

PREFACE

The scholars have studied trade of the English East India Company in Gujarat, North India and other parts of India like Bengal, Western India extensively right from the establishment of its factories in the beginning of the 17th century. But very little light has been thrown on the commercial activities of the Company's factories at Coromandel Coast in the 17th century. The English had established factories on Coromandel Coast at Masulipatam, Armagon, Petapoli and Madras and started their trade with eastern India and southeast Asia. Therefore, an attempt has been made here to give an account of these factories' trade in eastern India of 17th century using the original documents.

J. Talboys Wheeler in 1861 and H.D. Love in 1913 attempted to study Madras factory in their works 'Madras in the Olden Times' and 'Vestiges of Old Madras' respectively. But these two authors gave very meagre information regarding the English trade at Madras, Masulipatam, Petapoli, Armagon and other factories in Coromandel region. Even in the classic work of K.N. Chaudhuri, 'The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, (1660-1760)', the author deals with Coromandel as a part of Asian region fitting into an overall trade pattern. R.N. Banerji in 1974 attempted to study English trade in Madras in the period from 1700 to 1740, with the title - "Economic Progress of English East India Company in the Coromandel Coast". But this seems to be confined to trade of Madras in the early 18th century.

The English traders who had established their factories at Masulipatam, Petapoli, Armagon had trade relations with Golconda kingdom and the English merchants trading at Madras had commercial relations with Jingi, Vellore and Southern Karnataka region in the 17th century. This aspect has also not been paid attention to by the scholars so far. It was, therefore, considered worthwhile to study the commercial activities along with diplomatic relations of the Company's merchants with native rulers of the Coromandel Coast of the 17th century. This has been done with the help of the published correspondence of the English East India Company.

The trade of the East India Company in the Coromandel region has been studied from various points of view such as the establishment and development of the factories at Masulipatam and Madras and their commercial competition with other European companies, their diplomatic relations with the Indian rulers, weights and measures, commodities, prices, customs duties etc.

It must be noted that, the published records of the English East India Company are voluminous, to a certain extent sufficient enough to shed the necessary light on commercial activities, but they provide little information on the statistical aspects of trade and, therefore, we encounter problem while discussing the volume of trade. However, this does not mean that the records mention absolutely nothing about statistical account of the trade. The records do give some information in this regard and that has been fully utilized to discuss the volume

of trade, prices etc. of the 17th century in this dissertation. But these English records rarely throw light on historical geography of the period under review. For this we have to rely upon European travel accounts.

The important point in the study of trade of the English factories at Masulipatam and Madras is that, the region in which the merchants of the English East India Company traded, was not under a single rule like North India. North India in the 17th century was under the Mughal rule. But Coromandel region was ruled by various rulers. Not only this, but after the fall of Vijayanagar Empire, this region passed under various Nayaks, Muslim Kingdoms of Golconda and Bijapur. Therefore, Coromandel region witnessed wars between different local nayaks and the struggle between the Mughals and Deccan Kingdoms. Merchants had to carry on their trade often in adverse circumstances. Commercial and political relations of the English with various nayaks and Muslim kingdoms which had their control on coastal and adjacent region are explained in the chapters of the dissertation, indicating that they had no definite commercial policy as such but adopted the stand towards the traders from time to time as a means of monetary help.

Trade and commerce of the English East India Company has been particularly studied at length in this dissertation as the factory records throw enough light on these problems. It has been found in the records that though the English traders had spread right from the early years of the 17th century in the Eastern Coast of India and it took time to gain ground for their trade, yet they consistently struggled

to secure the comfortable place on Coromandel Coast and finally they made Madras their secure stronghold for the East India Company. The English East India Company made small territorial gains at Madras and Cuddalore in Coromandel Coast in the 17th century and used it as a stepping stone for the territorial expansion in Bengal in the 18th century. The Company took the advantage of tottering power of the Mughals, who never ruled Bengal in true sense after the death of Aurangzeb and established their foothold there.

While preparing this dissertation, ^{certain} records have been found most useful as sources. These sources can be classified into three categories such as:

- i) The records of the English East India Company;
- ii) Travel accounts; and
- iii) Secondary sources such as published books pertaining to the political and commercial history of the Coromandel Coast.

i) **Records of the English East India Company**

Our main sources that have proved to be of highest importance to us in this work are the records of the English East India Company. The correspondence maintained between the factories of Masulipatam, Petapoli, Armagon and Madras with the presidencies of Surat and Bantam, and with the London office grew in volumes during the years and those have now been published in volumes by the scholars of our

times. The correspondence throws light on the commercial transactions of the English East India Company. It also gives information about trading activities of the European trading companies, such as the Dutch East India Company. These accounts have been mainly used here to prepare the work both in its narrative and analytical aspects. The English East India Company's records from 1618 to 1684 have been published by Sir William Foster and Sir Charles Fawcett. Madras Record Office has published correspondence from 1670 onwards under the series of "Records of Fort St. George", which is voluminous in all aspects.

ii) Foreign Travellers' Accounts

For discussing the historical geography, commodities and prices in the 17th century the accounts of European travellers who visited India in the 17th century are of great use. In the 17th century a number of Europeans visited India and they have left behind them a valuable information of what they saw and experienced in India. Travellers such as Dr. John Fryer, Thevenot, Careri, Tavernier paid visits to the Coromandel area. It is true that we do not get much information from their accounts regarding the trade. However, satisfactory accounts of historical geography and information regarding weights and measures, commodities etc. are more valuable.

Dr. John Fryer was in India between 1672-1681. He paid visits to various places in Coromandel such as Masulipatam, Golconda, Madras, San Thome etc. He gives good account of various matters of

commerce.

Jean Baptiste Tavernier visited Coromandel region twice in 1641-42 and 1645-54. He paid visits to Golconda, diamond mines of Gandhikot and Kollur, Masulipatam. He gives valuable information about economic conditions of the Coromandel region, precious stones obtained from Gandhikot, Royal court life of Golconda, commodities, prices and monetary system etc. Two volumes of his travel account contain very valuable information regarding economic conditions of the Coromandel region. The travel accounts of Thevenot and Careri provide much information regarding various factories at Coromandel Coast and economic and political aspects of the Coromandel area in the 17th century.

iii) Secondary Sources

It must be noticed that the study of economic aspects of Indian History was commenced in early part of the 20th century. The economic historians who studied the conditions in 17th century India used various travel accounts and contemporary sources and threw light on various aspects of economic and commercial life of various parts of India. The works of these historians are also useful for our study. In this work, I have used these secondary sources also. Thus, it is with the help of all these records and secondary sources mentioned above that this M.Phil. dissertation has been prepared.

I must mention my gratitude to the persons who helped me while preparing this dissertation in many ways. I profusely thank Dr. M.A. Lohar, my research guide, who guided me at every stage while preparing this dissertation. I also thank the Librarian and the staff of Dr. Balkrishna Library, Rajaram College, Kolhapur; Department of Tamil Nadu Archives, Madras for providing me the necessary sources and books in their libraries.

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