

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF COROMANDEL COAST

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It is widely held that the term Coromandel is derived from the classical Tamil regional name Cholamandalam.¹ It was applied to the east coast of India covering a wider geographic area than that for which it was originally used. In the seventeenth century, this term was used to denote region even wider than what generally came to be accepted as Coromandel Coast in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. To the travellers and visitors of the seventeenth century to this part, the Coromandel Coast was the wide region of India's east coast from Point Calimere in the south where the coast line takes a sharp northerly drift upto 20°N latitude or the port of Ganjam in the north.

This region was divided into two parts, that is, the north and the south and the dividing line between the two was the Godavari Point. In later times the coastal region to the south of Godavari point was called as the Coromandel coast and the coast to the north of this point was known as Gingelly Coast or Golconda Coast. In the seventeenth century, the term embraced the coast lines of modern states of Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, and the south strip of Orissa. The merchants in the seventeenth century looked upon the Coromandel coast as one trading region, with common patterns of trade, common characteristics of seafaring and broadly similar hinterland.²

It must be said at first that the east coast of India

was generally inhospitable for shipping. There were not any natural harbours on the coast comparable to the west coast of India. This coast is at all times beaten by the heavy sea.³ Most of the ports of outlet were either exposed to the full force of the ocean or were sheltered behind mouths of rivers and creeks with problems of entry and exit created by shifting channels and sand bar.⁴ The ports of the Coromandel Coast were naturally not endowed with safe havens for shipping and trade. However, there were numerous ports on this coast which were in close proximity of one another and helped the trading activities on the coast.⁵

Because of the geographical situation the large ships could not anchor close to many of the ports and hence loading and unloading was done by the small country boats called as Coromandel masoolas.⁶ There were a number of ports situated at the mouth of the rivers. Some ports could admit large ocean-going vessels upto 200 tons through the river-mouths. In the time of high tide and monsoon season the river mouths were deeper and the vessels could sail in the land upto ten or twenty miles.

The Ports

Ganjam was the northern-most port on the Coromandel Coast which had some commercial importance in the seventeenth century. It is situated at lat. 19°22'N long 85°3'E at the mouth of the river Rushikulya.⁷ It was a port at a river mouth with shifting sand banks and narrow channels. The banks were sufficiently deep to allow the

entry of country vessels. Ganjam had commercial relations especially with Madras, Pulicat and other places on the Coromandel Coast where rice was in demand. Another characteristic of this port was that, it was situated in proximity of textile producing centres. There is no evidence that it was prominent in the oceanic trade in seventeenth century, but it appears that it was a feeder port to some of the neighbouring export centres of Golconda.⁸

About twelve miles south of Ganjam is the port of Gopalpur. We do not find sufficient information about this port and hence it seems that it was not a significant port in the 17th century, though it grew in importance in the 19th century. Twelve miles south of Gopalpur is the port of Sonapur, but very little is known about this port. There was an important mart town of Berhampur near this port and hence it seems that it was a feeder of piece goods to other larger ports in this area.

The next port in the south of any significance was Kalingapatnam. It is situated in 18°20'N and 84°8'E at the mouth of the Vamsadhara river. It is 17 miles from Chicacole. The port Kalingapatnam was an open roadstead protected on the south by sandy point and some rocks and provided safe anchorage.⁹ About 17 miles south of Kalingapatnam is a town of Shrikakulam, known among the contemporary Europeans as Chicacole. Thevenot says that Chicacole was the last town included in the Qutb-Shahi state and the north-eastern frontier extended right up to the mountains of Orissa.¹⁰ Srikakulam was a district administrative centre under the Golconda kingdom and also under the Mughal

Empire. It was a good mart which could supply various kinds of textiles collected^c from several villages in the adjacent region. The exports from the Kalingapatnam consisted chiefly of grains and pulses, myrabolams and turmeric and the imports were haberdashery, glasswares and gunny bags from several Indian ports.¹¹

Bimlipatnam was an important trading port in the seventeenth century. It was situated at lat. 17°53'N, long 83°27'E. It was more important than the major modern port of Visakhapatnam, which lies about 15 miles to its south. Bimlipatnam port was an open roadstead but it was well protected by the headlands. It provided safe anchorage for the vessels in both southwest and northwest monsoons. Large number of small coasting vessels and large ships which sailed to Bengal and across the Bay to south-east Asia visited Bimlipatnam on their voyages. Above all, it was the chief rice exporting port of Coromandel coast which supplied rice to South Coromandel, Ceylone and Malbar coast. Therefore, it was rightly called as a "rice bowl" for Ceylone and other ports.¹² The European merchants visited this place to pick up the food supplies before sailing on long journeys. The Dutch ships going from Masulipatam to Malacca and Batavia came to Bimlipatnam to collect rice, meat and other foodstuffs for the journey. It was also a port for export of textiles to south-east Asia.

To the south of Bimlipatnam is Vishakhapatnam, which is situated on lat. 17°42'N and long. 83°17'E. It was recognized as a good port in the 17th century because it was situated on the river and hence it was thought as a convenient port for the construction of

dockyard and for repairing the ships. It was chiefly a shipping centre, a port of call for the vessels trading on the coast.¹³

Further southwards from Vishakhapatnam are a number of ports such as Coringa, Kakinada, Ingeram, Bandarmulanka, Yanam and Jagannathpuram. Coringa is situated at the mouth of northernmost branch of Godavari, eight miles from Kakinada. It was an early Dutch settlement and it was formerly a principal port on Coromandel Coast. Kakinada is situated at shoal mouth of eastern branch of Godavari. Kakinada has not much historical significance. However, another place in its vicinity, Jagannathpuram acquired commercial importance because the Dutch established their factory at that place. It was finally ceded to the British in 1825. The ports of Yanam, Ingeram and Jagannathpuram had not much European trade though it is possible mainly because the indigenous merchants carried on trade there. The English carried the goods from Ingeram, the French from Yanam and the Dutch from Jagannathpuram.¹⁴

To the South of these ports is the town of Narasapur with its port and docks. It was situated on the Vasisthi mouth of Godavari river. The town is at the distance of six miles from the river mouth and almost all types of vessels, then in the use could enter it. Near Narasapur another town was Madapollam. Both these places were the ship-building centres. Ships were built here for the Royal Merchant Fleet of Golconda, for native merchants and for the European trading companies and merchants. European traders utilised the facilities at these places for building their vessels for Asian trade. The iron and

steel foundries of upper Godavari provided raw materials for nails, anchors etc.¹⁵ Ropes and Cordage were made here from coir imported from Ceylone, Malabar, and Maldives. The English and the Dutch also set up their dockyards here employing their own personnel. In spite of these facilities these places were not prominent trade centres, though there was some textile trade due to vicinity of the weaving villages.¹⁶

Masulipatam was another important port on the Coromandel Coast in the 17th century. It was situated at lat. 16°11'N and long. 81°8'E on the Bay of Bengal, 215 miles north of Madras city. In the 17th century Masulipatam was under the control of Qutbshahi kingdom of Golconda. It was one of the chief ports of the kingdom. Among the major ports of the Coromandel coast Masulipatam alone had trade contacts with Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea. The inter-regional linkage of Masulipatam was its major attraction for the Europeans. It was possible at Masulipatam to tranship goods from one region to another. It was an important port but it was never eminent as a port of export of local produce of the region.¹⁷

Masulipatam had direct sailings to the Red Sea Ports of Mokha, the South Arabian port of Muskat and the Persian Gulf ports of Basra and Bandar Abbas. It had commercial contacts with Surat, Malabar, Ceylone, Maladives, Bengal, Arakan, Pegu, Malaya and Bantam. A largenumber of mercantile ships visited this port every year. Shipping of Masulipatam was dominated by wealthy Golconda royalty and nobility who had their ships built at Naraspur. Even some of the Generals, Viceroy, administrative officials and the Governors of port of Masuli-

patam were the shipowners, the most celebrated among whom was Mir Jumla, the powerful Golconda General of Karnataka.¹⁸

Because of the encouragement by the rulers of Golconda a number of Persian merchants migrated to Masulipatam and settled there. Group of merchants from Telugu country, who were shipowners too, did their business at Masulipatam and they even traded across the Bay of Bengal. In addition to this, the two big European companies had large shipping there in the 17th century. Finally the growing European private shipping also used the facilities available at Masulipatam. It was an indispensable market for European import trade because of its access to rich hinterland. Masulipatam lost its importance after the annexation of Golkonda by Mughals in 1688. Masulipatam lost its political advantages and privileged character and consequently it lost its significant position in trade of Coromandel Coast.¹⁹

About twelve miles south of Masulipatam is Point Devy which was also known as Devy island in the 17th century. It was not a suitable place for harbour because of its geographical position. However, some attempts were made by the Dutch and the English to possess this island.²⁰

South of Point Devy was the port ^{of} Petapoli lying on the mouth of the river. It was situated in the several weaving villages and had considerable trade. From the end of the 17th century it came to be called as Nizamapatnam. Petapoli was the first place on the east coast of India where the English began to trade. They first launched

there in 1611 and later on established their factory at that place in 1618.²¹ It seems that the place-name Petapoli originated from Pedapallee which was the place name of a neighbouring village.²² Petapoli was the home of a number of Telugu Hindu merchants.

South of Petapoli or Nizamapatnam, there were ports such as Motupally, Cottapatnam and Ramapatnam. There was a tradition in this area that after the quarrel between the balijas and komatties in a nearby port, the Komatties migrated to Cottapatnam and started trading there.²³ An early 17th century English account mentions that Motapally formerly was a famous mart and centre of extensive trade.²⁴

Karedu was a port at the mouth of the river Munneru. It was linked with the capital city of Golconda by roads. Custom duties were lower at this place than at Masulipatam and the merchants carried on commercial activities here on small scale. Though it was not a very significant port in the 17th century, it is possible that it was one of the ancient ports of Andhra.²⁵

On the coast line from Cottapatnam in the north to Pullicat in the south, there were only two ports of some significance and these were Krishnapatnam and Armagon. Krishnapatnam was situated on the left bank of the Vupatheru river and it was commercially linked with the inland mart town of Nellore. The Vupatheru river was navigable upto twentyfive miles in small boats. Nellore was a weaving centre and piece goods produced in that area were carried in small boats from Nellore to Krishnapatnam and later on those were shipped in the big vessels for further transportation. South of Krishnapatnam at the distance

of fifteen miles was the port of Armagon. It was situated on a river and it had a good anchoring facilities and hence large European vessels visisted that place regularly in the 17th century. The English had made a settlement there in the early part of the 17th century and the Dutch vessels, too, visisted it for the piece-goods. Textiles produced in the adjacent area were exported from Armagon.

About 35 miles south of Armagon was the port of Pulicat. It was situated on lat. $13^{\circ}26'N$, long. $80^{\circ}20'E$. Geographically Pulicat was not a suitable place for a good port. However, it served as a port for Indian shipping since a long time before the 17th century, and it had commercial relations with south-east Asia. There were several handloom manufacturing centres in the nearby region and the finished products were exported from Pulicat.²⁶ Both the Dutch and the English traded there.²⁷ It was a place of the Dutch settlement and some villages in the neighbouring region were ceded to them and with the help of these villages they developed Pulicat into a good port town. They had also built a fort there. But outside the fort there was a section of port where the Indian merchants carried on their trade under Dutch restrictive control.

About twentyfive miles south of Pulicat was Fort St. George or Madras. It was situated on lat. $13^{\circ}5'N$, long. $80^{\circ}8'E$. Geographical position of the harbour was not convenient for shipping. It was not much frequented by the mercantile vessels before the foundation of the English settlement there.²⁸ Commercially it was an insignificant place, when the English arrived there. Madras was founded in 1639

in the reign of Charles I. In August 1639, a grant of half the revenues of the Madraspatnam was given to Francis Day, the chief of Armagon factory by the local Nayak of Chandragiri. Not only that, but the permission to build a fort also was granted to the English.²⁹ The port of Madras had not good facilities for anchoring the ships. The large vessels had to anchor well outside the port. Transport of goods was done by the small country boats and in the bad weather it was hazardous task.³⁰ It was predominantly a port of the English shipping and it served the networks of the English commerce in the east. Ships regularly sailed from Madras to ports of Malabar, to Bombay and Surat and beyond to the Red Sea and Persian gulf ports. On the eastern side Madras had trade contacts with ports of Burma, Achin, Bantam, Manila and Canton. It was only in the 18th century that, with the expansion of Madras in the interior and its administrative ties with the adjacent villages it became a port of the Coromandel Coast rather than an alien settlement. Such a development was caused more by the political reasons than by purely commercial interests.³¹

At the distance of four miles south of Madras was the port of San Thome. A fort was built there by the Portuguese and a town of Mylapore was very close to that place. Mylapore was commercially a significant port long before the Portuguese came to San Thome. Mylapore and San Thome were complementary to each other as the port and the inland mart town. Mylapore was a weaving centre and the piece goods were exported from San Thome. In spite of the Portuguese presence at San Thome, the Indian ships plied from that port to across the Bay of Bengal was unaffected by the English settlement of Madras. It was

commercially linked with Chingleput hinterland for its textile exports and imported goods for market of Chingleput.

About seventeen miles south of Madras was the port of Kovalam, but it never grew to any importance. South of Kovalam was the port of Sadras or Sadraspatnam. It was an important port of maritime trade in the 17th century. In the vicinity of Sadraspatnam there were several weavers' villages and the interior markets were well connected by the roads. Export and import trade was carried on by the Indian merchants from that place to across the Bay of Bengal. The coastline south of Sadraspatnam was the region of heavy trade and traffic in the 17th century. It had several ports close to one another and the places served by these ports were South Arcot, Tanjore, Trichanapally and Salem. About 20 miles of south of Madras was Alambaram, where there was a mint and pagodas were coined there with Alambaram stamp. About ten miles south of Alambaram was Kunimedu. It was situated at the mouth of small river which was navigable in land for some distance in small vessels. The English and the Dutch had settled their factories here.

At the distance of ten miles south of Kunimedu was Pondichery or Puduchery as it was known before the French settled there. It was situated on lat. $11^{\circ}56'N$ and long. $79^{\circ}50'E$. It was ceded to the French in 1672. But even prior to that it was a port of some commercial importance. Ships sailed from Pondichery to South-east Asia and it was a port of Coromandel shipping for several decades. The port had a hinterland of good markets and manufacturing centres

nearby.³²

About 15 miles south of Pondichery there were two ports, Devanampatnam and Cuddalore. Devanampatnam was mentioned in the contemporary European records as Tegenampatnam.³³ Cuddalore was at the distance of two miles from Devanampatnam. Cuddalore was famous as a port of trade for a long time. It was situated at the estuary of Gudilam river. It was a wintering port for the merchant ships which could shelter inside the river. Cuddalore developed as an urban settlement with many brick buildings and large population.

Deanampatnam was a port favoured under the Nayaks of Jinji. The capital and the mart town of Jinji was two days journey from the port. A brisk seaborne trade was carried on between Devanampatnam and Malabar, Ceylone and South East Asia. Commercially it had significance until the mid of the 17th century but in the last quarter of the century, it was a tiny village with no great trade. A piece of land was given to the English for settling a factory and building a fort. The fort built by them was called Fort St. David. The larger ships had to anchor four miles from the port. The port was at some distance from the shore and the goods were carried manually from the boats to the port.³⁴

To the south of Cuddalore was Porto Novo, which was situated at lat. 11°30'N, long. 79°45'E at the mouth of Vellar river. It was a flourishing port of the Coromandel Coast and was also known as Parangi Pettai and Mohammad Bandar. Commercially it was as

significant as the port of Masulipatnam. However, it had little contacts westward, except upto Malabar Coast. However, it had considerable trade on the Coromandel coast and in the east. Meaning of its Tamil name Parangipettai was the town of the Europeans. The Portuguese renamed it Porto Novo. The Portuguese established here the first settlement in the latter half of the 16th century and the English settlement was founded in 1683.³⁵ The anchorage for ships was good and the river was navigable for even the considerably large size vessels. The river Vellar was navigable for seven to eight miles from its mouth and the small boats frequented to the nearby weaving villages for carrying the piece-goods to the port.³⁶ Like Masulipatam the merchants of various nations traded at Porto Novo. The English, the Dutch and other Europeans had their factories there which were engaged in a thriving trade. It was a port with all the facilities for the vessels of both large and small size. It provided with naval stores, anchors, cordage, masts, sails etc. There was a large urban settlement and it was one of the few port towns of the Coromandel coast.³⁷

About five miles south of Porto Novo began the Tanjore Coast. There was the delta country of two river estuaries, the Coleroon and the Kaveri, with their innumerable branches and streams. The port of Kodiapaleam was at the mouth of river Coleroon. There was another port Devicottah on an island formed by the river and four miles south, there were two ports, Puthupattinam and Thirumulavasal. About 14 miles to the south was Tranquebar situated at lat. $11^{\circ}1'$ North, long. $79^{\circ}51'E$, on the left bank of the small river which could let in only small boats. The port had some trade on the coast and across Bay of Bengal. This port was ceded to the Danes by the ruler of Tanjore in 1618 and it was an important port of Indo-Danish shipping.

About seven miles south of Tranquebar was Karikal, an ancient port of Tamil country. It was situated at the mouth of Arasalar river and the town was on the north bank of it. Karikal was under the ruler of Tanjore until 1738. The Dutch had a factory there for some time. Paddy and rice of the Kaveri delta were exported from Karikal to other places on the Coromandel coast and to Malabar and Ceylone. Textiles and the sea produce were also exported from this place.³⁸

About eight miles south of Karikal was Nagore. It was situated at the mouth of the Kadaviayar river. Its chief exports were rice, textiles, chanks and other sea produce and its imports were spices, metals, arecanuts and a variety of consumables.³⁹

About three miles south of Nagore was Nagapatnam, situated on lat. 10°46'N. and long. 79°50'E. The Portuguese had a trading settlement in Nagapatnam for many years. They annexed and fortified it in 1642. The Dutch conquered the fort of Nagapatnam from the Portuguese in 1658. In the 17th century it was mainly a centre of the Dutch trade, though some Indian ships visited it. Large ships had to anchor at some distance from the port and hence loading and unloading was done by small boats. The Dutch exported textiles, rice and other country produce and imported south-east Asian Goods.⁴⁰

South of Nagapatnam the port of any significance was Adirampatnam. It was the port of the Tanjore kingdom. Most of the sailing from this port were to Malabar, Tinnevely and Ceylone. In the hinterland of Adirampatnam there were the villages producing rice and handloom textiles.⁴¹

The survey of the ports of the Coromandel Coast shows that many of the ports had open roadstead which made them relatively safe and had creeks alongside where either the large ships themselves could sail or the smaller boats could unload their cargo. Silting of the rivers and the shifting of the sandbanks was a regular phenomenon. The large ships had to stay out in the open and hence each port required a large fleet of boats to unload the cargo of big ships. Most of the ports provided minimal facilities.

The Ocean

The ports of the Coromandel coast were exposed to the Bay of Bengal and hence the climatic conditions in the Bay had great impact on the sailing in and out of the ports. Generally, the ships sailed from these ports to north and south along the coast and across the Bay of Bengal.

The major characteristics of the climatology of the Bay was the seasonal monsoon. There were two monsoons that blew across the ocean - the southwest monsoon from April to September and the north-east monsoon from October to February. Generally, the months of south-west monsoon was a good season for the vessels sailing from the Coromandel ports. The month of October when the monsoon changed was considered as a dangerous period for the sailings. The months when the monsoons changed were most hazardous period for shipping in the Bay. This was the period when the storms could create the cyclones. In the month of May the possibility of occurrence of the cyclonic storms which moved northwards and southwards, was greater. In the

month of October intense cyclonic depressions formed in the Bay and moved westwards and northwestwards. During this period the vessels lying in the open roadstead of the ports were in great danger and they had to run southwards or southwestwards on the approach of cyclonic storms.⁴²

The regular cycle of the two monsoons did not mean the division of a year into an outward and an inward sailing seasons. Generally, the ships sailed from southern to northern ports during southwest monsoon and from northern to southern ports during northeast monsoon. Vessels from the ports across the Bay of Bengal found their passage to Coromandel ports easy during northeast monsoon in the opposite direction in southwest monsoon. There is sufficient evidence to show that Indian ships generally followed this time-table. April to mid September was a safe period. The good season for the sailing in and out of Coromandel ports was a period from the month of April to mid-September. Ships owned by the Indians left Madras from April to mid-September for the ports of northeastern and eastern parts of the Bay and returned to Madras from the end of February to June, July and August which were the popular months for sailing.⁴³

Another notable characteristic of the climatology of the Bay was the cyclones that hit the coast periodically. The coast north of Masulipatnam was more susceptible to the cyclones. The cyclones had hit Masulipatnam several times during the 17th century. In December, 1659 and January, 1660 the town was hit by the storm and the floods. Many people and cattles drowned and the country around Petapoli, Naras-

pur, Pallakolu and the town of Masulipatnam were destroyed. In 1662 another cyclone hit the wider area from Masulipatnam to Porto Novo. This time about thirty vessels were destroyed.⁴⁴ In November, 1668 a cyclone hit Madras razing many buildings to the ground. In 1679 floods and cyclonic winds hit Masulipatnam destroying west parts of the town. It was estimated that 18,000 people died in this calamity.⁴⁵

THE HINTERLAND

Numerous ports on the Coromandel Coast had commercial linkages with the inland mart towns and they served as the outlets for the produce in the hinterland region. The vast hinterland of the Coromandel coast had a significant uniformity of its economic activities.⁴⁶ The markets and the trade routes from hinterland to Coastal ports remained consistent in the 17th century. Markets were strategically located and the outlets of exports were also conveniently located with good access to producing centres.

In the peace times the officers and their subordinates looked after the efficient functioning of the markets, security on the trade routes and collected the taxes from the artisans and the merchants. There were three types of villages in the hinterland. The one was villages that were purely agricultural. Another type of the villages had the artisans of one or other professions. The third type of the villages had mixed economy, i.e., agricultural as well as industrial and most of the villages could be classified in this category. Though the entire Coromandel region, economically and structurally had a broad similarity, there were naturally

some differences in the functioning of the economy, depending upon geographical, political and social factors.

In the extensive Andhra lowlands and plateau included within the Golconda kingdom, the district of Shrikakulam was the northernmost district. There were many textile producing villages in this district. Goods were cheaper here than elsewhere which helped in the growth of Ganjam. Earlier the goods were transported by land or in coastal boats to Bimlipatnam, Kalingapatnam or Vishakapatnam. The district was famous for the fine and coarse varieties of long cloth. Gunnies, twine and thread were also produced in the villages. Rice trade was also well organised. Rice was brought to the ports in large quantities from the interior parts.

Shrikakulam itself produced textiles and rice which were exported from the ports of Kalingapatnam and Bimlipatnam. The Europeans and Indian merchants had their agents at Shrikakulam who contracted for cloth and paddy. Vishakhapatnam which was a port in Shrikakulam district, did not acquire much commercial importance because it was in the territory dominated by the Telugu kings who opposed the demands of the Golconda and Mughal rulers.⁴⁷

The places such as Rajamundry, Elluru, Murtazanagar, Kondapalli or Mustafanagar and Warangal were the centres of textile export industry in North Coromandel. In the territory of hundred miles from Masulipatnam which was watered by the rivers Godavari and Krishna, there were a number of weaving villages, mart towns and central warehouses of manufactured cloth. Some weaving centres were very close

to the coast whereas some others were at the distance of about hundred miles from the port. Goods had to be transported on roads upto twenty days. Accessibility and security were major requirements in commerce and towns and centres for sale of artisan produce arose in convenient places.

To the south of Vishakhapatnam at the distance of about fifty miles a cluster of weaving villages centred on Tuny which was situated on a coastal road from Masulipatnam to Vishakhapatnam about five miles from the sea. The goods were supplied to Tunny markets by two villages, that is, Penarie and Uparu. About twenty miles south of Tuny was a mart town of Peddapuram drawing goods from a number of neighbouring villages. Another village south of Peddapuram supplied large quantities of cloth. This was the area of Godavari delta and the finished products could be transported from one place to another in small boats. There were two villages, Golapalem and Gondavaram ;in the vicinity of the weaving villages which had large tanks full of water convenient for washing and bleaching the cloth.⁴⁸ There were about 200 families of washermen scattered around the weaving villages. There was a convenient roadstead at Jagannathpuram to which goods could be transported for shipment.

To the south of Godavari delta there were settlements of weavers, dyers, painters, bleachers and washers. Cotton goods were procured from the village of Palakollu. The place was noted for its longcloth, salempores and moris. Dyeing and painting could be done there. Indigo was brought from inland where it was cultivated. The famous painted chintz of Masulipatnam, well known in the world market

came from this place.⁴⁹ The materials useful for ship building such as ropes, nails, coir were made here and were taken to Naraspore and Madapollam, the ship-building centres. Masulipatnam was at the distance of fifty miles from Palakollu. The goods were taken in small boats by river to a place called Vintera and then were sent to Masulipatnam on the oxen. Naraspore was situated on the Vasistha mouth of the Godavari river. It was a ship building centre. Further up from Naraspore was Madapollam. These places were in the heart of weaving villages. European companies had their factories and agents here. The English had a factory which they closed down in 1688 but resettled in 1698. About eight miles northwest of Naraspore was a small town Viravasaram (Veerasvaram). It was a market for textiles. Goods of these places could be sent to Masulipatnam by small boats along the coast or carried by the oxen.

In the interior of Godavari delta, there was the district of Elluru. There were several weaving villages which produced textiles for export. The piece-goods produced in these villages were known as Salempores, Parcallen and bethiles. They were at the distance of about fiftymiles from Masulipatnam and were linked by the roads. The goods were sent to Masulipatnam from a wide area, from Godavari delta villages to its southwest and from the interior region as faras Warangal. There were about twenty villages in the neighbourhood of Petapoli or Nizamapatnam which produced fine and specialized textiles for the export market. Petapoli was a noted place for the best dyeroots of the area and hence its painted and dyed goods were of good quality.⁵⁰

The district of Condapilly or Mustafanagar also provided the goods for export. There were about ten villages which produced the piecegoods known as tafachelas, beelangs, madaphons and blue dyed goods. In the region of Condaividu, there were about fifteen villages which produced all sorts of painted and dyed red textiles. Ventapallem and fourteen surrounding villages to the southwest of Masulipatnam also produced fine goods such as Salempores, bethiles and stripped gingham. South of the river Krishna and about hundred miles southwest of Masulipatnam there were weaving towns of Naliporu and Adelpilly and twenty villages which produced red chequered cloth, sestragantes, bethiles, pulang gobers and calewaphone bethiles. In that same direction were Darepondy and fourteen villages making painted goods, red dyed salempores and parcallen. Warangal and about twelve villages produced the piecegoods known as bethiles, chiavonyes.⁵¹ Most ofthe weaving centres noted above are in modern district of Godavari and Krishna of Andhra Pradesh.

We do not find much information about the inland mart towns. Navalavancha was a mart town on the main road from Masulipatnam to Golconda, about hundred miles from Masulipatnam. There were a number of weavers, cloth merchants, washermen and craftsmen. It was famous for coarse cloth and particularly, the long cloth that was exported. Commodities such as indio, iron and steel which were produced in the neighbourhood, were brought to this market for sale. Indigo was famous for its superior quality and it was taken to the weaving villages of lower Godavari and Krishna region. Iron was brought from the provinces of Santomannam and Singaneri and from the mines near Nagalavancha.

Samsatapeta in the province of Santomannam was chief market for iron and steel.⁵²

Makapente was another mart town on the way of Golconda and the imported goods such as copper, silver, perfumes and other luxury goods were sold there.

Golconda was famous for its diamonds during the 17th century. In the Golconda kingdom there were diamond mines at two places, Gandikota and Kollur.⁵³ Gandikota was situated on the north of the Pennar river and Kollur was situated on the Krishna river. Kollur was about hundred miles from Golconda. It was a major mining centre. There were about fourteen villages covered by the mines and a number of merchants resided in these villages.⁵⁴

South of Petapoli, at the mouth of Krishna river there were no major ports upto Armagon and Pulicat in the 17th century. Only the district of Nellore produced fine varieties of exports and these manufactured goods were sent to Armagon, Pulicat, Madras and San Thome. At the distance of about forty miles from Nellore was a place named Matalavare and there were some weaving villages around it. South of Nellore district was Chingleput which produced the textiles for export. Ponneri the northern taluka of Chingleput district had several weaving villages clustered around the towns of Ponneri and Arni. Ponneri was a good place for bleaching and washing. Karungali was a weaving centre where there were over a hundred looms.

To the south of Ponneri was the taluka of Saidapet.

In this taluka Madras and San Thome were situated. The weavers of San Thome and Mylapore produced painted and stripped cotton. Salivakkam, Poonamalee, Pedappa and Manimangalam were the places within twenty five miles of Madras. To the south-west were talukas of Kanchipuram, Uttiramerur and Arni which were important centres of weaving industry. These places were famous for long cloth, Salempores and fine muslin. South of Madras was taluka of Madurantakam which was the area of weaving industry. It contained many weaving towns and villages. Madurantakam itself was a centre of textile production and an internal market for variety of goods. Between this place and Madras were Manampady and Chempakam which were marketing centres for this region. At the distance of about twelve miles from Manampady was Kaipakam, with a number of dependent villages. The merchants of these places shipped their goods from the port of Sadraspatnam and Kovilam. The weaving villages of Cheyyar taluka exported the goods to the port of Alambaram and Sadraspatnam. Weavers in this region were mostly of Kaikolar caste.⁵⁵

Southwards of the Arcot district there were a few villages engaged in the textile production. Tinduvaram was a weaving centre. South of Tinduvaram there were some villages clustered around the port of Pondichery. There were several weaving villages in Chindamparam and Cuddalore talukas. Two villages Chennappanayakanpalayam and Naduvirapattu, supplied piecegoods to Cuddalore. Chindamparam was a mart town where the merchants of Porto Novo bought the goods. In the neighbourhood of Cuddalore indigo was cultivated in large quantities. Indigo was cheaper here. The region covered by SouthArcot district was well connected with the inland mart towns and weaving centres. The westward routes

passed through the important centres such as Salem, Mysore, Kanara and Southern Bijapur districts. Market centres along these routes were Bangalore, Walajapet, Lalpettai and Kanchipuram. Kannada merchants inter-changed their goods with Tamil and Telugu merchants in these markets. A significant feature of most of the south Coromandel ports was that within fifty to hundred miles of them there were a number of major market towns.

From Salem the textiles were exported in the 17th century. Long cloth of Salem was of the best quality and it fetched higher price. Further southwards, in the kingdom of Tanjore, the weaving centres were concentrated in the proximity of the ports. Negapatnam had several weaving villages around it such as Purvachery Naranamangalam, Sangamangalam and Manjikudi which were occupied by the weavers.⁵⁶ There were a number of weaving settlements in the neighbourhood of Karikal. The Coromandel ports of South exported the goods coming from Madura and Tinnevely.

Porto Novo, Negapatnam, Adirampatnam were famous as rice exporters. Rice in these ports was cheaper than at other places on the Coromandel coast and hence the wages of the workers and price of textiles were generally lower than in the northern weaving centres.

The Southern Coromandel ports were excellent for export of textiles because of accessibility to the hinterland, but in the matter of imports they were at disadvantage compared to the ports of northern Coromandel like Masulipatnam, Pulicat or Madras. Ports in the hinterland

of the southern ports were not great consuming markets. Some of the internal markets of this region traded in textiles, raw materials, necessary for their production and consumers goods of daily use. Some markets traded in metal, paddy and rice and some other in foodgrains, papper, spices and manufactured goods of daily use. All cotton used for textiles was produced within the subcontinent and transported from one place to other.

Merchants in Gujarat faced difficulties in obtaining supplies of textiles which resulted in popularity of cloth from Coromandel coast.⁵⁷ According to some contemporary sources some cotton was grown about 230 miles north-west of Madras. So cotton producing region was Krishna, Tungabhadra doab around Raichur. This cotton was suitable for coarser varieties of cloth.⁵⁸

There were a number of markets for cotton and thread. Two major cotton markets of central Coromandel were Ulundurpettai and Walajnagar. Ulundurpettai was about thirtyfive miles west of Cuddalore and Walajanagar was in North Arcot.

The geogography of the area and its settlement patterns were such that communication between ports and interior markets was easy and reasonably less expensive. A north-south and an east-west structure of roads and pathways usable through most of the years, provided the links between ports and markets. Thus ~~at~~ the above geographical background facilitated the growth of trade and commerce in the 17th century.



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