CHAPTER-V

SOCIO- ECONOMIC RELATIONS OF THE DUTCH WITH KOLLAM

The first of the European powers to rupture the trade monopoly of the Portuguese in the East were the Dutch. Interestingly, even during the zenith of the Portuguese commercial power, the Netherlanders had voyaged to India as individual traders and sailors in the employ of the Portuguese.¹ Thus, the Dutch had the opportunity to acquire some knowledge of the East.

Later, at the end of the sixteenth century, Philip of Spain prohibited any commerce between Holland and Lisbon which obstructed the people of the former country from obtaining Indian spices, which they had previously procured through that channel.² The availability of spices attracted the Dutch to the East. The Dutch collected spices from the Portuguese until the sixteenth century. Lisbon acted as a distributing centre of oriental spices and luxuries to the European countries.³ But when the Portuguese turned against them, they began to sail to East for the procurement of spices.⁴

¹ K. Sreedharan, A Maritime History of India, New Delhi, 1982, p.68.
It was only after the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 that the Dutch were emboldened to challenge the Portuguese in the Indian seas. The Dutch sent ships to different parts of the world seeking trade after their freedom from Spain. The different Dutch commercial companies formed in 1592 and later the union of these companies to form the Dutch East India Company in 1602 played an important role in organizing these commercial missions. Hence, the Dutch and the Portuguese began to compete with each other for the monopoly of trade in the East. The Portuguese spent huge sums of money to defend their settlement and trade privileges and they began to fortify their own settlement areas.

The new group (the Dutch) gave a hope to the princes on the coast against the Portuguese. It was pepper that drew the Dutch East India Company to Kerala in the middle of the 17th century. One of the reasons for the importance of pepper in European countries was that the conservation of meat, and another was its purported medicinal effect. The Dutch systematically eliminated the Portuguese bases and strategic points situated along the outer cordon of the Indian sub-continent, and hence secured a foothold on the East coast of India. They tried

to blockade the Portuguese possessions on the Malabar Coast and they disturbed their shipping on the Western coast of India.\(^{10}\)

The arrival of Admiral Steven van der Hagen, on the Malabar Coast in October 1604, the head of the first fleet owned by the United East India Company, was a landmark in the history of Dutch relations with Malabar (see p.235, map.13). Achieving a monopoly of pepper procurement was the major aim of the Dutch in Malabar. They tried to secure it by fixing targets for each individual ruler who had to supply specific quantity at the price decided by the Company.\(^{11}\) In 1604, they signed a treaty with the Zamorins of Calicut. Linschoten refers Calicut as the chief town of Malabar. He quotes a story of a Ceruman perumal, a king of Malabar, departed on a pilgrimage, dividing up his kingdom among Cochin, Cannanore, and Kollam.\(^{12}\)

The Dutch eventually turned their attention from north Kerala and entered into agreements with the minor powers in central Kerala. The officials of the Dutch East India Company held the view that their establishment in Kerala could be maintained only by monopoly contracts of trade with local rulers.\(^{13}\) Therefore they entered into trade contracts with the local rulers. The Dutch had maintained a

\(^{10}\) Om Prakash (ed.), *Dutch Factories in India 1617-1623*, New Delhi, 1984, p.40.


strict naval watch between Cochin and Kollam because of the commercial
importance of the both places.\textsuperscript{14}

Interestingly, exclusive agreements were entered into with local rulers for
the annual supply of fixed quantities of pepper.\textsuperscript{15} The native merchants could
export spices only with the consent of the Dutch and they could export only
limited quantities and Dutch passes were essential for sea trade. In the 17\textsuperscript{th}
century, the Dutch company also took over the cartaz system from the Portuguese.
It was known under the name ‘pass’ or ‘passport’ system. The Dutch company
(VOC) also followed the Portuguese procedure in attempting to monopolise both
the Europe-Asian and the intra-Asian trade in spices.\textsuperscript{16}

In May 1642 they negotiated a treaty with the raja of Cempakasseri
(Purakkad) for the delivery of pepper and ginger.\textsuperscript{17} The Dutch were also given
permission to build a factory at Purakkad. Mathew van der Broeck, the Dutch
merchant at Kayamkulam, visited the kings of Kollam and Travancore in 1647.
The king of Kollam promised to be helpful to the Dutch. The Travancore raja also
promised that his land would remain open to the company\textsuperscript{18}.

\textsuperscript{14} Ashin Das Gupta, \textit{India and the Indian Ocean World-Trade and Politics}, New Delhi, 2004, p.35.
\textsuperscript{16} Rudrangshu Mukherjee & Lakshmi subrahmanyan (ed.), \textit{Politics and Trade in the Indian Ocean
\textsuperscript{17} A. Sreedhara Menon, \textit{A Survey of Kerala History}, Kottayam, 1970, p.256.
\textsuperscript{18} T.I. Poonnen, \textit{Dutch Hegemony in Malabar and its Collapse (A.D.1663-1795)}
Historically, the Dutch entered into the port of Kollam only in 1658. The administrative council of Batavia sent Van Goens to put an end to the Portuguese power in India and Ceylon. The Dutch company wanted to keep good understanding with the princes and strengthen the connections with Kollam.\textsuperscript{19} Van Goens sailed to Kollam and reached on 29\textsuperscript{th} December, 1658. He touched Cannanore and returned to Ceylon, leaving a considerable garrison at Kollam.\textsuperscript{20} Certainly, Van Goen’s first objective in Kerala was Kollam.\textsuperscript{21}

In 1658 the Dutch captured the Fort of Kollam from the Portuguese and made a treaty with the Rani in 1659.\textsuperscript{22} But with the help of the natives, the Portuguese recaptured Kollam. With the formation of United Company, the Dutch policy of establishing sea power in the East and evicting the Portuguese crystallized. The working of the Dutch East India Company in Malabar resembled its operations in Indonesia.\textsuperscript{23} The Dutch sent powerful fleet to attack the Portuguese. It was true that trade was their sole concern, and they tried to resist other competitions through naval cordon.

Obviously, the treaty of 1659 also secured for the Dutch an exclusive monopoly of trade in spices at Kollam. However, the departure of Van Goens later

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p.22.


weakened the Dutch position in Kollam. Van der Meyden, Governor of Ceylon proceeded to Kollam, and withdrew the garrison on the 14th of April, 1659 under heavy Portuguese pressure.24 In December 1661 Kollam was recaptured by the Dutch in another expedition under Van Goens.

The Dutch now entered into separate treaties with Kollam and Travancore. The treaty with Kollam concluded in March 1662 repeated the provisions of the treaty of 165925. It also prescribed the arrangements for the administration of law and order in Kollam town. The treaty with Travancore in March 1662 provided for the expulsion of the Portuguese from the region and grant of the exclusive monopoly of pepper trade to the Dutch.26

The Portuguese began to withdraw from the scene by 1661.27 Kollam had seven fair brick churches (Portuguese) when the Dutch took it in 1661.28 Though Kerala was on the periphery of the Dutch commercial and political activities, distanced very much away from the core centre of Batavia, the intensity and the

25 Ibid.
extent of their commercial activities necessitated the collaboration of several local traders with substantial capital for their running.\textsuperscript{29}

At Kollam where a warehouse was built in 1650 with the consent of the king, relations with the Portuguese continued to be tense. The Portuguese commander of Kollam seized one of the company’s vessels loaded with goods on its way to Malabar. Again and again ships with Dutch passes were captured by the Portuguese. After the capture of the Portuguese forts of Kollam, Cochin and Cannanore, the Dutch were free to step into the place of the Portuguese in the politics and commerce of Malabar.

Indeed, the Dutch emerged as a powerful force in the history of Kerala with the capture of Cochin from the Portuguese in 1663; but even prior to this event individual Dutchmen had visited Kerala coast and explored possibilities of trade. The ‘married Portuguese’ and assimilated half castes removed from Cochin to Goa under the terms of the capitulation, with their women and children numbered 4000.\textsuperscript{30}

The Portuguese half-castes were employed as commercial residents, interpreters, soldiers and school masters. The Portuguese freed slaves (Topasses-illegitimate children) came down to the Dutch. Many of them are employed in the

\textsuperscript{29} Pius Malekandathil, \textit{Winds of change and Links of Continuity: A Study on the Merchant Groups of Kerala and Channels of their Trade, 1000-1800}, Paper presented in the 19th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies, Leiden University, Netherlands, 26\textsuperscript{th}-30\textsuperscript{th} June, 2006, p.10.

ship-building yard. Some of them engaged in fishing and other groups in carpentry work, some of them engaged in crafts and trade.\textsuperscript{31} Historically, The \textit{topasses} remained in the lower strata of the society and never shared equal social status with the other Portuguese trading groups.\textsuperscript{32}

Nieuhoff went to Kollam to start trade with that town.\textsuperscript{33} Nieuhoff served for two years as captain of Kollam.\textsuperscript{34} Nieuhoff was appointed as the chief of Kollam. He obtained concession from Travancore to purchase all the pepper grown in there for 15,000 fanam (about Rs.5000) a year and a small quantity of arms.\textsuperscript{35}

John Niuehoff on behalf of the Dutch company engaged treaty with the king of Karunagappally, Kundara, Kollam and Travancore. According to this treaty nobody shall be permitted to export any pepper or cinnamon out of this country or to sell them to anybody except to the Dutch company.\textsuperscript{36} After the conquest of Cochin and Kollam, monopoly contracts were rigorously enforced and the price fixed at a base of 2 stuivers a pound.\textsuperscript{37}

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{Ibid.}, p.89.
\item K.P. Padmanabha Menon, \textit{History of Kerala}, Vol.4., New Delhi, 1995, p.407,
\item Sanjay Subrahmanyam, \textit{Maritime India}, Delhi, 2004, p.110.
\end{enumerate}
Dutch, like their predecessors, the Portuguese, were not willing to follow the market rate; they wanted to obtain their requirements of spices at very low rates. And the competition for pepper had become very keen, the Dutch had profited from the constant quarrels of the local chieftains. Cinnamon also played a crucial role in medieval maritime trade. The Dutch held the monopoly on cinnamon from 1636. Later this monopoly became less important on account of the spread of cinnamon trees to other tropical areas.

Pepper was in greatest demand among the spices, the Dutch also concentrated on pepper trade at Kollam. But the amount of pepper collected by the company began to decrease from year to year. Passes for 100 candies of pepper are annually given to the kings of Kollam, and Porca. The vessels which passed by without paying the dues were seized by the company. Because of this, Malabar ships feared to sail to the places like Surat. This had a revenue loss of more than 100,000 fanams a year by way of tolls. It was about 4000 fanams that such ships had to pay. At Porca (Purakad) the company had brick lodge and a warehouse of pepper. There was a book – keeper as an agent for the collection of pepper.

40 Om Prakash (ed.), *Dutch Factories in India 1617-1623*, New Delhi, p.66.
The King of Cochin gets a toll of 40 Cochin fanams from the supplies for each candy of pepper of 500 lbs. In Kollam the company pay 4 fanams. The money circulated on the Malabar Coast consisted of ducats and Cochin fanams. The local rulers of Malabar granted the Dutch exclusive trading rights and permission to build forts and factories. But Cochin was the only territory directly administered by the Dutch East India Company. The kings of Malabar were not directly involved in trade. So, this task was done by the native merchants. The Dutch East India Company always remained as an alien body on the fringes of Asian society.

The Dutch purchased sandalwood from Canara and sent to Batavia for the China trade. Slaves also included in the items of commodities; slaves were brought to Masulipatnam from the Malabar Coast, Pulicut and Tengapatnam. From the coast of Malabar, timber also sent to Batavia which were used for ship-building. In Travancore, Parur was the centre of coir trade. They used it chiefly for use in anchors.

Coilan (Kollam) produced coir but was not so good, but Cochin produced fine quality coir than the coir of Parur and Kollam. But the Dutch sometimes

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43 Ibid., p.72.


bought the coir of Kollam in order to lessen the price.\textsuperscript{49} Toll from the export of slaves was an important form of revenue for the company. Tamarind, Jagger-sugar and Coir-fibre etc. were the items of trade in Coilan. Moreover, Japanese copper, iron, lead, tin steel, cotton etc. imported by Coilan (Kollam).\textsuperscript{50}

It is significant that the great demand for pepper in Europe, the export to China and other places, besides to the purchasing of the competing groups caused a hike in the price of pepper. The native chiefs began to sell pepper for a higher price. Travancore exported pepper to Coromandel by land and sea. The Prince of Neyyanttinkara, by the order of the king of Travancore, settled an agreement in 25\textsuperscript{th} April 1723. The Company was obliged to supply the artillery and munitions.\textsuperscript{51}

The first Dutch factory in India was founded at Surat in 1602. In 1610 a factory was founded at Pulicut.\textsuperscript{52} The Dutch had factories at Kanyakumari, Tengapattanam, Kollam, Palakkad, Kochi and Kannur, Kollam and Cochin were fortified establishments. The Dutch founded their factories for buying pepper and these factories acted as outlets for the imported items. To be specific, there were two types of pepper collection for the Dutch. They are those of contract pepper and of pepper bought from private persons.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{49} A. Galletti, \textit{Op.cit.}, pp.75-78.

\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.220-28.


\textsuperscript{53} \textit{Ibid.}, p.214.
They imported goods from Indonesia and other places. The Indonesian cloves and Japanese copper imported by them did not pick up to their expectations. The stock merchandise for which the Company found a ready market in Kerala were sugar, spices, saltpetre, tin, lead, iron, silk, camphor, quicksilver etc.\textsuperscript{54} Other articles of trade were piece-goods, cardamom, cotton, areca, sandal, indigo, slaves, timber, bricks, rice, coir fuses, coconut oil, salt, charcoal and firewood.\textsuperscript{55}

Later, the Dutch demand for pepper increased day by day. They wanted minimum quantity of spices, especially pepper. They collected pepper from Kerala coast at a cheapest rate and their profit in European markets was give to six times higher than the price in Kerala. Dutch exports slumped during 1730-40 to 70,000 lbs.\textsuperscript{56} Supplies from the Dutch factories at Palakkad, Kayamkulam and Kollam became irregular.

The distribution of crops in the war with Travancore made it difficult for Kollam merchants to fulfil their agreements with Dutch. By 1733 Dutch pepper exports from Kerala came down to 8,25,399 lbs.\textsuperscript{57} The Dutch rate of pepper was

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\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Ibid.}, p.248.
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12 Ducats\(^{58}\) per candy. At the same time, the other Europeans gave 15-16 ducats per candy.\(^{59}\) In 1736, the Dutch pepper export was 5, 36,789 lbs.\(^{60}\) In contrast to the steadily rising market price of pepper, the Dutch were willing to offer only 12 Ducats per candy.

The Dutch had threat from the rivals like the English and widespread smuggling affected the regular supplies to the Dutch factories. The annexation of Eleyadathu Swarupam the highest pepper providing area in South Kerala, by Thiruvitamkur in 1737 clinched the issue for the Dutch, and a confrontation with Marthanda Varma became inevitable. Marthanda Varma refused the supply of pepper from Eleyadathu Swarupam and Karunagapally.

During 1746, procurement of pepper was made the responsibility of the administrative officers in the regions of Trivandrum, Nedumangad, Chiranyinkil and Paravoor. In these areas the merchants acted as the sub agents of the offices, for out of the commission of 15 panams per candy granted to suppliers of these regions, 11 panams were to the merchants and 4 panams to the officials. Because of these developments pepper began to flow to the state depots.

At this time, Dutch pepper procurement at Cochi slumped. It came down day by day. By the treaty of Mavelikkara, signed in 1753, the Dutch agreed not to obstruct Travancore expansion and to sell arms and ammunition to the King. In


return Travancore agreed to supply annually 3000 candies of pepper from existing territories and 2000 candies from countries to be conquered, both at concessional rates. During 1743-95 the Dutch concentrated on local trade at Kochi to make their establishment profitable. Thus the Dutch turned to Kochi, and they began to sell Indonesian spices and sugar to the ships calling at Kochi. But it began to decline. All trading at Kochi had to be closed down in 1793.

The total turnover of Dutch trade in Malabar was very small. The items of the import in which the Dutch participated were opium, copper, tin, lead, iron, steel and spices. Of these products opium found a ready market and made huge profit. The Dutch exchanged opium for pepper.

The Dutch could not derive great advantages from goods in which they had dominance in the market. Their returns from all sources of revenue in trade and political power were very low throughout the seventeenth century. From 1670 to 1700, profits and incomes fluctuated from a low of F (florins) 64,622 (1698), to a high of F 298, 446 (1680). Apart from the year 1680, 1681, 1683 and 1684 (1680-84) there were never sufficient to cover the expenses of administration, and the annual budget was in deficit. This deficit was sometimes as high as F 290,000. In the other trading areas like Gujarat, situation was slight different. In

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61 Ibid.


64 Ibid.,p.109.
such places the Dutch were able to finance a good part of their exports from the country.

A battle was fought on 10 August 1741, between the armies of Marthanda Varma and the Dutch at Colachel. Consequently, the Dutch lost the battle and their dream of a revived monopoly had to be given up.\(^6^5\) The company had its agents at Collachel for watching such ships.\(^6^6\) Marthanda Varma turned against Kayamkulam and the Dutch helped the ruler of Kayamkulam against Marthanda Varma. But later Marthanda Varma won the battle. In 1742, the Dutch fort of Kollam was attacked by the Travancorean army.\(^6^7\)

As a result of the war at Colachel the pepper trade was taken over by Thiruvitamkur and this development was to have serious repercussions on the Dutch. In 1743 Thiruvitamkur banned free trading in pepper and directed the merchants to deliver it to the State. There was a decline in the supply of pepper in the year 1743.\(^6^8\) The continued warfare in Kayamkulam, Kollam and Vadakkumkur had caused much loss to the Company’s pepper trade. The conquest of Kollam, Kayamkulam and Vadakkumkur by Travancore caused to shake the base of Company’s trade.\(^6^9\) Thus the Company showed interest to make a treaty of peace with Travancore.

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According to the treaty of 1753, the king of Travancore had the responsibility to supply the Dutch 3000 candies of pepper at Rs.65 a candy of 500 pounds from his hereditary territory. Besides this, he had to give 2000 candies at 55 a candy from the conquered territory. But this was not possible for the King of Travancore. Most of the contracts became valueless. The officials tried to force the kings to fulfill their contracts by exhortations, summonses and threats. And, moreover, there was a decline in the supply of pepper in the year 1743.

According to Jan Rosier, a Dutchman came to Kollam in 1769, Kollam was one of the finest harbour in Malabar. Therefore, he was against the abandoning of Kollam by the Dutch. All types of Asian vessels could find a safe anchorage at Kollam. The king of Travancore had an interest on the region. The place was a centre of attraction for the competing powers because of its commercial importance.

To acquire Kollam without unpleasantness, the king of Travancore had stopped delivering pepper at his residency. Rama Varma knew that pepper is the main attraction of the Dutch in Kollam. He wanted the abandoning of Kollam by the Dutch. So he tried to make disturbance to the pepper procurement of the Dutch. Thus the Dutch were forced to abandon their establishment. The Dutch had

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the threat of the Portuguese and English also. The abandoning of Kollam by the Dutch is profitable for the Portuguese.74

According to Rosier Travancore’s plan was to make Kollam a second Calicut where complete free-trade would be permitted in pepper, wild cinnamon and other commodities.75 The Dutch restricted the business activities of Kerala by a system of track regulation. Their commercial system imposed several restrictions on imports and exports.76 They categorised the articles of trade two divisions. They were the lucrative products of commerce declared as the company’s products and the articles that gave them low returns. The Dutch East India Company actually wanted enormous profit. The Dutch and Coilan, both the groups lost very much in war times.77

Meanwhile the trade of the Dutch East India Company began to decline. Thus they changed their policy of interference and decided to make a treaty of friendship with Travancore on 15 August 1753.78 After the battle Marthanda Varma built up a new kind of bureaucratic state. He built up a commercial department to finance the state. The commercial department had a strict monopoly

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in the pepper trade. Interestingly, The merchants of Travancore were turned into employees of the state.\textsuperscript{79}

The Dutch Policy towards the princes did not make any profit to them. Actually their policy was unsuccessful and it was harmful to their trade interest. Stein Van Gollenesse tried to make good relationship with the enemy groups of Travancore. The Dutch always tried to make contracts with the pepper producing regions.\textsuperscript{80} Most of the princes refused to fulfill their trade contracts with VOC.\textsuperscript{81} Because, they were afraid of Travancore. But the Dutch were totally aware of the profits from the pepper trade.

The Dutch had six watch posts between Cochin and Kollam, causing the area to prevent the transport of pepper from the northern ports of Cannanore and Calicut.\textsuperscript{82} The price of pepper in southern coast was cheaper than in the northern regions. The Dutch also practised exchange system in pepper trade; they contracted to pay for pepper in opium. They fixed the exchange rate between pepper and opium at a pound of opium for 100 pounds of pepper.

Opium was imported freely from Surat into the northern parts and from their parts the merchants transport it into the southern parts. The Dutch brought large quantities from Bengal. During the early period the trade was very profitable


\textsuperscript{80} Sinnappa Arasaratnam, \textit{Maritime India in the seventeenth Century}, New Delhi, 1994, p.99.

\textsuperscript{81} Mark De Lannoy, \textit{The Kulasekhara perumals of Travancore, History and State Formation in Travancore from 1671 to 1758}, Leiden, 1997, p.67.

to the Dutch. But later they had to drop the exchange ratio between opium and pepper. The Dutch soldiers in the watch posts between Cochin and Kollam tried to prevent importing opium and exporting pepper. Rice imports to Malabar Coast had to be kept open to supply the Dutch controlled ports of Cochin and Kollam.

Historically, the accession of Marthanda Varma to the throne of Travancore was an epoch-making event in Kerala. He re-organised the bureaucracy of the state; and the annexation of neighbouring kingdoms to Travancore was another feature of his time. Most of the pepper-providing regions were annexed by him to his region. Certainly, this led to a long conflict with the Dutch. Travancore under the dynamic leadership of Marthanda Varma, not only reorganised its administration and quelled internal dissensions but also became a powerful force in the region.

They declared ‘cotton, cloth, lead, opium, silk, sugar etc, as company’s commodities. The trade in low profitable articles was left free or permitted under certain restrictions. The officials of the Dutch East India Company were given a

83 Ibid., p.98.
share in the trade. The Dutch commercial system restricted the freedom of trade of the local merchants.

**Dutch pepper export from Kerala.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1743</td>
<td>nil</td>
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<tr>
<td>1746</td>
<td>5,41,189. Ibs</td>
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<tr>
<td>1753-56</td>
<td>54,95,245 lbs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1756-60</td>
<td>99,73,615 lbs.</td>
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The Dutch did not have any obstacles in the early years. They were able to maintain a monopoly of trade. They guarded the coast to prevent the export of pepper. The Dutch threatened to make the rulers supply pepper according to the contracts. Later, the agreements which the Dutch had made with those chieftains for the monopoly of pepper trade became valueless. The decline of the political power of the Dutch had a negative impact on their trade. In the period of Dutch

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dominance, drastic changes were not occurred in the structure of export trade. But the expansion of trade was only in one specific direction-Europe.92

There was a gun powder magazine at Kollam. During the year of 1742 the supply of gun powder (at the end of August) to the fortress of Coilan was amounted to 29,950 lbs- and 114, 33 lbs to the fortress of Cannanore-Coilan provided 3,100 lbs of gun powder to the Jew and the Dutch collected from them.93 The Dutch also had financial burden to maintain military establishment to get monopoly of trade. Moreover, expenses of war also created many difficulties to them. Historically, the battle of Kolachel was a major disaster for the Dutch.94

The Dutch negotiated for a treaty of peace with Travancore on 22 may 1743. As per the treaty, the king of Travancore agreed to give the Dutch at Kollam 120 candies of pepper at 54 rupees per candy.95 A pass for 200 candies would be given to Travancore on its payment of half of the contracted 1200 candies of pepper.

The take over of pepper trade by the state during 1743-44, disrupted European commerce in Travancore. Pepper export by the Dutch reduced considerably by 1746.96 The high price for pepper and its shortage made many

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problems to the Dutch like the competition with other European powers like Portuguese and the British.

The Dutch had to depend on the government of Travancore for the procurement of pepper. With the treaty of Mavelikkara in 1753, the Dutch and Travancore wished to make good profit. The main clauses were that the Travancore ruler undertook on any pretext not to receive or encourage other European powers in the territories subject to him. If any other European powers attacked him, the Company would provide full support by land and by sea. According to the 9th article of the treaty, the Company was barred from interfering in the internal politics of the country.97

The treaty of 1753 practically destroyed the political power of the Dutch in Malabar.98 The Dutch tried to regain their lost territories but they failed. The Dutch tried to restore their prestige and regain the commercial monopoly, but they could never recover.99

Till the accession of Marthanda Varma in 1729, Travancore was only a minor principality. Most of the land in the country was owned by the administrative body of Sri Padmanabhaswami Temple. The temple body had the right to interfere in the political matters. There are records of the interference of the temple body in the political matters, especially in war times.100

100 *Mathilakam Curuna*, 1722, Ola.4.
Marthanda Varma several times attacked Kollam.\textsuperscript{101} The battle of Colechal put an end to the Dutch dreams of the conquest of Malabar. It was the first great blow inflicted on the Dutch army and its moral effect was so great that the Dutch were never recovered from it. Later, the company was reconciled to the position of mere traders without any political power.

The victory of Travancore was a decisive factor in its development. It removed the main obstacle in the way of its triumphal march towards the north and made conquest of Kayamkulam and other states possible. It also increased the prestige of Marthanda Varma with the rest of the Malabar princes.\textsuperscript{102} Of the 24 prisoners taken at Colechal there were two lieutenants, Eustachis D’ Lannoy and Doncaud,\textsuperscript{103} a Frenchman, whom the Maharaja selected for employment in his army.

The war with the Dutch taught him superiority of trained infantry.\textsuperscript{104} He employed these two officers to organise for him a standing army trained and armed on the western model.\textsuperscript{105} De Lannoy remodelled and reorganised the Travancore forces, trained a cavalry squadron. He built forts along the boundaries


\textsuperscript{102} \textit{Ibid.}, p.70.

\textsuperscript{103} K. Sivasankaran Nair, \textit{Op.cit.}, p.22.


of Travancore\textsuperscript{106} and the construction of Nedumkotta was under the supervision of De Lannoy.\textsuperscript{107}

Under De Lannoy Travancore became more powerful to fight against the enemies.\textsuperscript{108} The Dutch power became weak particularly in politics and trade. The army trained by D’ Lannoy was not inferior to the Dutch power.\textsuperscript{109} He served Travancore for 36 years.\textsuperscript{110}

Later, Marthanda Varma suppressed rebellion in the state and annexed Kollam. These activities helped for the expansion of Travancore. He had organised a standing army which was powerful enough for the purpose of welding Travancore into a single state. He had also undertaken numerous reforms like Nanjinad irrigation work.\textsuperscript{111}

‘Murajapam’, an important state ceremony celebrated in Padmanabhaswami Temple once in six years, was started during the period of Marthanda Varma (1750) and the last occasion being in 1905.\textsuperscript{112} ‘Murajapam lasts for fifty-six days

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and closing with Lakshadeepam. His Thrippadanam\textsuperscript{113} of 1750 is a historical event, by this he became a dasa (servant) of SriPadmanabhaswami.\textsuperscript{114}

Records say that Sri Padmanabhaswami temple was burnt in 1686.\textsuperscript{115} (Mathilakam Granthavary-1 Ola-222, 861-5-16). Marthanda Varma decided to repair this temple during his time (Mathilakam curuna 2(A), Ola-37). There were records of the donation of \textit{Channans} for the repairing of the temple during the time of Ravi Varma Kulasekhara. Their donation was around 18000 panams.\textsuperscript{116}

The property of Sri Padmanabha such as gold and ornaments took as lend by the rulers of Travancore for war expenses and they had returned these properties (Mathilakam curuna No:441, Ola No:4-6, 978-2-14.).\textsuperscript{117} Officials were appointed for registering the financial matters of the temple.\textsuperscript{118}

The wealth that kept in the arrays of the temple was the donations (kanikka) of the royal families and the subjects of the different branches of Venadu. In the festive occasions they gave ornaments and coins to Sri Padmanabha. Mathu Tharakan also include in this list of donors.\textsuperscript{119} Interestingly,

\textsuperscript{113} Neettu, 999-7-30-90-Page. 255.
\textsuperscript{115} Mathilakam Granthavari, 1, Ola 222, 861-5-16.
\textsuperscript{116} Mathilakam Curuna, No. 1719, Ola 34, 781-27.
\textsuperscript{117} Mathilakam Curuna, No.441, Ola no:4-6, 978-2-14.
\textsuperscript{118} Mathilakam Curuna, No.1722, Ola 4.
The *methanmani* (a special clock) of Sri Padmanabha Swami temple was built by using the Dutch technology.\(^{120}\)

The continued warfare in Kayamkulam, Kollam and Vadakkumkur had caused much loss to the Company’s pepper trade. The conquest of Kollam, Kayamkulam and Vadakkumkur by Travancore caused to shake the base of company’s trade.\(^{121}\) Generally, trade with Malabar was not profitable to them. They had heavy expenditure on garrisons, forts and factories. They couldn’t compete with the other trading groups such as the Moors and the other European power.

The Company’s standard reduced into a mere trading agency, and it lost its political power. Later period, *mulaku madissilakkar* (financial secretaries or officials of the financial section) look after the commercial matters.\(^{122}\) After Kayamkulam, Marthanda Varma turned against Puarakkad. Most of the Dutch establishments south of Cochin passed under the control of Marthanda Varma.

During the reign of Marthanda Varma, the Dutch company was forced to abandon its proud position. An efficient and trained army was raised which gave Travancore a predominance in Malabar affairs which no state had enjoyed before. Great irrigation works, roads etc. were undertaken and carried out, and many charitable institutions were also founded.\(^{123}\)

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\(^{122}\) Neettu, 976-8-10-4, Page.161.

Historically, the failure of the Dutch policy in Malabar was due to a variety of reasons. The most important cause was the rise of Travancore as a powerful military state. They were not able to compete with the rising power under Marthanda Varma. The Company actually gave up their idea of military establishment in 1697. The Company maintained considerable military establishments. Though the Company’s military establishment cost a great deal, it produced no satisfactory results.

In 1697 the company’s policy of economy resulted in most of the forts being reduced both in size and in the strength of the garrisons, Cochin being authorised a force of 300 men, Chettwaye 144, Quilion 99, Cannanore 79 and Cranganore 56.124 But they did not give their attention on territorial conquests.125 Trvancore continued its expansionist moves, during the time of Udaya Marthanda Varma, Kayalpattinam was under his control.126 Actually the Travancorean rulers concentrated on the strategic points of trade. The Dutch did not gave much attention to the conquered regions. The meagre naval strength of the Dutch at Kollam was not sufficient to master the sea and generate confidence among the

local princes. The battle of Kolachel was a major disaster for the Dutch. The heavy war expense was another reason for the weakening of the Dutch.

All the establishments of the Dutch were captured by Marthanda Varma and annexed with Travancore. He established his own rule in these captured territories. Actually the Company’s power was destroyed by Travancore. The majority of Dutch buildings, warehouses and godowns were dilapidated mud houses with thatched roofs hardly suitable for trade and totally inadequate to resist any attack. The Dutch policy towards the Hindus was tolerant and liberal. But the Muslims, who monopolised the trade of the locality of Kollam and Kayamkulam were turned against the Dutch.

Later, after the state took over pepper trade in Travancore, the price of pepper increased. Interestingly, the merchants turned to those who offered better terms and higher prices. The general Dutch policy in Malabar was maximum pepper trade at minimum expense. During 1743-95 the Dutch concentrated on local trade at Kochi to make their establishment profitable. Thus the Dutch turned to Kochi, and they began to sell Indonesian spices and sugar to

128 Ibid., p.55.
the ships calling at Kochi. But it began to decline. All trading at Kochi had to be closed down in 1793.

During the early years, the Dutch remained the masters of pepper trade in Malabar. But later on many changes occurred in the political conditions and trade in Malabar. It was the annexation of Eleyadathu Swarupam in 1737 by Travancore that alarmed the Dutch, a crisis in pepper trade in Malabar added to the gravity of the political situation. 134 Eleyadath Swarupam had a special importance for the Dutch in connection with pepper trade. 135 The Company never attempted to enforce the policy of completely restraining navigation and never claimed to be the sole lords of the seas. 136 At last with the coming of English the Dutch period came to an end.

The Dutch did not gave much interest in the field of agriculture. Their interest was confined to commercial crops only. Among the commercial crops, they chose crops that could be produced at cheaper rates for trade. They were concentrated on indigo cultivation and sent to Batavia. The Company brought fine quality seeds from Surat and cultivated in the land os Mangad and Angi Kaimals. 137 The Dutch had the cultivation of indigo in the regions like

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Venduruthy, Chettuwaye, Pappinivattam, Cranganore and Varapuzha. They owned many pieces of land scattered in different places in the middle of Travancore as far as Kollam.

At a time the Dutch were powerful on the coast, they did not care to consolidate landed properties by taking land nearer to the company’s territories in exchange for what lay nearer to the rulers. Company encouraged the local people for cultivation. They leased the land to local people annually and derived revenue from the lands. They leased the land for longer periods of time and it had its own disadvantages. Because of their policies like this, their future in the field of agriculture was not bright.

The monumental contribution of the Dutch in the field of scientific research work, *Hortus Malabaricus* is an authoritative work on medicinal plants of Kerala. It was the result of the keen interest and attempt of the Dutchman, Van Rheede. He noted that the medicines that he was importing at high cost from Europe for treating the soldiers of the Dutch Garrison in Cochin, were plants that were growing locally in Malabar. He could trace that it was these plants originally collected from Malabar by the Arabs and sold at the Mediterranean ports and reached various European capitals. It was these plants that he was importing back from the Netherlands.

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138 Ibid., 19.

139 Ibid., p.22.

Hortus Malabaricus is a 12-volume treatise on the plant wealth of Malabar, primarily those found around Cochi, Kollam and Kozhikode. This is the first regional floristic survey of Asia. Fr. Mathew also assisted him along with Ranga Bhat, Vinayaka Pandit and Appu Bhat for compiling this valuable work.\textsuperscript{141} A native physian, Itti Accuden contributed very much for completing the work. He has helped for selecting and identifying the plant and also supplied its local names. The characters of the plant’s stem, trunk, root, bark, leaf, flower, fruit and seed are systematically recorded under their local Malayalam names, along with their uses in medicine, agriculture and commerce. The methods of treatment are also described briefly.\textsuperscript{142}

It is interesting that Itty Accuden was an Ezhava by caste.\textsuperscript{143} By inviting him Van Rheede helped for changing the caste ridden society. It was a historical event, because the other three assistants were Brahmins and this must certainly have planted the seeds of an awareness about social justice in the minds of the people of Malabar. In the cultural history of the Malayalam language and script, Hortus Malabaricus has a pre-eminent position.

That Hortus Malabaricus has been printed and published as a document, makes it the greatest economic asset of our country in today’s context of the internationally accepted rules of “Intellectual Property Rights” and “Biological Patent Laws”. It may be recalled that when Turmeric was recently patented as medicine, by an American

\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid.,53.

Company, India contested on the ground that turmeric had been in use traditionally in India for a long period. For documentary evidences India submitted several printed books published earlier and this was accepted by the U.S. court.

The work remains unique even today as the most important original source of information on the flora of Kerala. The monumental work immortalized the memory of the Dutch relation with Kerala.