Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The native response to the Portuguese was one of co-operation and acceptance of their hegemony and, in consequence, it was a distinct lack of local resistance as much as anything else that enabled the Portuguese to hold on to Cannanore for more than a century. Both powers depended on each other in furthering their commercial and political interests and this mutual assistance had exerted a profound impact on the society and economy of Cannanore.

6.2 Economic and Social Impact of the Portuguese in Cannanore

6.2.1 Rise of Portuguese Colony in Cannanore.

Due to the establishment of factory and fortress in Cannanore a number of Portuguese men began to reside in and around the fortress. Gradually a colony of the Portuguese casados e moradores (married settlers) came up in this fort area. Many of them married local women giving rise to a mixed race. By 1512, there were one hundred Portuguese men married with local women both in Cannanore and Cochin.¹ Muslim and Brahmin ladies were preferred by the Portuguese men for marriage, because the Muslim ladies, according to Afonso de Albuquerque, were fair in complexion, chaste in morality, and reserved in social contacts being shut in their houses while the others were more of a liberated

¹ Cartas de Afonso de Albuquerque, tom.I, Lisboa,p.63
nature. The Brahmin ladies were also preferable because they too were fair and supposedly of better conduct than the others.

Both the king and Afonso de Albuquerque encouraged mixed marriage for the sake of the defense of the interest of the Portuguese. There were more than fifty Portuguese men settled in Cannanore with their Indian wives in the early part of the second decade of sixteenth century. Fernão de Alvares was a *casado e morador* of Cannanore in 1514. In 1514, thirteen children born of the Portuguese men married to local women were baptized at Cannanore. Besides that, there were several other Portuguese men who had children from the local women, but outside wedlock. According to a report from Cannanore on 27th December, 1514, there were 24 children born of the Portuguese bachelors (*solteiros*) in Cannanore. There were four couples living in the fortress of Cannanore in 1523, the brides being the offspring of the Portuguese in Malabar. There were about four more girls of their description to be married in the same year in Cannanore. Hence the Portuguese were able to find marriageable girls born of Portuguese parents in Cannanore by the third decade of the sixteenth century. Thus a mixed Portuguese community went on increasing. The new population was known as the *Reinos, Mestços, Topazes, Delgados, Farangis, and Eurasians* etc. The

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4 *Cartas de Afonso de Albuquerque*, tom.III, Lisboa, p.102.
5 ANTT, C.C., I- 17-27.
6 ANTT, C.C., I- 17-32.
7 ANTT, C.C., I- 30, 28.
8 ANTT, C.C., I- 30-28.
9 The Portuguese settlers enjoyed the privileges and had their own judges, jail and other institutions. *Cartas de Afonso de Albuquerque*, tom. V, p.466.
Portuguese settlers enjoyed the privileges and had their own judges, jail and other institutions. The Portuguese colony in Cannanore went on growing and was constituted into a Camera municipal (Municipality).

6.2.2 Increase of Production

The search for the spices by the first European traders kindled a spirit of production among the cultivators of Cannanore region. During the sixteenth century there was an increasing demand for spices in Europe because of the increase in consumption\(^{10}\). There was international trade between the Portuguese and Malabar and internal trade of the local kings and merchants with Cambay, Ormuz and various other centres in the Middle East and Coromandel Coast. Hence, the business of spices widened throughout the sixteenth century. The pepper producing peasantry responded to the enlarged market and increased the production both by intensifying the cultivation in the land and by bringing more lands under cultivation. It is calculated that the production of pepper alone went up by 200 to 275 per cent in the period between 1515 and 1607.

The north of Cochin to the extreme boundary of Cannanore produced 20,000 quintals (1049180 kgs) in 1504. The area between Cochin and Quilon produced about 30,000 quintals (1573770 kgs) of pepper in the same year, thus giving a total of 50,000 quintals in the whole Malabar. By 1515 the total production was 63,401 quintals. The total volume of pepper produced in Malabar was in 1520 was around 1,10,953 quintals\(^{11}\). Hence, there is an increase by 9510.26 quintals per

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\(^{11}\) *Cartas de Afonso de Albuquerque*, tom.III, p.258.
year. It clearly shows that there was an increase in the production of commodities on the Malabar Coast on account of the constantly increasing demand for pepper and other commodities. The pepper producing peasantry brought more land under cultivation and produced more pepper to keep pace with the demand. Afonso de Albuquerque wrote that the peasants were alert to the new demand and that the production had increased.

The case was same for the production of ginger. Sometimes the peasantry produced commodities in such abundance that the Portuguese were unable to buy them up, despite the demand in the market. In 1513, though the merchants at Cannanore were able to supply 7000 quintals of ginger, the Portuguese officials were able to purchase only 4000 quintals for lack of money. The increase in the production of spices is explained by the fact that the Portuguese substituted the Venetian demand and this remained effective throughout the period under discussion.

Another reason is that the intermediary merchants influenced and promoted spice production to a certain extent in this period with their mind set on profit and the producers intensified and enlarged the production accordingly. But details regarding the impact on the peasantry in the hinterland who produced the commodities for sale are very few because the Portuguese had contact only with the merchants, not with the peasants.

6.2.3 Emergence of Local Merchant Class

The Portuguese found themselves incapable of conducting trade without the help of the local merchants. Hence, the King instructed the
local officials of Malabar Coast to contact the local merchants. The local merchants became active in the field to arrange the commodities for the Portuguese on time. They contacted the peasantry producing pepper, ginger and other commodities in the hinterland and supplied them with articles of daily need such as rice, cloth and so on, on condition that pepper and other items should be delivered to them at the time of harvest\textsuperscript{12}. The Portuguese concluded contracts with these merchants for obtaining necessary cargo in the respective factories at the time of export\textsuperscript{13}. In certain cases, the local merchants received payments in advance from the Portuguese for a definite volume of commodities to be delivered at the factory\textsuperscript{14}. The Portuguese supplied articles of daily need to the peasantry in the form of advance payment for future delivery of spices and advances were offered in the season when they had nothing to live on. Then they stored the spices in their own storehouses which the Portuguese officials visited and agreed to purchase at the time of export\textsuperscript{15}. Among the local merchants of Cannanore the Muslim merchants continued to supply great quantities of spices to the Portuguese.

6.2.4 Monetization of Economy

Money was in use in the kingdom of Cannanore even before the arrival of Portuguese, but it was very few. The inflow of cash assumed unprecedented proportions during the period of Portuguese trade. The nature if the Portuguese trade itself demanded either the import of more

\textsuperscript{12}\textit{ANTT, Cartas dos Vicereis da India}, no.95.
\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Cartas de Afonso de Albuquerque}, tom.II, p.372.
\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Cartas de Afonso de Albuquerque}, tom.III, p.257.
\textsuperscript{15}\textit{ANTT, Collecção São Lourenço}, tom.II, fls. 378-379.
and more precious metals to Cannanore or minting more coins in India itself. Barter system was not feasible in Cannanore for spices because the Portuguese did not have sufficient commodities to supply the needs of the people and had not enough time required for the exchange on account of the dependence on the monsoon for navigation. João da Nova in 1501-1502 experienced the difficulty of resorting to barter and had to seek the help of the king and the merchants. The Portuguese on the spot always reminded the Portuguese king of the necessity of sending more cash to India. Afonso de Albuquerque wrote to him in 1514 that he should send more cash rather than copper and other commodities to facilitate the trade. Presumably, the Portuguese brought to market cash, either imported or minted on the Malabar Coast. This played a role in the monetization of the economy of Cannanore.

6.2.5 Local Employees

The movement of the commodities and the other works connected with the trade in Cannanore required more workers and offered chances of employment for the people. Several people from Cannanore were employed in the Portuguese services. Posts like interpreter, persons to see the weighing of the commodities in the factory and so on were filled by the local people. Some were employed as ship boys in the Portuguese vessels. There were a number of Nairs who were employed as guards in the factory of Cannanore. More men needed for the work in the ship yard. Ships

16 ANTT, Cartas dos Vicereis da India, no.16.
18 Cartas de Afonso de Albuquerque, tom.V, p. 498.
were built and repaired in Cannanore, Cochin and Calicut. Several carpenters worked under their chiefs in the shipyard. In 1514 the Portuguese built a ship in the port of Cannanore\textsuperscript{19}. A number of them were in the service of the Portuguese and they settled down in Cannanore adding to the population there. The preferential treatment given to the by the Portuguese served as an incentive for landless labourers to move from village to towns in search of new opportunities. Normally they were employed as watchmen of important establishments or as guards for the protection of cargo under Portuguese control\textsuperscript{20} or employed as domestic servants in the families of the Portuguese officials who possessed three slaves on an average\textsuperscript{21}.

Many of the newly converted persons were employed for loading and unloading of the ships, transporting commodities as well as for menial work in certain institution such as hospitals. There were numerous coolies or caretakers of the weighing houses. Some were employed to supply cloth, thread and needles for making gunny sacks, straw mats and basket for drying and carrying pepper and candles and oil for lighting. Guards were needed to transport pepper to and from the weighing house. This mobility of labour was an important feature of the society towards the end of the sixteenth century.

\textbf{6.2.6 Urbanization of Cannanore}

The Portuguese trade contributed a great deal to the development of the coastal town of Cannanore. Cannanore developed faster with the

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\textsuperscript{19} Cartas de Afonso de Albuquerque, tom.VI, pp.211,355.
\textsuperscript{20} Cartas de Afonso de Albuquerque, tom.V, p.496.
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trade and became thickly populated with a number of establishments. Several institutions sprang up in the Portuguese settlement of Cannanore to serve the needs of the population both Portuguese and local that went on increasing day by day. Almost all the factories of Malabar Coast including Cannanore had a hospital attached to them for taking care of the sick. The hospital at Cannanore was provided with food, clothes and everything needed for the sick by the Portuguese government\textsuperscript{22}. The Cannanore hospital situated in the fortress was considered the best in India since the air and water there were far better than anywhere else\textsuperscript{23}. The surgeon of the hospital at Cannanore took care of the sick in the fortress of Calicut too since there was no hospital at there. Slaves were employed in the hospital at Cannanore for menial work\textsuperscript{24}. A large number of sick people were treated in Cannanore hospital\textsuperscript{25}.

In addition to hospitals, a new institution peculiar to the Portuguese known as Santa Casa da Misericordia was established in the fortress of Cannanore. This institution is entirely dedicated to the care of the sick, poor, orphans and widows. Churches were also established in the fortress at Cannanore for the religious practices of the native Christians as well as the Portuguese residing in the fortress. There were two churches in Cannanore fortress, one in the fortress itself and other, the church of Santa Maria da Vitoria, close

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Cartas de Afonso de Albuquerque}, tom.V, p.204; tom.VI, p.118.
\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Cartas de Afonso de Albuquerque}, tom.IV, pp.288, 302-303.
\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Cartas de Afonso de Albuquerque}, tom.VII, p.305.
Institutions for teaching the children to read and write were also established in Cannanore. The poor students of the land were given food and other necessary things by the Portuguese government since the time of Afonso de Albuquerque. But later Lopo Soares stopped this help. The teacher was paid by the Portuguese government through the factor in the port. The missionaries of Cannanore taught the children to read and write. The special favour shown by the Portuguese to the converts to Christianity and the possibility of employment in the factories and the Portuguese settlements attracted several people to become Christians and settle down in the port of Cannanore. There were seventy Portuguese children and seven hundred Christians of the locality in 1523 in the vicinity of the fortress of Cannanore.

### 6.2.7 Impact on International Trade

Portuguese trade in Cannanore had great impact on the international trade and economy. It affected the Arabs first then the Venetians as well as the Egyptian merchants. They had to adjust themselves to the new milieu created by the establishment of Portuguese trade on the Malabar Coast. The German and the Italian merchants flocked together to Lisbon and some of them came to the

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Malabar Coast to take advantage of the newly established trade. Similarly, the Portuguese trade system affected the fortunes of the foreign Muslim merchants in Cannanore as well as the coastal trade existing so far.

The impact of the Portuguese presence in the social and economic status of Cannanore is considerable. Trade with the Portuguese had exposed the various sections of the populations in Cannanore to a new situation. The local merchants were able to maintain their position in business and among them a new group of merchants in the locality of Cannanore came up. This must have brought about far reaching effects on the structure of society in Cannanore. The production commodities increased in proportion to the increasing demand and presumably new areas were brought under cultivation. This change in the agrarian sector had a profound impact on the society and economy of Cannanore. The positive response given by the natives to the Portuguese brought about great transformation in condition of agriculture labour and commercial production. It is true that the Portuguese trade brought more cash in to the market which accelerated the monetization of the economy of Cannanore. Increased opportunities of trade and employment drew people to the towns accelerating urban growth. Urban life and the flow of more people from the villages to the towns in search of employment were boosted up by the Portuguese trade. Ship building in the premises of the Portuguese factory gave opportunity to the workers. Expansion of trade and commerce had a significant impact on regional politics and social organization. The balance of power in Cannanore was seriously affected by the Portuguese trade. The traditional relations between the
Zamorin of Calicut and the Kings of Cannanore and Cochin were substantially altered. In Cannanore the Portuguese trade led to slow shift of power and influence from the hands of Chirakkal Raja to the hands of Arackal Raja. With the arrival of Portuguese, the bi-religious society (Hindus and Muslims) became tri-religious, adding the Christians to the society.