Early Joint Stock Company, 1600-1640” (1965) and his later work “The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company 1660-1760” (1978) were different from the works classified under regional commercial history. His basic interest was to study the company and its penetration in the Asian commerce.
Commerce” and “Improvising Empire” are comprehensive accounts which deal with the trade structure, the centers of trade and trading groups besides the role played by the indigenous polities and European trading groups in the 16th century and the changes which took place in the mid 17th century.²

In the case of Southeast Asia, van Leur’s ‘Indonesia Trade and Society’ (1934) was written with an indigenous perspective.³ The dismissive comments of van Leur on Portuguese trade formed part of Meilink Roelofsz’s critique. Two years after the publication of Meilink Roelosfz’s work, Luis Filipe FR Thomaz’s thesis, “Os Portuguese in Malacca” threw a valuable light. Besides many of his articles on the different aspects of Portuguese activities in Asia gathered attention.⁴ Anthony Reid has contributed an interesting perspective through “Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450-1680” which is spread over two volumes. Besides these two groups of writings that are either Coromandel centric or focused on Southeast Asia, there are a third set of writings that pertain to maritime and commercial history in a pan-Asian context. The works of C.R. Boxer, K.N. Chaudhuri, Ashin Dasgupta, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam have thematic bearing on the area and period of study.⁵

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² S. Jeyaseela Stephen’s “The Coromandel Coast and its Hinterland” (1997) is an interesting study of the 16th century Coromandel wherein ephigraphical sources along with the main body of Portuguese sources have been effectively used. M.N. Pearson’s detailed study of the “The Portuguese in India”(1987) and K.S. Mathew’s “Portuguese Trade with India in the 16th Century” (1983) are important related works.

³ van Leur characterized the Southeast Asian trade as a pre-capitalist peddling trade. A strong follow-up of his work was M.A.P. Meilink Roelofs “Asian Trade and European Influence in the Indonesia Archipelago” (1962). D.G.E. Hall, B.J.O. Schrieke have written, between 1934 and 1962. But it was Meilink Roelofsz’s work which gave a broader perspective to the Southeast Asian studies.

⁴ Leonard Andaya’s doctoral thesis on “The Kingdom of Johore” (1975) was a fine study of its polity and economy. Nicholas Tarling’s edited. “The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia” (1992) was an enduring compilation of different articles by the known authorities of Cornell group like Kenneth Hall, Anthony Reid, J. Kathirithamby Wells, Leonard Andaya, Barbara Watson Andaya.

⁵ C.R. Boxer’s “The Portuguese Seaborne Empire” (1969) and “The Dutch Seaborne Empire” (1965); K.N. Chaudhuri’s “Trade and Civilization in the Indian Ocean” (1985); Asin Dasgupta’s and M.N. Pearson edited “India and the Indian Ocean” (1987); Kenneth McPherson’s “The India Ocean” (1993); Sanjay Subrahmanyam’s “The Portuguese Empire in Asia” (1993) are the main works on the theme.
The first aspect that is dealt in the concerned theme would be a study of region. Without understanding this vast macro-region under consideration and its various places which assumed so much importance in the history, one cannot transverse further. For this study both the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries travel accounts have been greatly brought into use. Most travelers have described the Coromandel or Cholamandalam as the 'land of open plains'. They also mention the crops grown and the abundance of cotton and the related textile production. Besides, this coast was well known by the sailors for its strong currents, frequent cyclones and storms. Peter Floris's descriptions (1611-15) also points towards the coast being dotted by bad harbors. He remarks that: "We came before Paleacatle at ancker, passing over the (drought the) shallowe not being a lengthe above a musket shatt, having butt 3 fadeem water, which is very dangerous for greate ships". On the other hand, the Southeast Asian region can be seen as comprised of two parts – the mainland and the archipelago. While the mainland includes China (south of Yangtze), Burma, Thailand, Indo-China and peninsular Malaysia it is the Archipelago that provokes more interest. The more wanted produce i.e. spices came from East Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Philippines and the Mollucas. An early 16th century Portuguese traveler, Tome Pires noted that – "The Malay merchants say that God made Timor for sandalwood and Banda for mace and Maluku for cloves, and that thus merchandise is not know

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7 Domingo Paes notices it in between 1520-22, Fijiozat, Vasundhara (ed.), Vijaynagar as seen by Domingo Paes and Fernao, Numun, NBT, Delhi, 1999, p.60.
9 Nicholas Tarling has made this distinction in his edited volume of “The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia”, vol. 1., 1993.
anywhere in the world except in these places." Thus it would be interesting to understand how the Portuguese perceived the region.

The political theatre in 17th century Asia was varied. On the Coromandel Coast, the Vijayanagar Kingdom in 16th century and then the Golconda rulers in the 17th century were the polities in focus. Besides, there were Nayaks of Tanjavur and Madurai. In Southeast Asia, besides Malacca, the Sultan of Makassar, Ternate, Susuhunan of Mataram and Sultan of Aceh gained attention besides other polities whose career at many times did not last long. Such indigenous polities were the ones who helped the Portuguese and encouraged them to develop trade to make profits. Later on, these polities were the ones who according to many modern scholars were responsible for the Portuguese retreat. Now instead with the Portuguese they cherished their relationship with the Dutch. It is interesting to locate the reaction of the indigenous powers towards the Portuguese. This is more prevalent in Southeast where for example the Sumatran Sultanate of Aceh, who was the arch-rival of Malacca, turned more hostile with each passing day. A closer examination of such examples would enable us to come to a conclusion regarding the relation between Portuguese and the indigenous polities in the succeeding chapters.

After undertaking the study of the region, one has to understand how the Portuguese presence developed in this maritime world during our period of study. The men who were sent to Asia to occupy different posts had to endure hardships during their voyage from Lisbon to Goa and further to Malacca. A study of their life on board along with the kind of ships that coasted around in the late sixteenth and seventeenth century Asia would help

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us to develop clarity on the theme further. In this theme, one would also underline that how in this macro-commercial world the Portuguese developed their presence. It is surprising that this huge area of our study had just three settlements-Malacca, Ternate and Timor where the Portuguese had their official presence. The unofficial settlements exceeded in number and they were Macasser, Ambon, Banda, Tidore in Southeast Asia while the Coromandel was totally out of the ambit of Goa. The presence of the Portuguese on the Coromandel coast and Southeast Asia would thus explain how and why the conflicts started among the Portuguese, Dutch and English in the seventeenth century.

The next aspect, which needs a consideration, is the configuration of the other European powers mainly the Dutch and the English vis-à-vis the Portuguese before the year 1641. Both the VOC and the English East India companies were organized on different lines from the Portuguese’s Estado da India. While on the one hand, the VOC and the Portuguese were at loggerheads, the English had defensive attitude towards the Portuguese. Travelling between 1616 and 1620, Martin Pring noted that the Dutch had not only been doing wrongs with the Portuguese but with the English too. One of the Englishman, who was held as a prisoner by the Dutch in the Moluccas and had fled from there, had reported of the atrocities committed by the Dutch. The ‘Amboyana Massacre’ is another example. If the English had met with such a treatment then what would have been the state of the Portuguese? Besides in this aspect, an examination of how the English acted as mediators between the Dutch and the indigenous polities would be done. The treaties signed would also be given attention with respect to the conditions in Europe. A study of the way in which the companies were organized will also explain that why did the Portuguese retreat began so early.

The fourth aspect would relate to the contest for hegemony between the Portuguese and the other European powers. The time period chosen is from 1600 to 1641 A.D. The dawn of the seventeenth century marks the presence of the chartered trading companies of Holland and England in the waters of the Indian Ocean. The year 1641 A.D., is a benchmark again because of the loss of the important settlement of Malacca by the Portuguese to the Dutch. So it would be interesting to observe how the hegemony of the Estado was whittled down due to the presence of the ‘other’ European powers during the period.

The VOC, for instance proved to be a different type of trading organization. From its very inception the Dutch had an enterprising attitude towards mercantile activities and overseas expansion. As early as 1608, the States of Holland passed a secret resolution they would never “in whole or in part, directly or indirectly withdraw, surrender or renounce the freedom of the seas, everywhere and in all regions of the world”. Thus with this kind of mindset, the Dutch started their onslaught on whoever they thought could pose difficulties on their functioning. The Portuguese due to their century long monopoly could hardly be ignored. The Spanish connection of the Portuguese was always in the background ever since the unification of the two in 1580. The Spanish and Dutch rivalry also dragged the Portuguese who had to face the brunt of being the fellow Iberians. Perhaps it is this context that the contest for hegemony between the Portuguese and Dutch in Coromandel and Southeast Asia became important. In the early years of their pursuit, the Dutch could identify the importance of Coromandel Coast in relation to Southeast Asia. Hendrick Brouwer, a Governor General of the VOC noted that the Coromandel Coast was the “left arm of the Moluccas and

the surrounding island because without textiles that came from there [The Coromandel Coast], the trade in the Moluccas will be dead”.15

The twelve-year truce (1609-1621) between Spain and Holland said among other things that the Dutch and the Portuguese should not interfere with each other’s trade in the East. But it was meaningless. The statement made by the Dutch Governor General, Jan Pieterszoon Coen to Heren XVII on 27 December, 1614 gives a clear idea of the Dutch policy – “From experience, your lordship ought to know very well that in India trade is driven and maintained under the protection and favour of your own weapons, just as weapons are furnished from the profit of trade in such wise that trade cannot be maintained without war, nor war without trade”.16 The Dutch were thus a serious threat to the Portuguese ‘seaborne empire’. The results of the Dutch policy were quite evident from the early years of their arrival in Southeast Asia. A striking, example that can be noted was Peter Floris’s observation on the Siamese markets in 1612. He pointed “the recent entry of the Dutch into markets previously monopolized by the Portuguese inevitably resulted in temporary dislocation of trade.”17 This proposition could as well be applied to other regions.

Meanwhile on the Coromandel Coast, the VOC had obtained the firman from the Qutb Shahi Sultans to establish a factory at Masulipatnam. But it was still an open question to the company directors about the role Coromandel Coast would play in their Asian design apart from the fact that its cloth was the only item to barter in the Moluccas. There followed a factory at (Nizampatnam) and Pulicat. The latter was detrimental for the Portuguese,

who had their settlement at San Thome, but used Pulicat for trading activities. William Methwold observed the Dutch presence at Pulicat as a "bade neibbour to the Portugall"\(^\text{18}\). Thus the Portuguese and the Dutch waged a struggle for Pulicat for thirty years (1610-1640) with the final victory of Dutch. Perhaps in the first half of the 17\(^{th}\) century the Vijayanagar Empire had ceased to exist and it was the semi autonomous nayaks who were the real local powers. The Qutb Shahis were gradually extending their influence. During this period of relative insecurity, in the region, the establishment of fortified presence was the best guarantee the Dutch would be willing to remain in it.\(^\text{19}\) In Southeast Asia, Malacca was the major bone of contention between the Portuguese and the VOC. It was due to the virtue of Malacca, had the Portuguese controlled the spice trade. After a number of blockades and allying with indigenous polities like Acheh, the Dutch were successful in capturing Malacca in 1641. The contemporaries as a catastrophe have described the seizure of Malacca. It was a big blow to the Portuguese after which they had virtually nothing left.\(^\text{20}\)

Besides examining the political aspects of the contest one can also look into the moral degradation of the Portuguese. One comes across these aspects in

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\(^{19}\) Vink, M. and Winius, G.D., The Merchant - Warrior pacified, OUP, 1990, p. 13. The Nayak of Gingee, Krishnapa, for instance, gave permission to build a fort at Devanampatnam (modern Fort St. David), in 1608. This concession was granted to the Dutch, so as to check the Portuguese and to increase the trade thus the Nayak's Olla (for Farman) was stated as: "We promise to protect the Dutchmen who will settle in Tegnapatnam to allow them to build a town, to refuse entrance to the Portuguese to whom we shall remain hostile. On the other hand we, the Dutchmen, promise to bring all kinds of gods, to traffic with all traders, on the condition that they will pay us for every merchandise excepting rice. We shall also pay 4 for every 100 of our merchandise we carry away from their. Those who have paid once will not pay again. We promise to take the oath and to keep all conditions faithfully" <Bahadur, Rao and Srinivasachari, C.S., A History of Gingee ad its Rules, Annamalai University, Annamalianagar, 1943, p. 109>.

\(^{20}\) Travelling in 1670, the Dominican missionary, Friar Domingo Navarrete very aptly commented: "I shed tears as I walked through those streets to see that country [has been] possessed by enemies of the Church, for it is Garden and Paradise in Worldly things, in Spirituals it was once a great colony, and the Church has many children there still, but they are set among bloody wolves. The women wish they could get away from thence, but are so poor and without help that they cannot, those who have some wealth the pleased and satisfied". Cummins, J.S., The Travels and Controversies of Friar Domingo Navarrette, 1618-1686, vol. II, The Hakluyt Society, 1962, p. 283.
Livros das monções. Also the aspect of the prisoners of war needs to be looked upon.

The Livros das monções provide ample information regarding the deterioration of the structure of the Estado da India. In the correspondences of the Kings to the various Viceroyos who occupied the post at Goa, the information is exchanged between the two authorities at Goa and Lisbon regarding matters of the East. The flavor of the correspondences is varied and in it are mentioned all the matters of concern. Besides describing the methods, the measures that the Crown asked to execute are also mentioned. So the King understanding the gravity of the matter was trying to stall the retreat of the Portuguese by taking various measures. At the same time we also see the growing importance of Misericordia as well as bishoprics. Did various Misericordias had some role to play in the retreat of the Portuguese or did they act as saviours? This aspect will be explained in a greater detail in the on-going discussion.

The last aspect would relate to the rapid decline of the Portuguese settlements between 1641 and 1662 AD. Since Malacca, the main stronghold of the Portuguese Indies had already been occupied by the Dutch in 1641, it was not difficult to occupy other Portuguese settlements. In a council meeting of the Estado held at Goa on the 6th of February 1642, the viceroy informed the members who were present that — "he has been informed through different sources, that he Dutch enemy was preparing itself to attack some of the pracas (military installations) of Colombo, Jaffna, Manar and Saint Thomas and for this purpose have left from Batavia. Six naus and from that are outside this port have left for to join them and on their way they were in a position to create some damage to the fortress of Canara, Cannanor of Cragnaore, if the opportunity raised they could not miss it. Thus the need of
the anticipated the necessary help."\(^{21}\) The places mentioned in the document actually became the senses of conflicts in this phase. Philip Baldaeus also noted the differences between the Portuguese generals on the question of viceroy's ship in 1662. The two competitors were Meneses and Gama. According to Baldaeus, this "had almost prov'd fatal to the Portuguese Affairs in the Indies".\(^ {22}\) So if we are to believe Baldeus then it gives an impression that the high ups in the Estado were still contesting for power when it was already on decline.

The adoption of the policy of mare clausum clearly shows what Dutch aimed at. A good review of their position can be visualized by the general instructions compiled by Herreens XVII. This was meant to be the guideline for the Governor-General and his council at Batavia and was issued in 1650. The Heeren, XVII explicitly recognized that the Company's trade in Asia could be divided into three categories: Firstly, trade in regions where the VOC exercised unchallenged territorial control by right of cession or of conquest. In 1650 these places were limited to a few islands in the Moluccas and some of the fortified trading settlements like Batavia, Malacca and Pulicat. Secondly, regions where the VOC enjoyed exclusive trading rights due to monopoly contracts negotiated with the indigenous politics such as the Sultan of Ternate and the village headman of Amboyna. Thirdly, trade conducted by virtue of treaties with the rules 'both on the basis of freely negotiated agreements as well as on the basis of free trade alongside merchants of all other nations.'\(^ {23}\) By 1660's the Portuguese had been ousted.

\(^ {22}\) Baldaeus, Philip, A Description of the East India Coasts of Malabar and Coromandel and also of the isle of Ceylon with their adjacent Kingdom and provinces, Asian Educational Services, 2000, p. 629.
\(^ {23}\) Boxer, C.R. the Dutch Seaborne, Empire, Hutchinson, 1965, p.94.
from most parts of Southeast and the whole of Coromandel Coast. Where did these Portuguese go?

The activities of the Portuguese in the Lesser Sunda Islands also require attention. This group of islands, which comprised of Timor, Solor, Flores were controlled by the Estado directly as well as indirectly. It is interesting to notice how in this micro-world while on the one hand all three places were dependent on each other for their trade and on the other there was a official Portuguese settlement adjoining the unofficial ones. The Dominican missionaries who with their activities controlled these islands had a noteworthy presence here. The Portuguese frequented these islands in order to procure the fragrant white sandalwood. The Dominican influence was so deep that the inhabitants fought against the Dutch. But after the capture of Malacca by the Dutch, at a council meeting held at Goa on 25th November 1642, the Dominican priests requested the viceroy to permit them to travel in a Dutch ship to Solor. This is an interesting fact because the priest now sorted the permission of Goa for their travel in a Dutch ship. The Lesser Sunda group of islands needs a deeper examination for many such reasons.

Situating the Portuguese diaspora and the indigenous mercantile communities in the light of the developments that had been taking place in the 17th century would garnish our last theme with a more interesting aspect. After the Portuguese were expelled from the Moluccas, they established themselves at Maccassar from where they traded till 1660’s. Earlier when in 1511, the Portuguese had captured Malacca; some of the Muslim merchants had also fled to Macassar. The Gujaratis which where a big mercantile community before 1511 had fled to Achech. Later Achinese attacks on Johore

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25 In 1660 and 1667, the Portuguese suffered two severe attacks from the Dutch which lead them to give up Maccasar.
and the blockade of Malacca by the Dutch led Javanese and Malay traders to take shelter in Southern Sulawesi. The Portuguese at Malacca started moving out once the Dutch took over the port-state. Fray Sebastain Manrique, travelling between 1629 and 1643 noticed that during Emperor Sumbanco’s tenure, the Portuguese had taken shelter in Mascassar. Furthermore, one of the Portuguese became a regent and played a formidable role in the politics there. On the Coromondel coast, the Portuguese flocked to Fort. St. George and formed the part of the population of the White Town. While mentioning the taking over of Nagapattinam by the Dutch, Baldaeus noted, “the Portuguese were permitted to depart with their Goods, Families, Church – Ornaments, and C. in Certain Ships appointed for that purpose by the Dutch Company”. The question, which comes across ones mind is why, were the Dutch so courteous? Was it that they did not want troublemakers (i.e., the Portuguese) nearby? Or was it a movement of diaspora? If so then to where?

Thus among the various features of European expansion that would be analyzed in the thesis, the evangelical campaigns undertaken by different religious orders cannot be missed out. Of them, the Jesuits, the Dominicans, the Franciscans and the Augustinians were the prominent ones and they in the Estado’s ships also traveled and preached. Wherever the Portuguese went, along with them went their language. Even after the decline of the Portuguese in the region that concerns our theme, their language and culture continued. For e.g. by the year 1660, most of the Portuguese settlements had been occupied by the Dutch. Philip Baldaeus while visiting Nagapattinam in that year said that he “preached the first the 18th, both in Dutch and Portuguese and administered the Holy Sacrament to 20 Persons, and Baptism to several

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26 Luard, C. Eckford (trans), Travels of Fray Sebastian Manrique (1629-1643), Vol. II: China, India etc. Hakluyt Society, London, 1927, p. 79. In Manrique’s words – “he has been a real father to all the Portuguese who reached his shores in a distress conditions, aiding and assisting them all with paternal solicitude.”

27 Baldaeus, P. 2000, p. 651.
children.  

If Baldaeus is to be believed then it took two years before the Dutch could start with their religious preaching. His preachings in Portuguese show that though the Portuguese were not present in that part, but their legacy was there. Did this legacy live and if so then for how long? Besides this also points to the fact that there were still Portuguese speaking communities. Such an example can be applied to other settlements as well.

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THE WORLD OF COROMANDEL AND SOUTHEAST ASIA
IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY