

CHAPTER THREE

MADRAS (FORT ST. GEORGE) FACTORY

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The English East India Company was making utmost efforts to secure a firm footing on the Coromandel Coast. They established themselves at Petapoli and Masulipatnam from 1613. In the beginning, however, they had to carry on their commercial activities in competition with the Dutch East India Company which had founded a strong foothold at Pulicat. In March 1624, they succeeded in getting "leave" or permission from the Nayak of Tanjore country and hence they established a factory at Karikal.<sup>1</sup> In 1626 they founded a settlement at Armagon or Durgarazpatnam, a place about 12 leagues (40 miles) from Pulicat and established a factory with 8,500 rials of eight as capital.<sup>2</sup> The Nayak of this place (Nayak of Venkatagiri) granted the English a spacious compass of ground, where they built a castle and gave them permission to stamp pagodas and fanam.<sup>3</sup> But Armagon could not fulfil all their hopes because Armagon road was shallow and the English Factors realised that Armagon could not supply piece goods on a large scale. Moreover, merchants in this area were impoverished by the exactions of the Nayak. The English fort at Armagon was dilapidated in spite of large expenditure on it. Evidently Francis Day, who had been in charge of Armagon since 1634 was looking out for a better position to which the settlement might be transferred. A Dutch letter from Pulicat tells us that at the end of January 1637, Francis Day passed Pulicat on his way to Pondicherri, with the intention of negotiating for the establishment of a factory there.<sup>4</sup> A letter of Pero Da

Silva, a viceroy of Goa to the President Methwold at Surat dated November 11/21 1637 reveals that, the English on Coromandel Coast were trying to settle a factory at "Coisvalao" (Covelong, 20 miles south of Madras,<sup>5</sup>) but nothing came of these attempts.

In 1639, owing partly to the annoyances caused to the Company's officers at Masulipatnam by the subordinates of the Sultan of Golconda, and partly to the desire to possess a factory nearer to the real centres of the weaving and dyeing industries of the country, Francis Day, Chief of the subordinate factory of Armagon sought for some land of Nayak named Damarla Venkatadra or Damarla Venkatappa. Hewas the chief of a neighbouring District of Chingleput with a coast line extending from Pulicat to San Thome and was lord of about twelve to fifteen thousand soldiers. His chief abode was at Wandiwash, about sixty miles south west of Madras and he was chief supporter of last representative of the old Vijayanagar dynasty, who was then living at Chandragiri in the North Arcot. He was a person of great influence and was eager to encourage commerce, in the hope of seeing his country flourish and grow rich. He offered the English to trade in his region.<sup>6</sup>

In July 1639 when Ivy arrived at Armagon as Agent, Francis Day brought the matter forward and obtained permission to visit the Nayak's country and ascertain what prospects of trade it offered. Embarking in one of the small country-built vessels, he voyaged there and on July 27, 1639 landed at Madraspatam, a village about twenty-five miles south of the Dutch settlement of Pulicat. The local Hindu Chief welcomed the English and the local merchants showed him piece-goods like excellent long cloth, morris and Percalla of excellent quality at cheaper prices

than at Armagon.<sup>7</sup> The little village of Madraspatam consisted of some fifteen to twenty fishermen's huts. A little to the south of the place Day found an ideal spot, for the proposed fort. This spot was a mere stripe of land to the north of St. Thome. It ran six miles along the shore and one mile inland. The tongue of land protected by the sea on the east and by the little river Cooum and another small stream on the south and west. It was only four hundred yard long and about hundred yards wide, and it could be easily protected against the attacks of native plunderer horsemen.<sup>8</sup>

After three weeks Francis Day obtained a grant of privileges which he conceived to be necessary. On August 22, 1639 he obtained a "Grant of Madras" from the Nayak Damarla Venkatappa.

"Farman granted by Deomela Vintatro Nague to Mr Francis Day, the chief of the English factory at Armagon, On behalf of the Honorable company for their trading and fortifying at Madraspatam, to this effect follow. Mr. Francis Day, Captain of the English at Armagon, with great hopes on our premises often made to him, went to our port of Madraspatam. He met me personally and discussed with us on behalf of the English East India Company, concerning their trade in our territory and friendly commercial relations with our subjects. We, with our special love and favour to the English, granted to the said captain or others who will be deputed to look after the affairs of the company by virtue of their farman,

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By this grant Nayak permitted the English to built a fort or castle in Madraspatam. He also undertook

to bear the cost of erecting the desired fort on condition that the English should repay him the expenses on their taking its possession.

2 To express the friendly feeling to the English nation the Nayak granted the English full power and authority to govern Madraspatam for the term and space of two years.

3 For the future its revenues were to be equally divided between the English and the Nayak.

4 Whatever goods and merchandize the English company would either export or import at Madraspatam were to be duty free for ever.

5 If they would transport or bring any commodities through his country, then they were to pay half the duties, that other merchants paid.

6 The said English Company was to perpetually enjoy the privileges of minting the coins at Madraspatam, without paying any duties.

7 If the English could inform him before advancing the money to the merchants, painters, weavers who were residing in his territory, then it was his responsibility for the fulfilment of all contracts made by the merchants, weavers and painters etc., in any part of the country.

8 No duties were to be levied upon the provisions bought by the English for their ships and the fort and if any ship or vessel belonging to the English lost its voyage or wrecked on any part of his coastal area, he promised to restore to them all goods found therein".<sup>9</sup>

On his return to Armagon, Francis Day resolved to go in person to Masulipatnam to lay the grant before the Agent and Council and to urge the desirability of accepting the Nayak's offer. He arrived at Masulipatnam at the end of August 1639. The matter was debated there, but difficulty arose due to strict orders from Bantam not to start a new factory without special permission from the president and council. Meantime the coast factories were transferred to Surat Presidency. Andrew Cogan, Agent of Masulipatnam factory who was also interested in Day's plan of Madras received permission from Surat President for establishing factory and fort at Madraspatam in February 1640.<sup>10</sup> The construction of fort was started in anticipation of the company's sanction, by Francis Day and Andrew Cogan, the Agent on the Coromandel Coast in March 1640 and it was named Fort St. George after England's patron saint. In honour of the local Nayak's father Chennappa, the settlement as distinct from the town of Madras itself was called Chennapatnam and the natives called it by this name, but the English called it Madras, probably from the Hindu Shrine or legend of the place.<sup>11</sup> The Portuguese at St. Thome whose prosperity was already waning had invited Francis Day to settle there, but he preferred an independent position. By the autumn of 1640, 300 or 400 families of weavers and others, attracted

by an exemption from taxes for thirty years, had settled round the fort. The fort when finished, consisted of a tower or house enclosed by a rectangular wall 400 yards long by 100 yards wide with bastions at the four corners. Its cost estimated to about 4,000 pagodas or 2,000 £.<sup>12</sup> As only the Europeans were allowed to live within the wall isle, it came to be known as white town, while the weaving hamlets which grew up outside, under the shelter of its guns were called Black town. The whole was included under the name of Madras.<sup>13</sup>

In 1641, Fort St. George or Madras became the Company's headquarters on the Coromandel Coast. But the position of the English at Madras was poor in comparison with the Dutch at Pulicat. At the end of 1641 they received from home stock of only about 17,000 for the investment on Coromandel coast. Andrew Cogan, the Agent at Madras tried to raise the loans for investment and also appealed the company, the importance of the trade in this area. However it seems that the English factors at Madras faced the scarcity of money and poor supply from Bantam and Surat. In the period of the first five years i.e., from 1641 to 1645 the situation at Madras and in its surrounding area was gloomy. This was due to financial and political embarrassments. The Nayak of Armagon was crushed by Hindu and Muslim powers and his territory was snatched away by Golconda army and by neighbouring Nayak.

In the beginning of October 1642, the king of Chandra-giri (Vellore) Venkatapati died and his nephew, Shri Ranga Rayalu III ascended the throne. But many nayaks opposed his succession and caused

him great trouble.<sup>14</sup> A letter dated August 28, 1643 reveals the situation and mentions that "the country was in the throes of civil war, one Nague against another, and most against the king, but the later, by means of a large present had induced the king of Bijapur to send an army to his assistance and he was therefore likely to gain the upper hand".<sup>15</sup>

In 1644 the English factors at Madras, to secure a safe position, expended on the fort a sum to the tune of 4300 £ and kept garrison of hundred soldiers for the protection of this place.<sup>16</sup> After Francis Day's departure in 1644, the trade languished and the merchants remained idle and disheartened. Because at this time England was distracted by the civil war and at Madras, political situation around Madras and in Eastern Karnataka was worsened by the Muslim aggression. In this period Golconda Army under the command of Mir Jumla overran Eastern Karnataka and overcame most of the territories of local Hindu Nayaks.<sup>17</sup>

At the same time in November 1645, Greenhill, the Agent at Madras paid visit to Shri Ranga Raylu either at Vellore or at Chandragiri and obtained a grant (Cawle) for the possession of Madras. By this grant <sup>the</sup> English at Madras obtained confirmation of the same original concessions given by Nayak Damrala Venkatappa in 1639. According to this grant, the English at Madras obtained the following concessions.

1 The English were freed from all customs or duties at the port on their merchandize.

2 They were also freed from tolls on provisions brought



from inland districts.

3 The goods passing through the district of Punamallee  
were to pay only half of the customs or usual duties.

4 The customs paid by others at Madras port were to  
be shared with royal treasury.

5 The town of Madraspatam and piece of ground adjoining  
were made over to the English and they were  
authorised to administer the government and justice  
of the town.

6 The concessions regarding the goods recovered from  
wrecks was renewed and promise was given that the  
settlement should be independent of the control of any  
of the neighbouring Nayaks.

By 1646 Mir Jumla, the General of Golconda Sultan became the master of all the country around Madras and the English factors quickly made their peace with him. Mir Jumla confirmed all the privileges that the English had obtained from the previous Hindu ruler, when they gave him help against San Thome. The years 1646-47, when this change was being affected, were marked by great famine in the land when a large number of people died of starvation. As many as 3,000 persons died in Madras alone during the period from September 1646 to January 1647.<sup>19</sup> We find, however, that after 1649 the English factors on Coromandel coast received ample supplies of money from England, Surat and Bantam and bought large quantities of piecegoods of Coromandel for Europe. It is recorded that at the beginning of 1650,

the trade affairs of the East India Company were in flourishing condition.<sup>20</sup>

In 1652 Madras was raised to the rank of the presidency independent of Bantam and Aaron Baker was its first president. But President Baker's period of office at Madras was troubled one, owing to the Dutch war, the quarrels among the members of the council and the bitter disputes among the town people known as Right hand and Left hand castes.<sup>21</sup> So in 1654 the new presidency was reduced again to the status of subordinate agency. However, four years later, Madras was again restored to the rank of presidency independent of Bantam and all the factories on the Coromandel coast and Bengal were placed under its charge.<sup>22</sup>

The company's position in this period was not sound. Trade had been very bad at home as well as on the Coromandel coast. England had been distracted by the great civil war between Charles and his parliament and business was almost at a standstill. At Fort St. George the factors had as many difficulties as the directors at home. The native wars were frequent and threatening. Both Golconda and Bijapur forces entered in Eastern Karnataka and most of the territory came under the control of these powers. They captured Vellore kingdom and the territory was divided among them, but this unity immediately led to discord on account of the war indemnity. The rift seemed to be permanent and as the representatives of the two sultanates overshadowed the authority of the local Nayakas, the latter were also divided into two warring groups.<sup>23</sup>

Madras, after the fall of Chandragiri (Vellore) had become dependent upon the king of Golconda, but the Golconda government was dissatisfied with many tariff concessions given to the English and sought to reimpose duties on goods going into and out of Madras by land. Mir Jumla, Lord of Karnataka, who was an astute statesman and financier, in order to supervise the customs revenue fully, he set up his own officers at Madras, San Thome and Mylapore with adhkari-  
es (officers) at their head. One of these adigars (officer) was Malappa who was the officer in charge at Madras from 1648 to 1654. He constantly attended the choultry (custom house) to see that his master's share in the customs revenue was duly credited.<sup>24</sup>

In 1656 Mir Jumla defected to Mughal camp and his place was soon taken by Neknam Khan. His objectives in dealing with the English Company was that correct and honest account of export and import should be kept. This led to a considerable rift between the Qutabshahi officials and the English which took shape in some petty squabbles on minor events. The Golconda General, Neknam Khan blockaded Madras in 1656, preventing entry and exit of goods and imposed heavy duties on them. A settlement was made with the general of Golconda Army in December 1656, but the disputes over customs continued. The Golconda forces continued to blockade Madras with the intention of forcing the English to recognize Golconda customs claims. An agreement on this matter was reached in April 1658, by which the English agreed to pay the Golconda Diwan 380 pagodas annually in lieu of half of the customs revenues of Madras. In return the Golconda authorities allowed the English undisturbed possession of the town.<sup>25</sup> But this was not the end of the matter as far as the Golconda authorities were concerned.

With the restoration in England, Madras entered on a new period of life. Because in England the whole kingdom was mad with joy and excitement at the downfall of the commonwealth and the restoration of Charles II. From his period trade revived and fresh consignments of bullion were dispatched to Fort St. George, for the purchase of Eastern commodities.<sup>26</sup> The appointment of Sir Edward Winter in 1661 makes a new period in the history of Madras. The factories in Bengal and on the Coromandel Coast were all placed under his supervision and he was given summary powers to punish all private traders. He improved the sea trade with the Bengal and Bantam. He also threatened the hostile Indian powers with the retaliation on the sea.<sup>27</sup>

The English were much disturbed at this time by Neknam Khan, the Golconda Nawab and General, over the question of customs duties of Madras as well as demand for the stationing of Qutabshahi officers and troops at Madras.<sup>28</sup> He thought that 380 pagodas per year was very small amount for the Diwani share of Madras customs. The English opposed that, this was unfair as they had spent much money in developing the trade of the port. The matter remained unresolved as Neknamkhan's attentions were distracted by events elsewhere in the kingdom. The Golconda Government refused to accept 380 pagodas as its share of customs.<sup>29</sup> It set up customs posts on all roads leading to Madras and scrupulously taxed all incoming and outgoing goods. At this time the English at Fort St. George were again threatened by the Dutch. The English officials of Madras understood that nothing could be achieved on land against a powerful enemy. Their only strength was at sea, but they were not in a position to attack. The outbreak of the

Second Anglo Dutch war (1665-67) diverted their attention to the defence of their forts and factories from the Dutch.<sup>30</sup> In this situation the English were anxious to approach Neknamkhan to protect Fort St. George from their enemies. There is a letter from the company to the Agent and council of Madras dated 18th December 1665 in which they say, "we desire you to engage the king of Golconda, his Nawab or any other of the natives that have the power near the fort to assist you in the preservation thereof".<sup>31</sup> Neknamkhan had protected the fort against the Portuguese by laying a siege to San Thome from June 1666 to July 1666. The king of Golconda also issued farman forbidding the Dutch to show any hostility to the English. In spite of these good turns on the part of Qutabshahi authorities, the English at Madras remained adamant regarding their share of customs.

Mr George Foxcroft (1668 to 1670) who was appointed as a Governor of Madras by the Company refused to accept the terms offered by Neknamkhan. He had, therefore, to blockade Madras again in 1670, to enforce the demands of Golconda administration on the English. The blockade lasted a month. The dispute finally came to an end when William Langhorne assumed the Governorship of Madras in 1670<sup>32</sup> The Nawab, Neknamkhan, wanted to settle the issue on the model of Pulicat, where the servants of the hawaldar collected half of the customs due to the Diwan from the customs posts in the town. The issue was finally resolved in February 1672, when "cawle" (farman) dated 23rd February 1672 was issued by which the English were to pay 1200 Pagodas annually for half the share of customs and arrears of dues for the last 11 years at one thousand pagodas per year. The formula adopted in the farman

was that the customs of Madras was to be rented to the English in perpetuity for the above mentioned annual payment. The money was to be paid to the Diwan directly and there was no obligation on the part of the English towards the hawaldars or governors of neighbouring districts. The concessions of freedom from duty on the English goods and goods for the consumption of the town were confirmed. Autonomous administration of the English in Madras, without the interference of Golconda officials was also confirmed. Immediately after the grant of the farman, the Nawab Neknamkhan died and he was succeeded by Musakhan. Shortly after, the king died and was succeeded by Abul Hassan Qutabshah in 1672. In February 1676 the new king issued a farman confirming his predecessor's grant and adding the village Triplicane to the bounds of Madras.<sup>33</sup>

In all this period the English were opposed by the Dutch, in every possible way. The Dutch attempted to drive the English out of market by selling cheaper and buying dearer than the English. This, however, would be considered fair play in these days of free trade. But the Dutch went much further than that. The English coastal trade was almost stopped by the Dutch cruisers who swarmed in the Indian seas and who were ready to commit acts of piracy, as to purchase native merchandize. Besides the horrible massacres at Amboyna, the Dutch were even said to have committed piracies under the English flag against ships belonging to the native powers and for which the English company had itself to pay hundred thousand rials of eight. In 1652 matter became even more threatening. Cromwell declared war against Holland and factors in the fort St. George were in

imminent danger. They prayed to the Directors to increase their garrison and permit them to complete their fortifications and above all to be allowed to construct curtain towards the sea.

Meantime, the English at fort St. George and the Portuguese at San Thome seem to have lived together on the best terms. The friendship between the Portuguese and the English was probably the result of their common enmity towards the Dutch. Indeed the Dutch possessed a powerful force in the Indian seas, that it seemed as no nation could stand against them. They took Ceylone and excluded the Portuguese from the island. They blockaded the Portuguese Capital of Goa and blockaded the English settlement at Bantam.<sup>34</sup> In 1654 a treaty was concluded between the English and the Dutch, known as the Treaty of Westminster. By this treaty the Amboyna matter was settled and the English company obtained from the Dutch 3615 £ as compensation.<sup>35</sup> Then the Company, its courage revived by Cromwell's charter of 1657, resolved to make Madras its effective headquarters in Eastern India and in 1658 declared all its settlements in Bengal and the Coromandel Coast subordinate to fort St. George. Thence forward Madras stood as the type of the system of fortified factories, which the conflict of the Indian powers in southeastern India rendered indispensable for the safety of European trade.<sup>36</sup>

Thus, in the period of first twenty years, the English factors at fort St. George had to struggle for their existence. They tried to establish their commercial hold on the Coromandel Coast, struggling with European competitors, facing the problem of supply of money from home, and constant warlike situation of this region.

They searched for goods and markets in this area and opened the factories in Cuddalore, Kunimedu, Porto Novo, Canjiveram.

Though Governor Sir William Longhorne secured farman from Qutubshah of Golconda in 1672 and secured strong position for the English trade at Madras, the English trade at Madras and Coromandel Coast was hindered by many curious series of events like advent of the French, rivalry between the Dutch and the French and disturbances from local governors. In 1671, the French armament of twelve ships under the command of Admiral Dela Haye appeared at the coast of Malabar and commenced their trading on old Dutch line of giving extravagant prices for Indian products and selling European goods at very low rates.<sup>37</sup> In 1672, the French admiral unexpectedly landed three hundred men and some guns at San Thome. The Muslim forces in this district resisted the French but the French took the place by storm. The Muslim army under the command of General named Baba Sahib attempted to recover San Thome from the French but in vain.<sup>38</sup> The relations of the French and the English were friendly due to alliance between England and France. For two years (1672-74) French held the possession of San Thome. Within that time they had established a camp at Triplicane, the Mohammedan quarter of Madras and fortified it.<sup>39</sup> Meantime, the Dutch, under Rickloff Von Goens, Dutch governor General of India laid seize to San Thome and at last in 1674 the French surrendered San Thome to the Dutch. But the Dutch soon agreed to cede San Thome to Nawab due to opposition of Golconda Sultan.<sup>40</sup>

Dr. John Fryer visited Madras about the year 1673.



He describes the place, English factors at Madras and its surroundings.

The true possessors of Madras are the English, installed therein by one of their Nayaks or prince of Hindus 90 years ago, 40 years before their total subjection to the Moors, who likewise have since ratified it by a patent from Golconda, only paying 7000 pagodas yearly for royalties and customs that raised the money fourfold to the company; whose agent here is Sir William Langhorne, a gentleman of indefatigable industry and worth. He is superintendent over all the factories on the coast of Coromandel, as far as the Bay of Bengal and up Huygly river (which is one of the falls of Ganges) viz. fort St. George alias Maderas, Pettipolle Mechlapan, Gundore, Medapollan, Balisore, Bengala, Huygly, castle Bazar, Pattana. He has mint, and privileges of coining; the country stamp is only a fanam which is 3 d. of gold; and their cash, twenty of which go to a fanam. Moreover he has his judiciaries; to give sentence, but not on life and death to the King's liege people of England; though the rest they may. His personal guard consists of 300 or 400 Blacks; besides a band of 1,500 men ready on summons. He never goes abroad without fifes, drums, trumpets and a flat with two balls in a red field; accompanied with his council and factors on horseback, with their ladies in Palenkeens. Their only merchants being Gentues, forty moors having hardly cohabitation with them, though of the natives 30,000 are employed in their monopoly.<sup>41</sup>

At interval, Neknamkhan's successor Musakhan had handed over the village Triplicane to the English who for an annual rental of fifty pagodas, sublet it to one of the most influential merchants of Madras Kasi Viranna (Casa Verona). Kasi Viranna evidently enjoyed

the confidence not only of the English but also of the Qutbshahi authorities at the Capital, for he was exempted paying half the customs duties right through the Qutbshahi dominions. San Thome had also been farmed out to Kasi Viranna for 13,000 pagodas per annum.<sup>42</sup> In this period the trade of the English at Madras was carried on with the help of Kasi Viranna. Kasi Viranna seems to have taken off large quantities of the goods from Europe and to have supplied such native goods as were required by the English Agency for shipment to England. For that purpose he had distributed presents (pichcash) as were sent by the English merchants to Muslim chiefs and assisted in the transmission of money from one station to another. From this it seems that Kasi Viranna was a channel through which the members of Madras presidency carried on their private trade and other doubtful but very profitable undertakings.<sup>43</sup>

Governor Sir William Langhorn was succeeded by Mr Streyنشam Master in 1677. The Governorship of Mr Streyنشam Master (1677-1681) was distinguished by events of greater significance. In May 1677 a more terrible enemy than local princes or rival European powers threatened Madras. Shivaji the Maratha Ruler swept across southern India with an army of sixty thousand men and seized the fortress Ginji, 82 miles south-west from Madras. The entries in the diaries and consultation books of the Madras presidency show the general state of alarm. In this campaign Shivaji had sent two Brahmin messengers to Madras, to provide some cordial stones and counter poisons. The English gladly responded to this request and sent cordials and medicines

along with some present. Again Shivaji asked for some English engineers but the English politely declined this demand. Madras was constantly alarmed with rumours that he was about to attack the English and the Dutch settlements at Madras and Pulicat. In August 1678, news reached the Madras Agency from Canjeveram, forty miles from Madras that some fifteen hundred of Shivaji's horses were at that place and that the Marathas intended to advance and take the fort of Poonamallee. Subsequently the Brahmin engaged to look after the interest of the Agency at Golconda sent an intelligence to fort St. George that Shivaji had given orders for the plunder of Sadraspatam, Madraspatam and Pulicat. Fortunately the return of Shivaji to his own territory (Dec. 1678) dissipated most of these fears of the English.<sup>44</sup>

Though the relations between the English and Golconda were good, there were always disputes with the rentiers and district governors over the movements of goods and the taxes to be imposed on them. These overlords of adjacent countries were trying to channel the transport of rice and other foodstuffs through their districts, so that they might enjoy a monopoly of supply and raise prices thereby.<sup>45</sup> There was clash between the claims of the English who relied on Neknamkhan's cowl and the stand of Lingappa, who was the tarafdar of Poonamallee. Lingappa considered the English as being under his command. When he was promoted to the governorship of Karnataka, he became even more adamant. His intention was to collect huge amount of present from the English. As fort St. George lay within his jurisdiction, he would not allow the English to deal directly with the Govern-

ment at Hyderabad. Sir Streyntsham Master, Governor of Madras was not ready to compromise with Lingappa. But it cost him a great amount of inconvenience and worry. In 1678 Lingappa quietly put an embargo on all paddy entering Madras except through Poonamallee, where he could charge as much customs duties as he liked and thus virtually shut off the commodity from the Madras market. On the other hand Streyntsham Master applied direct to Sultan for the lease of such important villages as San Thome, Egmore and Tiruvallyur. He informed Vir Raghavayya, who represented the English interests at the court, that he was willing to "offer considerations" to Madanna for this.<sup>46</sup> He thus ignored the channel of the tarafdar and tried to deal directly with the government of Hyderabad. Frustrated by this economic onslaught, Streyntsham Master again attempted to over-ride him and sent the presents of 1200 hons to Ibrahim (Sarkhail and Nawab of Masulipatnam) at Hyderabad. He even went further and when he heard that the Sultan was to visit Masulipatnam in the near future, along with his prime minister Madanna, he directed the chief factor at Madapollam and secured (1) a farman from Sultan giving the English at Madras the right to coin silver rupees and copper paise in the name of the sultan which should have currency all over the Qutubshahi dominions. (2) Another farman exempting the English goods from paying toll as was the case at Masulipatnam. (3) A farman under which Madapollam and Viracheronne or one of the two towns were to be rent-free or on fixed on fixed unalterable rent, and (4) a farman granting Tiruvollyur, Egmore and San Thome to the English either rent-free or a moderate rent. The whole scheme, however failed as the Sultan did not proceed to Masulipatnam.<sup>47</sup>

The Governorship of Streyنشam Master is important in the history of Madras and in East India Company. He tried to defend Madras from these local disturbances strongly. He framed regulations for the proper administration of justice and the conduct of civil servants. In this period trade became brisk and large investments were made. So he may very well be called the second founder of Madras.<sup>48</sup>

Streyنشam Master was replaced by Mr William Gyfford as a Governor in June 1681. His policy towards the native chiefs like Lingappa was more pliable. Mr Gyfford attempted to make peace with Lingappa and to get a new cawl from King of Golconda. The Madras council resolved that 2,000 pagodas be sent as a "peace offering to Akkana, the Sarlashkar and 300 pagodas to Lingappa. Pedda Venkatadri, Agent at court asked to see Ihim for probing the basis of some kind of understanding.<sup>49</sup> But the matter was not ended. So at last seven thousand pagodas were sent to Lingappa and matter was settled down at once. Lingappa stopped to protect the interlopers. The yearly rent of Madras was again fixed at 1,200 pagodas.<sup>50</sup>

The period of 1681 to 1687 is also remarkable from the point of trade and commerce on Coromandel coast. At this period Mr Josiah Child was a chairman of the court of Directors in England. He was a man of a mark, but hard and over-bearing in his ways. Court of directors had been anxious to extend the trade of East. So the trade of the company flourished greatly under his regime. He put down all private trade of the company's servants in any of the articles which the company chose to reserve to itself.<sup>51</sup> Also in this period

(1682) the English got permission from the Maratha ruler of Ginjee to settle and trade at Port Novo and Cuddalore.<sup>52</sup>

The grants and concessions received from Golconda, together with those relating to the English trade in North Coromandel, were again to be ratified after the Mughal conquest of Golconda in 1687. The problem became more complicated because of the outbreak of hostilities between the English and Mughal in Bengal in 1689. All English trade was prohibited in Mughal dominions. The English factories at Vishakhapatam, Masulipatam and Madapollam were seized.<sup>53</sup> Job Charnock, the founder of Calcutta took refuge at Madras on his expulsion from Bengal by Mughals who threatened to attack Madras also. But the storm blew over and the Mughal General Zulfikar-Khan, in the campaign against Ginjee confirmed the privileges regarding Madras and other places.<sup>54</sup> The English got opportunity when Zulfikar Khan appealed to the English in 1690 for ammunition, some soldiers and gunners to help him in his attack on the Marathas in Jinji. The Governor Elihu Yale, responded promptly with dispatch of 200 maunds of gunpowder. Taking advantage of this the Governor put forth petition in 1692 for the remission of (1) Annual rent for Madras and Triplifcane, (2) The rental of three more towns, Tandore, Purushawakam and Egmore as gratuity to company. (3) The right to coin rupees with the emperor's stamp in Madras Mint.<sup>55</sup> But of these only the permission to coin rupees was granted immediately and others were referred to the Emperor.

In February 1693 farman was granted by which the

town Tandore, Purushawakam and Egmore were rented to the English. Two of these towns were part of the jagir of one Velayuda Arasma Nayak who opposed the English occupation. The English were equally determined to safeguard their rights and hence sent company's soldiers to prevent the entry of the Nayak's men. An appeal was made to the Wazir or Prime Minister of Golconda and he (conformed) the privileges granted to the English in 1693 and thus the claims of the Nayak were rejected. In 1693 the English got another six villages, north of Madras in their jurisdiction by Kasimkhan, Nawab of Karnataka on account of medical attention given by the English. These were Tiruvottiyur, Sattankudy, Shadian Kuppam, Ernavoor, Kutavakam and Alandacheri. The English did not take over the management of these villages immediately but left them under the existing rentiers. In this way the English were mostly benefitted by the Mughal conquest of the south.<sup>56</sup>

In the meanwhile the English interests were spreading to the south of Madras. When Marathas established themselves in Jinji, Elihu Yale was sent there to negotiate with Hari Raja in 1681. Gopal Pant, the subhedar of Porto Novo was favourable to an English settlement in these parts, as it would add to his revenues. Through his intercession the English obtained a cawl to settle and trade in Porto Novo, Cuddalore and Kunimedu. In 1682/83 settlements were founded in these three places, but shortage of capital forbade the expansion of trade there. The English desired fortified settlements in these parts to be more independent of hinterland governments. They wanted more tax concessions similar to those in Madras before they could commit themselves to an expansion of investment.<sup>57</sup> In 1685 Marathas were in

need of money and they asked the English for loan on condition that the English would be permitted to build a fort at Cuddalore or Port Novo. The English in return asked for autonomy within the settlement in administration and justice. But nothing came of these proposals. Afterwards most of the region around Jinji was occupied by the Mughal army under Zulfikarkhar and the Marathas at Jinji were surrounded by the Mughals.<sup>58</sup>

The English took the opportunity to secure by purchase the old fort of Devanampatam in 1690 from hard pressed Maratha ruler at Jinji, Rajaram. In return for 120,000 chakrams the English received the fort and land upto one gun shot fired inland from the fort. Thus the surrounding country of Devanampatam including part of the port of Cuddalore and village of Manjikuppam, came under the control of the English. At Devanampatam the English demolished the existing fort and built fort St. David on that site.<sup>59</sup> The Dutch had factory at Devanampatam and they became tenants of the English. They protested the illegality of the grant to the English on the ground of previous grant to them of the ground of their factory by the then Nayak of Jinji. The Dutch appealed to Rajaram but failed in their efforts due to crucial position of Rajaram. The English continued to assert their right of ownership over the Dutch factory and consequently the Dutch trade in Devanampatam was ruined. In 1697 Zulfikarkhan captured Jinji and became master of this region. He demanded a loan from the English at Madras. When this was refused he demanded return of Devanampatam and Cudalore. His troops attacked Cuddalore in 1698 but matter was later settled amicably.<sup>60</sup>



In 1700 Zulfikarkhan was succeeded by Daudkhan as a nawab of Karnataka and took up residence in Arcot. He had campaigned in this part of the country for long and knew the strength and the weaknesses of the Europeans. He wanted to derive utmost advantages from the English for himself. The English congratulated him with presents on his arrival at Arcot. But he was dissatisfied with their gifts probably expecting some considerable cash in addition. He threatened the English at Madras by imperial Hasb-ul-hukum of 1701, prohibiting all European trade and blockaded Madras. Thomas Pitt, the Governor of Madras at this time showed resistance to the attack of Daudkhan. The matter was settled after some negotiations and the Nawab consented to receive a sum of Rs. 25,000 as present and the blockade lifted.<sup>61</sup>

Thus in the first half of the 17th century the English were striving to establish their trade in the Coromandel. While trying to lay foundation of their trade at Masulipatnam, they established a stronghold at Madras. They obtained several concessions and trade privileges from regional ruling powers from time to time. In the last quarter of the 17th century they concentrated on some selected factories of Coromandel, though trading activities were carried on at other minor factories too.

#### TRADE OF MADRAS

##### a) Development of Trade

The English East India Company's trade at Madras prior to 1658 was infrequent and inconsistent. Nature of the Company's Organization was a temporary joint stock company and their major concentration

in India was at Surat and on Gujarat Coast. With the foundation of Fort St. George in 1641 and favourable customs privileges there, their attention shifted to southern and eastern markets. The establishment of a presidency in Fort St. George in 1652, with the group of senior company servants and decision making machinery made it possible to make planned and regular investment on the eastern coast. The reorganization of the company as permanent joint stock coincided with increasing demand for the type of painted and dyed goods of Coromandel Coast. A great growth in investment is seen from 1660. The investment at Madras for European market rose from £ 48,496 in 1664, till it reached £108,810 in 1672. Then it decreased, though not below £ 58,568 in 1675, till 1678. Afterwards during the period from 1678 to 1687 investment was constantly above £100,000, reaching its height in 1683 to £209,000 and in 1684, £318,000. It seems that under this expansion Madras provided about 35% to 40% of total volume of return to Europe.<sup>63</sup> The growth of trade at Madras from 1660 onward had many reasons.

In the 17th century, India was probably the world's greatest producer of cotton textiles before the discovery of machine spinning and weaving in Britain in the second half of the 18th century. Indian cotton textiles had great demands in European countries. So finer qualities of Coromandel chintz were very famous and much in demand.<sup>64</sup>

The English merchants changed their policy of previous pattern of looking only to finer, painted varieties of Coromandel cloth. Following the Dutch, they decided to purchase what the region was

able to produce in great bulk. Madras and its adjoining areas upto Tanjore and Madura were famous for staple cotton cloths of long cloth, Salempores, and moris. Special efforts were made to encourage the native weavers for finer weave and measurement suitable for the European markets and large amount was invested. These increased investments show that the English factories grew along the coast to spread out the orders in the various weaving districts. From Fort St. George the English succeeded in tapping the markets of Kanchipuram, Chinleput and Arni. The continuing search for goods induced them to open factories further south in the late 1670's. They opened factories in Cuddalore, Kunimedu and Porto Novo. They also tried to reach up to Tanjore and Madura.<sup>65</sup>

Upto 1670 the commercial position of Madras was staggering one. But after 1670's as trade flourished Madras emerged as a centre of trade and developed gradually. The trade of the East India Company both with Europe and inter-Asia, helped the growth of Madras. This centre of trade extending gradually into the suburbs and links with the interior region, attracted merchants, artisans and maritime people. Indian merchants could trade freely without any restrictions. By offering concessions and incentives to artisans, presents to local officials and middlemen they attracted a number of people to Madras. Expansion of the network of the factories was also facilitated by the growth of the settlement of Madras. The acquisition of new villages in the 1660's and 1670's has been noted above. Under the presidencies of Foxcroft (1668-1672) and Sir William Langhorne (1672-78) the town and suburbs grew to a population of between 30,000 to 50,000

inhabitants.<sup>66</sup> The total customs revenue of Madras in 1680 was 11,441 pagodas, of which about 30 per cent was from the inland trade and the trade from seaborne trade.<sup>67</sup>

The role of the prominent merchants in this region was also equally important in the development of the trade and commerce of Madras factory. In the first three or four decades of the seventeenth century, when company was striving to establish its trade in Coromandel, these prominent merchants helped this factory in various ways. They were intermediaries for the company with local powers. They helped the company in securing privileges for trading and settlements. These merchants had considerable influence in various local chiefs' courts and in state courts. When a company was so established they included its trade within the orbit of their concerns. These chief merchants were shipowners and overseas traders to south-east Asia and Ceylone, suppliers of textiles to the companies and wholesale merchants in imported goods. They also enjoyed the privileges of revenue farming of coastal territories. In addition to their commerce and tax farming, they also were engaged in money lending. Mallaya and his brother Chinnana were most outstanding merchants of this time, who were famous in coastal Karnataka. They had close relations with Vijayanagar raja of Chandragiri and had much influence in the court of the Nayak of Jinji. Such prominent merchants utilized their political position to further their commercial interests and attempted to engross the trade in particular commodities in varying degrees. Not only that, by acquiring tax farming rights they held considerable influence over produce of weaving villages and food purchasing villages.<sup>68</sup>

From this time onwards prominent merchants permanently resided in Madras and developed close relationship with the English. The first important merchant settled in Madras under the English jurisdiction was Shesadra. After him Beri Timanna held such position of influence. He started a career as dubash to one of the English factors and rose to the position of Chief Merchant of the company. He was major supplier of textiles to the company, and accepted great part of their imports. He had concessions on Madras customs for his trade, paying only half what the Europeans paid. Some times he lent money to the English. He also seems to have managed the mint. Not only this but he also got concessions of half customs in Golconda region by Neknamkhan.<sup>69</sup> He belonged to Perika baliya caste (weavers of gunnies as well as salt traders). Another prominent merchant was Kasi Veeranna. He was for a long time partner of Timanna and probably of Komati caste. He succeeded Timanna's position and in some respect surpassed him.

During the time that Veeranna and Timanna were chief merchants, Viranna shared the management of the English company's business with Timanna. Both were major suppliers of the textiles to the English and held monopoly over the purchase of the English export such as woollens, lead, copper. After Timanna's death Viranna was sole head of a joint stock company of Indian merchants trading with the English. He also held the same concessions as Timanna from Golconda Government. He was the rentier of customs revenues of the coastal territories north of Madras upto the port of Armagon. After the Golconda ruler recaptured San Thome from the French in 1674,

it was rented out to Viranna for some years.<sup>70</sup> He represented the English interests to Golconda and secured many favours for them from Golconda Government. He also represented as a vakil of the company to the King of Golconda and secured farman of 1676 from the King of Golconda. It seems that his close relations with the English grew to the extent that, he had very close relations with the highest company servants of Madras. He was reported to have been heavily involved with Edward Winter, Agent at Madras from 1662-1665 in the company's trade and Winter's private trade.<sup>71</sup> Afterwards it seems that Timanna's two younger brothers Peddu Venkatadri and Chinna Venkatadri occupied the same dominant position. The role and position of these prominent Merchants facilitated the migration of other merchants to Madras. m

The second sector of the East India Company's trade at Madras was coastal trade. This coastal trade was carried on from Madras to Bengal and to Western India touching on Malabar ports, Bombay and Surat. Bengal was famous for fine muslin and silk. The trade from Madras to Bengal was developed for making Madras a place where fine muslin and silk of Bengal could be available for consumption in the interior and for re-export elsewhere. There was also growing trade in foodstuffs between Bengal and Madras. In the trade with Malabar the English were trying to enter in the usual traffic in textiles, cotton yarn, foodgrains, pepper, cinnamon and coconut produce. For Bombay and Surat, Madras was the base and convenient place for their Eastern Asian trade.<sup>72</sup> Thus this coastal trade benefitted the English at Madras and gradually Madras emerged to prominent place on Coromandel coast

in latter half of the seventeenth century.

The other factors for the growth of trade of Madras was East Asian trade. In the first half of the seventeenth century East India Company was trying to acquire major foothold in Western India and in Western Asian countries. Competing with rival European companies (Portuguese and Dutch), they succeeded in getting considerable hold in West Asian countries like Persia and Arabia. They also got foothold at Bantam. Bantam was their main centre of trade in East Asian countries and factories on Coromandel were posted under the control of Bantam Presidency upto mid of the seventeenth century. But in the later period, the English merchants tried to penetrate in other eastern countries like Burma, Thailand, China and other countries. So this Eastern Asian trade helped the growth of trade at Madras.<sup>73</sup>

#### b) Volume of Trade

From 1641 the English started their trade at Madras. At the end of 1641, a stock of £17,290 was sent to Madras from Surat. Comparing to the stock which came from London to Surat in this year it was only nearly 17 per cent.<sup>74</sup> In 1642, piece goods of Porto Novo and Madras goods worth 5503£ were sent to Bantam<sup>75</sup> and 257 bales of calicoes, 700 bales of sugar were sent to England. In this year (1642), 61006£ were dispatched from Bantam and Masulipatam to Madras for investment in piece goods for England.<sup>76</sup>

In the year 1643, Madras factory received 21094£ from London in the form of spices, coral and in cash. This year it

sent piece goods and other Coromandel goods valued to 18299 £.<sup>77</sup> In 1644 Madras factors obtained 5000 £ from Bantam for the investment in piece goods. In the same year Madras factors sent the piece goods valued at 7765 £ to Bantam and Persia.<sup>79</sup> In the year 1646 only 2353 £ valued goods were sent to Bantam from Madras.<sup>80</sup>

In 1647 Madras factors received total amount of 19,984 £ from Bantam, Surat and England and piece goods and other articles valued to 8214 £ were sent to Surat.<sup>81</sup> In 1648 Madras factors received 28,950 £ in form of cash and other commodities from Bantam and England. In the same year they sent piece goods and other Coromandel goods valued to 8904 £ to Bantam, Persia and England.<sup>82</sup>

We have some figures from 1651 onwards regarding the investments and exports of Fort St. George factory and from these figures we can get the idea of the volume of trade of Madras factory.<sup>83</sup>

Year	Investment or Import value in £	Export value in £
1651	21,384	11,276
1652	9,609	10,081
1653	-	15,125
1654	2,400	-
1655	4,706	-
1656	-	4,549
1657	15,500	-
1658	21,560	-
1660	25,800	29,636

(Some figures are converted into £ from



rials and pagodas, in ratio of Rs.  
 2 = 1 rial, 3.5 Rs. = 1 Pagoda and  
 8.5 Rs. = 1 £ )<sup>84</sup>

The volume of trade of Madras between 1642 and 1660 was nearly  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the total volume of the Indian trade. The trade indicates some ups and downs. There are many reasons for the meagre volume of trade at Madras. The British trade had two facets. The broad cloth and metals produced in England were sold in India at maximum level and the goods produced in India were marketed in Europe and England. There was great demand for Indian calicoes in Europe. The calicoes produced in India were superior and cheaper to that produced in England.

The longcloth imported from England had very little demand in Deccan Peninsula. It was profitable for the Britishers to sell the Indian textiles in Europe rather than selling their own cotton goods in India. Secondly they had a profit margin of as high as 200 per cent from the sale of Indian cotton goods in Europe. So the English merchants invested their funds in the cotton textiles in and around Madras. In the first half of the 17th century the growth of textiles production in Madras region was tardy. The reasons for this were as under.

Much time was lost in providing samples of piece goods to Indian weavers and getting the same quality cotton produce. The great hindrance in the establishment of textiles trade in Madras was the severe competition from the Dutch merchants. The Dutch merchants used to pay much higher prices to the Indian weavers and charged lower selling prices of their imported articles.

The supply of capital from England was both scarce and inadequate. The parliamentary policy of England was not conducive for the import and sale of Indian cotton goods in England, because the puritans had a firm grip on the parliamentary affairs.

The situation in this area was chaotic and was marked by civil strifes and public resentment. Added to this was the aggressive policy of Golconda and Bijapur rulers who captured the area around Madras.

The economic condition of the weavers in this area was one of distress because of the natural calamities and the warlike situation prevailing then. This forced the weavers to migrate from the region to another. The condition was so precarious that the weavers and other workers engaged in textile industry were to be provided with essential food articles along with raw materials necessary for the production of cotton goods.

In the latter half of the 17th century, we find that trade volume of Madras was in rising position. If we suppose the 1664, the base year, Surat provided 50 per cent of the total quantities and 35 per cent of the total value of the textile exported to company. The share of Madras was 41 per cent of the volume and 48 per cent of the value, while that of Bengal came to 9 and 17 per cent respectively. The mark up on Surat textile in 1664 stood at 1:2.48. On Madras goods it was 1:2.75 and on Bengal only 1:1.56. If these ratios are taken as a guide to volume and profitability, then it is clear that Madras was occupying important place in company's investment.<sup>85</sup>

Thus, from 1664 the English investment flourished in Madras. As a seat of Presidency of Coromandel coast and Bay of Bengal, the investment in Coromandel for European market seems to have risen. In 1664 the investment in textile was £48,498 then it reached to £108,810 in 1672; except the period of 1667 to 1669. In these seven years we find, the average of volume was 26 per cent to the total volume of the English trade in India. Then it decreased, though not below £58,500, till 1677. But though it seems to be decreased, the average of total value was 31.6 per cent. Then from 1678 to 1687, in the ten year period we find the greatest height of the English trade at Madras. Investment was constantly above £100,000 reaching £209,000 in 1683 and £318,000 in 1684. The average of total value of this period seems to be 38 per cent.<sup>86</sup> During this period the English trade caught up with the Dutch in volume and sometimes even outstripped it, though only for a brief period.<sup>87</sup> Thus in 1684 the English East India Company's exports from Madras was the highest in its total history of textile export from the Coromandel Coast.

This long period of expansion of trade of East India Company reveals that Indian cotton goods had gained popularity in England and in Europe. In the early part of the seventeenth century use of the calicoes in Europe was mainly confined to the household functions, serving as table and bedlinen and house furnishings. In latter half of the century, it was used for clothing and demand increased. Demand for Indian cotton goods was generated because of its utility and novelty. In 1683 the East India Company requested Surat factory, "to supply chintz printed on finer

cloth in order to make it more acceptable to upper class women, saying that in Holland the Indian chintz were already "the ware of Gentle women", but here in England "of the meaner sort". But four years later the company could report that all sorts of chintz had become, "the ware of ladyes of the greatest quality, which they wear on the outside of Gowns and Mantuoës, which they line with velvet and cloth of gold". There were many comments on the sudden rise in the aristocratic demand for the delicate painted cloth from Masulipatam region and it was said that great ladies in England were prepared to pay excessive prices for the supreme muslin of Bengal not seen in Europe before."<sup>88</sup> These observations on the use of cotton textiles are enough to support the figures of exports.

In Europe itself the use of cotton and silk goods in house furnishing and in daily use was regarded as a more civilized and higher standard of living. So it is significant that the European consumers preferred Indian textiles. Cotton was cheap washable and colours were relatively fast. It was comfortable to wear and easy to clean. The popularity and the general acceptance of cotton goods in Europe from the mid seventeenth century onwards shows the prosperity of the East India Company's trade in Indian textiles, in spite of prohibition acts and the imposition of heavy duties intended to curtail their consumption.<sup>89</sup> Further, the markets for new and finer textiles, which were supplied from Southern India, continued to grow until the turn of the 17th century. This growth was facilitated by the lower prices and consumers' liking and the total consumption reached its maximum.

The volume of trade of Madras from 1688 seems to be a downward trend. The Mughal wars in the south and the company's

difficulties with the Mughal Emperor combined to bring about drastic reduction in its exports. The volume of the English export dropped from 174,629 £ in 1687 to 57,006 £ in 1688. It continued to decline, reaching to all time low in 1691, 1692 and 1693 of 4556 £ 1888 £ and 5991 £ respectively.<sup>90</sup> In these years the Mughal prohibition on European trade was most effective. The recovery was slow and after settling the disputes with Mughals amicably, the trade of Madras began to improve. In 1699 the volume of exports reached to 100,604£. But the English trade in Madras never reached the heights of the 1680's thereafter.<sup>91</sup>

The other side of the trade of East India Company at Madras was import trade. Before 1660's the English tried to push the sale of European imported goods in Madras. These imported goods consisted of woollen goods, lead, copper and coral. The Board of Directors pressed all the presidencies in India to encourage the sale of European goods. The efforts to do this in Madras in the 1660's and 1670's were great failure.<sup>92</sup> The merchants of Madras region were unwilling to accept any imported goods and the godowns were stocked with bales of unwanted woollens. Sir Silliam Langhorne, the Agent of Madras wrote to the court in 1676, "Note that the sales of Europe goods is no furtherance to the Investments, but the contrary, being things merely obtruded upon them in favour of the English manufacturers and a mere burthen and pestering of their godowns."<sup>93</sup>

The pressure to encourage export to Asia was increased during the discussion over the renewal of the company's charter after the revolution of 1688. The court of Directors was compelled to export

commodities produced in England to a certain conditional value. Among the three trading regions of India, Madras was the least responsive to this pressure to sell European goods. After 1680's the English merchants at Madras tried to influence on the Indian merchants, suppliers to accept the English woollens in part payment for the textiles they delivered to the company. Starting with small quantities in this direction of forcing on them, a tenth of the payment due to them was made in woollens. Then they gradually increased this to one third and even more. Once the merchants of Madras were conditioned in this manner, the practice was extended in other parts of South India. The woollens sold in Coromandel were known as broadcloth, of various varieties. But it seems that they had no great use among the peasant societies of South India. It was useful for armies on the march and among cavalry. They were sold better among the Muslims rather than among the Hindoos.

When Mughal armies marched to the South in 1685, the sale of broad-cloth in this region began to rise up. In the 1690's the merchants of Madras willingly accepted a certain quantity of broad cloth in part payment for the English investment. They purchased broad cloth in this manner to the value of upto 30,000 pagodas (12,500£) per year.<sup>94</sup> In this way the volume of import trade of the English at Madras gradually developed after 1690.

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- 83 E.F.I. (1651-54), pp. 16, 20, 24, 96, 102, 212; E.F.I. (1655-60), pp. 103, 178, 181, 394, 400.
- 84 ~~W.W.~~ Moreland - from Akbar to Aurangjeb, p. 103 and Appendix D. H
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- 86 Ibid., pp. 508, 542.
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